

## **Grant making Guidelines**

The South Carolina State Firefighters' Foundation (the "Foundation") is a Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Consistent with its charitable mission, the Foundation makes grants to provide assistance to firefighters and their families when they are in need. The following are the Foundation's guidelines for making such grants, consistent with applicable law:

### **Who is eligible?**

1. The following class of persons are our "Fire Family" and are eligible to receive grants:
  - **Firefighters:** Active and retired firefighters and fire department staff and volunteers serving in any jurisdiction within South Carolina. Member must be a current member in good standing in the South Carolina State Firefighters Association.
  - **Firefighter Families:** The immediate family members of the firefighters described above, or of an deceased firefighter, fire department staff, or volunteer who served in any jurisdiction within South Carolina and was a member in good standing in the South Carolina State Firefighters Association at the time of death, including their:
    - Spouses or domestic partners,
    - Children (including step-children), parents, grandparents, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and siblings, and their spouses or domestic partners.

### **What are grants used for?**

1. Grants are awarded to help individuals who experience tragedy or hardship due to circumstances beyond their control and demonstrate a financial or otherwise immediate need. Examples are a natural disaster, a fire at their home, a medical emergency, an act of terrorism or other personal tragedy or hardship.
2. An individual does not have to be destitute to qualify for a grant, but must be able to demonstrate a financial or otherwise immediate need. However, grants cannot be made to individuals merely because they are the victim of a disaster or personal tragedy. Grants will not be made based on hardship due to personal financial decisions.

### **How are recipients selected?**

1. All grants are awarded based on an objective and non-discriminatory determination that the recipient is financially needy or otherwise distressed and in need.
2. Whether a grant is approved, and the amount of the grant that will be approved, will depend on the individual's needs and resources and any other relevant facts of the particular situation.
3. The support required for a grant application will depend on the particular circumstances and the amount of the grant requested.

4. As a general rule, an individual's financial means are less relevant in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. For example, immediately following a devastating fire, a family may be in need of food, clothing, and shelter, regardless of their financial resources. However, as time goes on, they may have adequate resources (such as savings, insurance or other sources of support) upon which to rely. Therefore, making grants in the longer term typically requires greater demonstration of financial need.

### **Examples**

The following are examples of the types of assistance that the Foundation may provide:

1. Payments for permanent or temporary primary housing and/or necessary repairs in excess of insurance coverage or incurred during a waiting period (incl. rent, mortgage, security deposit).
2. Payments for permanent or temporary primary transportation and/or repairs in excess of insurance coverage, or incurred during a waiting period; or any costs incurred as a result of necessary transportation to/from medical appointments related to the disaster or hardship (incl. train, bus, or airfare costs).
3. Payments for medical or mental health expenses not otherwise covered by other insurance, such as alternative medicine treatments, chiropractic and acupuncture services, mental health counseling and outpatient addiction recovery services.
4. Payments for basic expenses such as utilities, food, clothing, basic communication tools such as cell phone and basic data plan.
5. Payments related to the acquisition and registration of an emotional or physical support animal.
6. Payments related to childcare for young children or to enable a surviving spouse with young children to remain at home with the children.
7. Payments for funeral costs and related travel expenses for immediate family members.

### **How much are grants?**

1. Amounts per grant: Minimum of \$250 and maximum of \$1,500.
2. An individual may receive more than one grant. Each grant request will be evaluated separately. The Foundation will determine whether to award multiple grants based on all relevant factors, including the individual's need and particular circumstances, the total amount of funds that the Foundation has available for grants, and the amount and needs of other applicants.

### **How do I apply?**

1. All grant requests must be submitted in writing or electronically on the Foundation's standard application form, which may change from time to time.
2. Applications may be submitted by persons other than the recipient, if the person submitting the application has accurate and appropriate knowledge about the recipient (e.g., by a Fire Department on behalf of one of its firefighters), if determined by the Foundation, in its sole discretion, to be appropriate under the circumstances.
3. Application must include a letter from the local fire chief stating what local assistance has been provided to the member and their understanding of the hardship.

### **What is the grant approval process?**

1. The Foundation strives to review grants within 30 days.
2. The Foundation has the sole and absolute discretion as to whether or not to make any particular grant. Qualified applicants are not guaranteed to receive a grant.
3. Applications are reviewed and decided on by the Foundation's Board of Trustees.
4. In determining whether to award a grant and the amount of the grant, the Foundation's Board of Trustees considers the total amount of funds that the Foundation has available for grants at that time and the particular needs of all applicants.
5. The Foundation may require additional documentation or verification of information provided in the initial application in order to make a grant, as the Foundation determines to be appropriate under the circumstances.
6. All documentation requirements determined to be necessary or appropriate under the circumstances must be met before a grant will be paid. Applicants should remove all sensitive information (e.g., social security numbers) prior to submitting any documentation to the Foundation. The Foundation will take all reasonable efforts to protect against the disclosure of sensitive information, but is not responsible for the unintentional disclosure caused by an applicant's failure to properly redact or remove such information.
7. The Foundation's decision of whether to make a grant is final and not subject to review.

### **Are there any requirements after a grant is made?**

1. Grant funds must only be used for the purposes, over the timeframe, and in the manner defined by the Foundation. After a grant has been made, the Foundation may require confirmation or documentation that the grant funds were in fact used for the intended purposes (e.g., receipts). The Foundation may impose specific requirements for when such confirmation or documentation may be received (e.g., within 30 or 60 days).

2. Grant funds must be returned if they are not used for the intended purposes (or for another use approved by the Foundation, if circumstances have changed after the grant is paid). The grant recipient must inform the Foundation immediately if grant funds are not used for the intended purposes.

### **FFF's Policies & Procedures**

1. **Payment**: Whenever possible, grants will be paid directly to third parties to pay for specific expenses incurred, rather than to individuals or families directly. The Foundation does not provide funds to Go-Fund Me or any other similar fundraising pages.
2. **Documentation**: The Foundation is required to maintain adequate records to show that the grants it makes are consistent with federal tax law requirements given the Foundation's status as a Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization. The Foundation will maintain the following internal documentation for each grant:
  - Amount
  - Name and address of the recipient
  - Purpose of the grant
  - The criteria used to determine the recipient's need for the grant
  - Any relationship between the grant recipient and officers, directors, key employees or substantial contributors to the Foundation (and how a conflict of interest, if any, was managed)
  - Application form and any additional documentation provided to qualify for the grant or to confirm that grant funds were used for the intended purposes
3. **Confidentiality/privacy**: The Foundation will take appropriate steps to protect the personal information and confidentiality of applicants and grantees, in accordance with applicable law.
4. **The Foundation's policies and procedures**: The Foundation will administer Funds consistently with the Foundation's other policies and procedures (including without limitation, the Foundation's Conflict of Interest Policy).
5. **Conflicts of interest**: In the event of a family or business relationship between the potential recipient of a grant and an the Foundation Board member, staff or committee member or any other person involved in the grant review process, the conflict of interest will be handled appropriately (including that conflicted individuals must recuse themselves from the grant making process).
6. **Source of funds**: Funds for grants may be provided by the Foundation's Board of Trustees from its existing assets. The Foundation may also fundraise. The Foundation's Board of

Trustees will determine, in its sole discretion, the amount of funds that will be available for grants.

7. Earmarking prohibited: The Foundation will, and is legally required to, retain full control and discretion over all charitable donations that it receives. Donors may not earmark or require contributions to go to a particular individual or family. Any fundraising conducted by the Foundation will not state or imply otherwise. Nonetheless, donors may restrict their contributions for use for specific types of grants (for example, for families of firefighters who died or were disabled in the line of duty).
8. Tax consequences: Individuals receiving grants from a charity to serve a charitable purpose are often not subject to tax on the assistance that they receive. However, the Foundation will not provide any personal tax advice to grant recipients. Rather, they should consult their personal tax advisors for any needed tax advice.
9. Other grant making: For clarity, these guidelines do not restrict the Foundation from making charitable grants and providing that is outside the scope of these guidelines but consistent with the Foundation's Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.
10. Periodic review: These guidelines and the grant application form will be reviewed periodically by the Foundation's Board of Trustees to ensure compliance with changes to the law and best practices for charities.
11. How to Submit: All applications and statistic forms should be emailed to [foundation@scfirefighters.org](mailto:foundation@scfirefighters.org) or mailed to the association office.

South Carolina State Firefighters Association

Attn: Foundation Application

PO Box 211725

Columbia, SC 29211