

Essential Expenses Program Guidelines

The ODVN Emergency Hotel Program has received funding to provide clients with some money for their essential expenses while in the hotel. This includes:

- Food
- Gas
- Transportation (Bus passes, cabs, Uber, and Lyft)
- Laundry
- Pre-paid phones

This money will be allocated to local programs on a monthly basis, and it is the responsibility of the local program to distribute the funds amongst their clients as they deem necessary.

ODVN will not accept applications on a per-client basis.

Eligibility

Only current hotel program clients are eligible for these funds.

What we can cover

Food

- ODVN can provide gift cards to grocery stores for survivors' food and household needs.
- These gift cards **cannot be used to purchase alcohol or cigarettes.**
 - If a survivor uses the gift cards to purchase alcohol or cigarettes, we will not reimburse the local program for that portion of the gift card.
- We cannot provide gift cards to convenience stores, restaurants, or UberEats.
- We will need an itemized receipt from the grocery store. For reimbursements, we will also need a receipt for the purchasing of the gift card.
- *We will reimburse the value of the gift card, not the amount the survivor spent.* The purpose of collecting receipts from the survivors is to ensure that the money is going where it's intended
 - Example: If the local program purchases a \$100 gift card for a survivor and provides us with the receipt, we will reimburse them \$100 whether the survivor's receipt says \$85 or \$110.
 - If the survivor is unable to provide a receipt, please email hotelprogram@odvn.org
- If you are requesting that ODVN directly purchase the gift card, you will need to indicate on the monthly form which grocery store you would like the gift cards for.

Gas

- We can provide gift cards to purchase fuel. These can either be in the form of a grocery store gift card (i.e., a Giant Eagle gift card that can be used at a GetGo) or a gift card to a gas station chain (i.e., from Speedway).
- ODVN will require a receipt for the fuel purchases, but will reimburse for the gift card amount, as with the grocery store gift cards.

Bus Passes (Reimbursement only)

- We can reimburse local programs for bus passes they provide to survivors. We cannot pay directly for bus passes.
- We can also reimburse for daily or weekly passes for survivors who rely on public transit for their daily needs, like work.
- There is a limit of 2 passes per day per survivor, plus 2 for each child with the survivor.

Uber and Lyft

- We can buy Uber and Lyft gift cards for survivors to get to/from court, work, the doctor's office, the store, school, visitation, and other essential travel.
- We can also reimburse local programs. We can reimburse gift card purchases or all of the individual trips a local program paid for in a month.
- Programs must keep a log of all travel that indicates the nature of the trip. We don't need the actual address, writing "work" or "court" will suffice.
- If requesting direct pay, please clearly indicate which company you would like the gift card for. Both companies are not in all of the same locations.

Cabs (Reimbursement only)

- We can reimburse for cab fare. We cannot prepay for cabs.
- Programs must provide a log of all cab rides that includes the nature of the trip.

Laundry (Reimbursement only)

- We can reimburse for a client's laundry that they cleaned in the hotel or at a laundromat.
- There must be a receipt.

Prepaid phones (Reimbursement only)

- We can reimburse for prepaid cell phones for survivors.

Process

1. Local programs must enroll with the Hotel Program at ODVN **PRIOR** to their first Essential Expenses request. After they enroll, you will be sent a monthly application form and the spreadsheet which you should use to track expenses.

2. Each local program must designate a primary contact person who will be responsible for applying for essential expenses each month.
3. Each program should submit one application per month for all of their survivors. Programs may submit two applications per month if they are applying for a combination of direct pay and reimbursement.
4. **ADVOCATES SHOULD NOT SUBMIT APPLICATIONS ON A PER-CLIENT BASIS.**
5. Advocates do not need to get approval from ODVN for any individual client's essential expenses.

For reimbursement:

1. The local program should track all eligible essential expenses throughout the month. They will then submit one application for all of the essential expenses.
2. ODVN will require a receipt for each expense.
3. When a gift card was given to a survivor to spend as they need, we will also need receipts of what the survivor purchased.
 - a. Example: If a local program wants to be reimbursed for a grocery store gift card, they must provide a receipt for their initial purchase of the gift card and for what the survivor purchased.
 - b. *Programs will be reimbursed for the gift card amount, not the amount the survivor spent.*
4. The local program will also submit the required spreadsheet that categorizes each expense.
5. One reimbursement will be dispersed for all essential expenses.
6. Essential expenses reimbursement requests (application and spreadsheet) must be received by the 15th of the following month.

For direct pay:

1. **We will only process one direct pay request per month.**
2. We can only directly pay for essential expenses that can be purchased and transferred to local programs online, such as Kroger, Speedway, or Uber gift cards. Other types of essential expenses must be reimbursed.
3. Local programs should submit an application for direct pay by the 20th in the month *before* the requested month
 - a. Example: Applications for direct pay of essential expenses for May should be submitted by April 20th.
4. We understand that local programs cannot know how many survivors they will serve in an upcoming month. *Please estimate to the best of your ability.* We do not need to know how many survivors you expect to serve in a month, just what your estimated need is. It is ok to overestimate.

5. ODVN Hotel Program will send a spreadsheet of gift cards dispensed for the month. This spreadsheet will need to be returned filled in.
6. Throughout the month, local programs should track how they disperse the gift cards on the spreadsheet provided by ODVN.
7. Local programs should send the spreadsheet and all receipts from survivors to hotelprogram@odvn.org in the next month by the 20th.
 - a. Example: Receipts and the spreadsheet for April should be submitted by May 20th (with the direct pay application for June).
8. Local programs are not eligible to apply for direct pay funds until the spreadsheet and receipts for the previous month have been received.
9. If a local program has gift cards remaining when they apply for funds for the next month, they should indicate the amount. These will count towards their next month's request.

Example scenario:

DV Agency serves approximately 4 survivors in the hotel program per month. The program has some ability to provide for survivors' essential expenses but not much. They want to provide all survivors with grocery store gift cards and laundry money. They estimate that half of the survivors will need gas money and half will be relying on public transit. They expect that one survivor will probably need a phone.

Some of these expenses are eligible for direct pay by ODVN and some are reimbursement only. This program could decide to apply for all funds through reimbursement for their own convenience OR they could decide to apply for a combination of reimbursement and direct pay if they don't want to spend as much money up front.

DV Agency decides to save their money and apply for a combination of direct pay and reimbursement for the month of May. They submit a request by April 20th for the direct pay needs. They send in the application form and request five Kroger gift cards for \$300 each and two \$50 Speedway gift cards, for a total of \$1,600.

The local program here decided to request a fifth Kroger gift card in case they have more need than they expect. They would rather have the gift card carry over into the next month than have to buy a gift card for reimbursement.

ODVN Hotel Program will process their application and send the contact person the gift cards via email by May 1st. We will also send a spreadsheet listing all of the gift cards. The contact person at DV Agency will disperse the gift cards internally as needed, within the limits specified in the program guidelines. You will not need to contact the hotel program to ask if a specific survivor can have a gift card.

On May 20th, they submit a direct pay request for June for more grocery store and gas station gift cards. They think they may end up with a gift card left over and they take this into account when making their June request.

DV Agency serves four survivors in the month of May. All survivors need food, all do their laundry at their hotels, three need gas money, and one takes the bus to work daily (this survivor's stay is extended to four weeks). One requires an Uber to get to and from court twice. One needs a prepaid phone to stay in contact with their advocate.

May Spending

By ODVN

\$1500 – 5 Kroger gift cards

\$100 – 2 Speedway gift cards

Total: \$1600 (this is the direct pay request)

By DV Agency

\$50 – 1 Circle K gift card

\$100 – 4 weekly bus passes

\$74.89 – 4 Uber rides

\$50 – 1 prepaid phone

\$50 – Laundry money

Total: \$324.89 (this is the reimbursement request)

The local program was close in its estimates of how much they would need for essential expenses. They got the number of survivors who would be in the hotel program, but not the number who would be using their own car compared to public transit. They have a leftover Kroger gift card.

The local program should keep track of all reimbursable purchases they make. This includes keeping receipts for the Ubers, the bus passes, the Circle K gift card, and the prepaid phone, as well as an invoice for the money distributed to survivors for laundry. They cannot be reimbursed for these expenses without a receipt.

DV Agency should also ask survivors to send them receipts from the grocery store and gas station.

By June 15th, DV Agency fills in the reimbursement spreadsheet provided by ODVN and the monthly application for the reimbursements. They attach all of their receipts to the application. The total reimbursed amount is \$324.89. They send all documents to hotelprogram@odvn.org.

On June 20th, they submit their application for July funding. With it, they attach the spreadsheet for direct pay spending from May (received from ODVN Hotel Program with gift cards) and all survivor receipts. They write which survivors were given which gift cards. They also indicate that they did not use one of the gift cards in May and what they did with the gift card (i.e., gave it to a survivor in June). They should send in the receipt from the survivor for that gift card, even though it is dated in June.

After the Hotel Program confirms that we have a record for each of the previously distributed gift cards, we will process your request for gift cards for July. If receipts are not received by the time the program ends, ODVN may ask local programs to pay back the gift cards.