



FAQ

Arkansas Direct Care and Non-Direct Care Worker Payment Program

On March 30, 2020, Governor Asa Hutchinson created the Arkansas Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Steering Committee by Executive Order 20-11. This steering committee will make recommendations to the Governor on the best uses of the \$1.25 billion in federal funding made available to the state. The funding is available under Section 601 of PL 116-136, the “Coronavirus Relief Fund” of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”).

On April 15, 2020, the Steering Committee approved a recommendation to spend up to \$80 million to make payments to three groups: (1) direct care workers in hospitals; (2) non-direct care workers in hospitals; and 3) and non-direct care workers in nursing facilities. The Department of Human Services (DHS) is overseeing this program.

You can find the guidance published by DHS for this program by clicking on the link below and scrolling down to “Hospital Direct and Non-Direct Care Payments.”

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/resources/response-covid-19/response-covid-19-providers-1>

Q1. Did Jefferson Regional develop the criteria to decide who is eligible?

A1. No. The criteria for determining the categories of Direct Care and Non-Direct Care, as well as who is ineligible, were developed by the Arkansas Department of Human Services. You can find the DHS criteria at the link above.

Q2. Who at Jefferson Regional was involved in carrying out this program?

A2. It was a collaborative effort between Human Resources, senior leadership, and department directors and managers, to group our staff into the appropriate category based on the DHS criteria.

Q3. Where can I find the instructions that were used for determining eligibility?

A3. You may find all of the guidance published by DHS at the link above.

Q4. What is considered direct or non-direct?

A4. Direct care workers are defined as those who regularly come in physical contact with the patient population. The guidance from DHS provides examples of who is included as well as examples of who are ineligible. Non-direct care workers are defined as those who work in locations in a hospital where direct care is provided. Again, the guidance from DHS provides examples of who falls into this category.

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- Q5. I work at one of Jefferson Regional's clinics in direct patient care. Are clinic employees eligible?
- A5. The DHS guidance says the payments are limited to staff members who are providing patient care to hospital inpatients or emergency room patients. Staff members who provide care only to outpatients, including clinic patients, are not eligible.
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- Q6. Will employees who worked from home be eligible?
- A6. No. Employees working at home are not in physical contact with patients and are not working in locations where direct care is provided.
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- Q7. Are travelers or contract staff members eligible?
- A7. Contract staff are eligible. At Jefferson Regional, this includes therapists employed by Kindred and Dietitians employed by Sodexo.
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- Q8. I worked on COVID-19 projects (in the command center or ordering supplies or other support) over the last 2 months. Wouldn't I be eligible for these payments?
- A8. Not necessarily. You must meet the definition of direct care or non-direct care to be eligible.
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- Q9. What if I have specific questions about my eligibility? Who do I ask?
- A9. You should ask your department director or manager first. Many of them participated in the process of determining who met the definition of direct care or non-direct care. If they cannot answer your question, then they will get assistance from their senior leader.
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- Q10. What time frame is being considered?
- A10. The program was approved for an eight-week period beginning April 5, 2020 and ending May 30, 2020.
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- Q11. What about employees that have been furloughed? For example, I was furloughed by 20% and used my PTO. Will these payments be based on worked hours or paid hours?
- A11. The DHS guidance specifically says worked hours are the basis for the payments.
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- Q12. Has Jefferson Regional submitted the necessary information to DHS to receive the funds for these payments?
- A12. Yes. Jefferson Regional has submitted the necessary information for the first five weeks of the program. We are currently preparing the information for weeks six and seven and expect to submit it within the next week.
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- Q13. Has Jefferson Regional received any funds related to the Direct Care Worker and Non-Direct Care Worker Payment Program?
- A13. Yes. We received the funds for the first five weeks on Wednesday, June 3, 2020.
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Q14. If we are eligible, when should we receive these payments?

A14. The payments for the first five weeks of the program will be included in employee paychecks on Friday, June 12, 2020. Payments for the remaining weeks will be made once those funds are received from DHS.

Q15. How will payments be distributed to eligible employees?

A15. These payments will be included with your routine bi-weekly paycheck.

Q16. Will taxes or any other deductions be taken out of these payment amounts?

A16. Yes. These payments are considered regular wages and are subject to routine income and payroll taxes. Also, if you defer a percentage of your income to the 401k plan, that deferral will also be deducted from these payments.

Q17. Is Senior Management included in the payments? Is anyone else excluded?

A17. No they are not included. The DHS guidance specifically says that "Administrative Staff" are ineligible. DHS defines "Administrative Staff" to include administrators, executives, and staff in functions such as finance, accounting, bookkeeping, payroll and human resources.

Q18. What about other members of management?

A18. If the director or manager provided direct care to patients, then they would be included. Most directors and managers fall into the definition of "Administrative Staff" and are ineligible.

Q19. Does the hospital receive any kind of money through the "Coronavirus Relief Fund" or CARES Act that benefits the hospital's financial statement?

A19. As of May 31, 2020, Jefferson Regional has received \$4.1 million in relief funding from the CARES Act, which roughly covers the losses incurred during the month of April. Of the \$2 trillion in funding included in the CARES Act, \$100 billion was designated specifically to help hospitals offset losses from decreased revenue and increased expenses due to the pandemic. Approximately \$30 billion of this fund have not yet been allocated and Jefferson Regional is making its case known in an effort to receive an appropriate share of those funds.
