

GUIDELINES FOR WORKERS

This packet will briefly cover the guidelines for workers to help their clients apply for the Season of Sharing (SOS) program in Contra Costa County. Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the following important topics:

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

1. What is SOS?
2. Criteria to Apply
3. The Application Process
4. The Role of Volunteer & Emergency Services
5. Worker Responsibility

1. What is Season of Sharing (SOS)?

The San Francisco Chronicle's Season of Sharing Fund (SOS) provides emergency assistance to individuals and families in housing crisis in 9 Bay Area counties. EHSD's Volunteer & Emergency Services (VES) unit is the coordinator for Contra Costa County residents. SOS applications for assistance must fit in the category of **Housing Assistance (HA)** rent or deposit; or **Critical Family Needs (CFN)** furniture, wheelchair, etc. HA or CFN requests cannot be for utilities. A person does not have to be on public assistance to apply for SOS. Completed applications are submitted to VES staff for processing. SOS is a fund of last resort; payments are only made to legitimate landlords not to applicants. Those in need of SOS who are EHSD clients must meet with their worker to fill out an application. Those in need of SOS who are not active to EHSD may be referred to one of the community based intake agencies (list available upon request). For referral or to determine eligibility clients can call the SOS Hotline at: (925) 655-1205.

2. Criteria to Apply

1. SOS will assist parents with dependent children age 18 or under living with them, seniors (55 and over), the disabled, the Veterans, pregnant women in her second trimester, victims of domestic violence and emancipated foster youth. **SOS will not assist single, able-bodied individuals under 55 or families without dependent children.**

2. **2 MONTH RESIDENCY** - Applicants must be able to verify that they have lived within Contra Costa County for at least 2 months prior to applying for SOS if they use to live in any of the 9 SOS Counties. For applicants out of the 9 counties they have to

be Contra Costa residents for at least 6 months. They must be in a **non-recurring, verifiable** emergency situation not caused by his or her own negligence. S/he must have been stable in the past, and with this **emergency** assistance, be able to maintain his or her situation. Applicants may be allowed to reapply after 5 years.

3. Grants are generally less than **\$3000**. Applicants may for HA or CFN or in combination of both, but it may not exceed \$5000.

4. W-9 TAX FORM - required from all landlords, for delinquent rent and deposits.

3. The Application Process

1. All Season of Sharing applications and supporting documentation are submitted via email to sos@ehsd.cccounty.us No paper applications will be accepted. Worker should verify that the applicant has not previously received SOS assistance within the past 5 years. This will save the worker unnecessary time. Email Alvaro Florez at aflorez@ehsd.cccounty.us or dnorris@ehsd.cccounty.us Also you can call the VES unit at 925-655-1208 to verify.

2. The worker meets with the client and completes 3 SOS forms: Intake Form, Budget Form, and Worker Questionnaire during the meeting. Please use the fillable .pdf forms emailed to you or found on STARS (EHSD workers). **Complete all fields.** Do not leave fields blank.

3. All documentation **must verify the applicant's story** and must be scanned and submitted with the application. Signed rental agreement, proof of income, proof of the crisis as police reports, 3-day notice, termination letter, UIB, SSI or DIB determination letters, Section 8 inspection approvals.

4. SOS Housing Assistance (HA) grants are sent to landlords directly, not to applicants. It is important to enter **correct landlord information** for the landlords on the application. When completing an application for SOS Critical Family Needs (CFN) please enter **correct vendor information** (i.e. name of store), address, contact person and telephone #. Submit an invoice for the cost of the item.

5. Print all forms. Worker and client must sign where necessary. (electronically or in pen)

6. Give client the handout: **“Season of Sharing Process for Clients”**.

7. The worker is responsible for submitting completed applications & checking for accuracy.

8. **Scan** the Intake, Budget, and Questionnaire forms along with all supporting documentation and email to sos@ehsd.cccounty.us .

4. The Role of Volunteer & Emergency Services (VES)

1. The SOS application committee consists of VES staff who will ensure that each application is given a fair and accurate review.

2. All applications are checked against our database prior to review. Applications are checked for eligibility and completeness. All applications are then reviewed by the SOS committee at a weekly meeting. **If we are able to grant your client, we will notify you**, the applicant, and the landlord/vendor in writing the day the check is requested.

3. If more information is needed VES staff may contact the worker for missing documentation or clarification. Incomplete or illegible applications take much longer to process and may be denied outright. Suspicious, or altered documents will be denied and may be reported.

4. Checks are mailed directly from the fiscal agent **Catholic Charities East Bay** to the landlord or vendor. Checks generally take 7-10 business days to be processed. Applications are generally processed in the same week they are received and will not be held open for more than a month.

5. Worker's Responsibility

1. The worker is responsible for accurately completing the 3 fillable forms: **Intake form, Budget Form, & Worker Questionnaire**. The worker should provide a detailed story

in the narrative, help your client verify it, obtain necessary documentation and document the outcome in the applicant's file.

2. Do not submit applications for those who are clearly ineligible.

3. If workers have questions regarding any part of the referral process, or terminology please call the SOS Coordinator directly at (925) 655-1203 or the VES clerk at (925) 655-1201.

These numbers are for WORKERS only.

4. Please do NOT have applicant call the SOS coordinator or VES staff directly. Applicants should call the **SOS Hotline (925) 655-1205** for status updates and questions.

SOS Guidelines for Workers *Updated 8/2022*