



**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA
EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND POLICY
Approved 08.07.2019**

The University of Nebraska Emergency Assistance Fund (the “Fund”) was established to help currently enrolled students and employees who are in crisis because of natural disasters, home displacement, food insecurity, or other emergencies.

1. **Committee.** The Fund shall be administered by a Committee consisting of five (5) members as follows:
 - a. A representative recommended by the UNL Chancellor;
 - b. A representative recommended by the UNMC Chancellor;
 - c. A representative recommended by the UNO Chancellor;
 - d. A representative recommended by the UNK Chancellor; and,
 - e. A representative, who will serve as Chair of the Committee, appointed by the President.
 - f. A representative from the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel may provide confidential and privileged legal advice as an *ex-officio*, non-voting member of the Committee.

2. **Committee Meetings.**
 - a. Meetings shall be scheduled by the Chair, and held on an as-needed basis.
 - b. Minutes and records of attendance shall be maintained for all meetings.
 - c. A quorum of the Committee shall be three (3) appointed members.
 - d. In general, meetings should not occur without at least twenty four (24) hours of notice.

3. **Conflicts of Interest.** Any member of the Committee who has applied for financial assistance, or who otherwise knows he or she has a conflict of interest due to family or business associations shall refrain from voting on such matter(s). In the event that the Chair becomes aware of a conflict of interest, the Chair shall communicate the same to the member without violating the anonymity of the process, to the extent possible.

4. **Records Management.** The Chair must maintain adequate records to report that payments further the Fund’s charitable purposes and that the persons served are needy or distressed in the manner described in this Policy. Generally, documentation should include:
 - a. A complete description of the assistance provided;
 - b. The purpose for which the financial assistance was given;
 - c. The objective criteria for disbursing financial assistance to each recipient;
 - d. The name, address, and amount distributed to each recipient; and,
 - e. Any conflict of interest or relationship between a recipient and committee members.
5. **Eligibility for Financial Assistance.** Persons eligible for financial assistance shall be:
 - a. Active, permanent employees of the University—either faculty or staff—who are classified as regular full-time or regular part-time; or,
 - b. Currently enrolled students.
6. **Application and Review Process.**
 - a. Applicants seeking assistance should complete the application form online at <https://nebraska.edu/flood-assistance/affected>.
 - b. The Committee may request additional information or documentation from the applicant before making a decision. To maintain anonymity, such requests will be communicated by the Chair.
 - i. When the Committee requests additional information, the applicant has two (2) weeks from the date of the request to provide the additional information or explain why the information cannot be provided.
 - ii. If the applicant does not provide the requested information within two weeks, the application will be considered closed.
7. **Qualifying Event or Emergency.** Applicants applying for assistance from the Fund must have a documented hardship, event, or emergency situation that has caused a financial hardship. This event or emergency must be: (i) an occurrence of any event or combination of circumstances or events that call for immediate action, or (ii) any pressing need following a sudden and unexpected happening, the occurrence of which was wholly unforeseen by the applicant and beyond the applicant’s control.

- a. Examples of emergency situations that could be considered as a basis for assistance include, but are not limited to: (i) natural disaster such as hurricane, flood, tornado, etc. resulting in destruction of the primary residence (rental properties are excluded) or displacement of primary residence; (ii) death in immediate family (spouse, parent, child) if accompanied by other hardships; or (iii) life-altering accidents.
- b. For natural disasters, assistance will be provided to applicants in a *Qualified Disaster Area** as declared by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- c. Common life occurrences such as routine car and home repairs, car and home maintenance, legal fees, monthly bills, animal care, and living beyond one's means are not qualifying events for which an award from the Fund will be made. Also, financial hardships caused by garnishments and loans do not qualify for assistance.

8. Guidance for Providing Financial Assistance.

- a. Financial assistance is not intended to replace all losses or to reimburse the cost of nonessential, luxury, or decorative items or services.
- b. Financial assistance should be measured solely by need or distress.
- c. All financial assistance shall be distributed in compliance with the University's nondiscrimination policy.

9. Committee Review and Decision.

- a. Applications will be presented for Committee review in such a manner that the identity of the applicant is not known to the Committee. Circumstances may occur in which an anonymous review is impossible or impractical, in which case the identity of the applicant may be revealed to the Committee.
- b. The Committee will award financial assistance by a majority vote of all appointed members of the Committee (at least three (3) appointed members must approve in all cases). Committee decisions are final, and no appeals process is available.
- c. Financial assistance shall be based on an objective review of the applicant's need or distress caused by the qualifying event or emergency.
- d. The financial assistance awarded may not exceed the following monetary limits:
 - i. No more than \$1,000 may be awarded to a student or employee during any twelve (12) month period.
 - ii. No more than \$2,500 may be awarded to a student or employee during his/her employment or enrollment at the University.

10. **Notification and Payment of Financial Assistance.**

- a. For employee applicants, payment will be made directly by the University of Nebraska Foundation.
- b. For student applicants, payment will be made through the Scholarships and Financial Aid office in accordance with applicable federal, state, and institutional financial aid rules and regulations.
- c. Neither the Committee, Chair, nor other University personnel will provide financial assistance recipients with individual tax advice. Award recipients will be issued appropriate tax documentation, if applicable.

* For the March 2019 Severe Winter Storm and Flooding, the following counties were declared *Qualified Disaster Areas*: Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Buffalo, Burt, Butler, Cass, Colfax, Cuming, Custer, Dodge, Douglas, Hall, Holt, Howard, Knox, Madison, Nance, Nemaha, Pierce, Platte, Richardson, Saline, Santee Indian Reservation, Sarpy, Saunders, Stanton, Thurston, Washington