

# Mississippi Animal Disaster Relief Fund Guidelines

## I. Background

The Mississippi Animal Disaster Relief Fund (MADRF) was established by the Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH), the Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) and the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine (MSU-CVM) to provide a mechanism by which monetary donations could be received and disbursements made following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Following this event, the fund was utilized to provide care to animals and to support reestablishment of animal care within the local community.

The MADRF has been transitioned to a permanent fund that can provide assistance to Mississippians and their animals affected by any disaster in the state. Financial donations have been made through the generosity of private citizens and businesses, designated for the care of animals and support of communities in Mississippi affected by disaster events. The following guidelines provide application, management, and distribution information for this fund.

## II. Purpose of Fund

The purpose of the MADRF is to provide assistance to Mississippians during recovery from disasters affecting domesticated animals, as well as support efforts to mitigate, prevent, and protect animal health and welfare in disasters. This includes activities such as reimbursement for out-of-pocket animal care and veterinary costs, distribution of vouchers for immediate veterinary care, support of local veterinary business continuity, preparation for animal care and sheltering, stockpiling supplies, providing for emergency hay and feed needs, and training emergency responders.

## III. Application for Funds

Any individual Mississippi resident who has incurred expenses for animal care related to a man-made or natural disaster, such as a hurricane, tornado, fire, flood, etc., may apply. Groups such as animal shelters, veterinary clinics, and farm entities may also apply; however, individuals from within these groups may not submit additional requests. Veterinary clinics are encouraged to contact the American Veterinary Medical Foundation ([www.AVMF.org](http://www.AVMF.org)) for reimbursement of the emergency medical care of animal victims of a disaster rather than submitting applications on behalf of their clients. Veterinary clinics are also encouraged to provide their clients with MADRF application forms as needed.

Supporting agencies under the Mississippi Emergency Support Function (ESF) 11: Animals, Agriculture, and Natural Resources may apply for monies to prepare for and respond to the care, health, and welfare of animals in disaster situations per their responsibilities in the state response plan.

- Unless specifically designated by the donor, funds may not be used for loss of income, wages, or salaries. Overhead costs, equipment usage fees, permanent building structures and taxes are also not reimbursable.
- Reimbursements for boarding of animals following disaster situations are limited to a maximum length of 1 week per animal. Reimbursements are also limited to 4 animals per client per day unless extenuating circumstances apply. Boarding costs are limited to a maximum of \$10/day for cats and \$15/day for dogs.
- Additional excluded expenses for companion animals include: heartworm testing, heartworm treatment, elective surgeries (spays, neuters).
- Emergency feed and shelter for livestock may be reimbursed for a maximum length of 2 weeks.
- Application forms must be accompanied by receipts and/or any other documentation verifying the applicant's needs and expenses, such as medical records, photographs, and documentation of damage and/or reconstruction of facilities.
- Applicants are required to sign a statement on the application form stating that funds are not requested for losses or additional expenses that may be covered under insurance or other means.

Completed applications should be sent to the MVMA no later than 12 months following the disaster. Applications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and any extenuating circumstances will be considered by the MADRF Board of Directors. All personal and financial information contained within the application will be held confidential. Additional documentation may be requested by the Board based on the disaster event and may include interviews or site assessments performed by the members of the Mississippi Animal Response Team. Groups applying under ESF-11 preparedness activities are encouraged to consult with and provide letters of support from their local or state emergency management collaborators and/or the primary ESF-11 coordinating agency.

Application forms will be available on the following websites:

- Mississippi Board of Animal Health [www.mbah.state.ms.us](http://www.mbah.state.ms.us)
- MSU-College of Veterinary Medicine [www.cvm.msstate.edu](http://www.cvm.msstate.edu)
- Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association [www.msvet.org](http://www.msvet.org)

#### **IV. Fund Management**

The MADRF is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization. The funds are managed by a MADRF Board of Directors. The number of Directors who compose the Board of the corporation shall be no less than four (4) and no more than ten (10), including the State Veterinarian, a representative of the Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) disaster committee, a representative of the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine (MSU CVM) disaster response committee, and the Executive Director of the MVMA. In addition, representatives from private/non-governmental entities representing small animals, livestock, and equine will be seated on the Board as deemed necessary. Each officer shall hold office for three (3) years or until his successor shall have been duly elected and qualified. The Executive Secretary of the MVMA is retained as a non-voting member of the Board and will serve as the Treasurer for the MADRF. At-large representatives are chosen by the MBAH, MVMA, and MSU-CVM members

every three years at staggering terms. Funds will not be disbursed without the consent of the MADRF Board president, who will be elected by the MADRF Board every three years. A complete list of the current Board of Directors and their responsibilities is available through the Executive Secretary of the MVMA.

## **V. Donations**

Any monetary donations made to the state of Mississippi on behalf of animals in disasters, or fundraising proceeds performed on behalf of Mississippi animal disaster relief will be allocated to the MADRF unless otherwise specified.

Donations can be made to the fund by sending a check to:

Mississippi Animal Disaster Relief Fund  
c/o The Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association  
PO Box 395  
Clinton, MS 39060

Funds may be earmarked for particular response activities or for a specific species (eg, horses, cats, dogs, veterinarians, shelters). Any funds not specifically earmarked may be disbursed at the discretion of the Board of Directors under the MADRF guidelines.

## **VI. Distribution of Funds**

Completed applications for funding will be distributed to MADRF Board by the Board president and reviewed within 14 days. A written response will be provided by the MADRF Board president to the applicant as soon as possible after completion of the review and no longer than 30 days after receipt of the application by MVMA. Final approval will be made by the State Veterinarian and the Board president. The Board president will be responsible for notifying the Executive Secretary of the MVMA and the applicant of the decision.

Unless extenuating circumstances have occurred, the MADRF operates on a reimbursement basis. Under emergency conditions, “conditional approval” may also be made until documentation can be reviewed. Conditional approval allows funds to be released quickly by approval by at least 50% of the Board members, which must include either the State Veterinarian or the Board president.

Boarding vouchers may be issued by the MADRF to boarding kennels and veterinarians to more efficiently assist their clients.

Applicants receiving funds will be required to prepare a brief update for the MADRF Board of Directors within 6 months, or in reasonable time to be presented at the next scheduled MADRF meeting. Funded applicants may also be asked to provide personal testimonials that can be used for MADRF promotion.

## **VII. Contact Information**

Further application information can be obtained by contacting the following:

Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association  
Mrs. DeAnna Dillard, Executive Director  
PO Box 395  
Clinton, MS 39060  
Phone: 662-323-5057

Mississippi Board of Animal Health  
Dr. Jim Watson, State Veterinarian  
P.O. Box 3889  
121 N. Jefferson St.  
Jackson, MS 39207  
Phone: 601-359-1170

Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine  
Dr. Carla Huston, MADRF Board president  
PO Box 6100  
Mississippi State, MS 39762  
Phone: 662-325-1183