

# **AEF Frequently Asked Questions**

## **What is the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF)?**

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund is a national grant initiative available to eligible ALA members who have endured a significant financial setback because of a natural disaster or other personal crisis. Grants are awarded up to \$3,000.

## **How is AEF funded?**

The AEF, established in 1969, is a legacy gift from Helen Colby Small of Burlington, Wisc. Funding for the awarding of AEF grants today comes from generous contributions made by ALA entities, ALA members, and donors throughout the United States.

## **What are the qualifications to apply for disaster assistance?**

The applicant must be an American Legion Auxiliary member who has maintained annual ALA membership for three consecutive years (the current year applied and immediate past two years). Applications for disaster assistance must be received within six months of a disaster event. One grant (disaster or hardship) per grantee will be awarded within a 12-month period.

## **What types of expenses qualify for disaster assistance?**

AEF disaster assistance funds may be used to provide emergency assistance to eligible Auxiliary members whose primary residence has been devastated by disaster, including flood, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, fire, or other severe weather. Funds may be awarded for interior/exterior structure damage to the vital livable portions of the primary structure, personal items, household contents, major appliances, furniture, and HVAC units with photos provided as documentation. Reimbursable expenses with itemized receipts as documentation related to essential emergency expenses for temporary shelter, temporary structure repairs, purchase of alternative power sources and/or purchase/replacement of groceries incurred due to or being displaced after the disaster will be accepted. Only applicable receipts dated the day of the disaster and after the disaster up to a three-week time limit may be considered for funding. Assistance will not be granted for damages to a secondary or seasonal residence.

## **What expenses are not applicable for disaster assistance?**

AEF disaster assistance funds will not be administered for damage to landscaping, fencing, accessory structures (pools, pool cages, patios, sunrooms, screened enclosures, lanais, decks, ramps, docks, boat garage, sheds, detached garages, and similar nonvital portions of the primary structure), and individual personal electronics. Any expense that occurred before the disaster event or exceeds the three-week time limit will not be accepted.

## **Is any additional documentation required for disaster assistance?**

Since onsite visits are not part of the AEF program, providing as much information as possible regarding damages/losses/expenses in which you wish to be evaluated is vital. Information such as photos (cause/effect, loss, external/internal/content damage), itemized receipt(s), estimates, proof of primary residence, current driver's license, and/or other documentation are helpful to the AEF Review Committee to properly review and consider your application. The committee will evaluate your application based on the information, photos, and documentation provided by the applicant.

**What are the qualifications to apply for hardship assistance?**

The applicant must be an American Legion Auxiliary member. Applicant must have maintained ALA membership for three consecutive years (the current year applied and immediate past two years). One grant (hardship or disaster) per grantee in a 12-month period will be awarded. Applicant must provide qualifying, eligible documentation for the AEF Review Committee to review and consider for funding.

**What types of expenses qualify for hardship assistance?**

AEF hardship assistance will consider funding only for past/overdue expenses related to residing in your primary shelter, basic household utility expenses, and/or loss of income due to medical and/or employment reasons within the last six months.

**What expenses are not applicable for hardship assistance?**

Funds requested through AEF related to the payment of medical-related expenses, taxes, general loans, insurances, credit cards, cellular/TV services, animal care, car purchase/payments, and/or home/vehicle maintenance/repairs are not applicable for review or funding consideration.

**Is any additional documentation required for hardship assistance?**

Information such as copies of basic household utility bill(s)/invoice(s) pages (most current billing cycle), mortgage statement, landlord documentation (note or statement from landlord on status of rent payment and/or amount overdue), medical/employer documentation related to loss of income, and other related documentation is helpful to the AEF Review Committee to fully review and consider your application. All basic household utility bills, invoices, mortgage/rent statements and/or documentation should be in the name of the ALA member and/or their spouse. The committee is only able to evaluate the applicant's application based on the information provided.

**Where are the AEF applications located?**

The applications can be found on the ALA website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF). The applications on the National Organization's website are the only applications accepted for processing. Applications formerly available through ALA departments and units are no longer applicable.

**Does my ALA unit have to approve my AEF application prior to submission?**

No. In the past, this was the procedure, but it is no longer required. All eligible ALA members can complete the applicable AEF application from [www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF), provide the required documentation, and submit it directly to [AEF@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:AEF@ALAforVeterans.org).

**Is my personal information listed on the application kept confidential?**

Absolutely. That is the reason for changing the process for ALA applicants to apply directly to the National Organization for AEF assistance. The information provided remains confidential among only ALA National Headquarters staff required to process your application and the AEF Review Committee. In the event another individual needs to be involved in any manner related to your case/situation, you are informed in advance and must provide authorization for us to contact or share information regarding your application or situation.

**Can someone submit an AEF application on my behalf?**

Yes, if necessary. However, no individual or ALA entity may apply on behalf of another ALA member without their knowledge, consent, and/or approval.

**How do I submit my AEF application and required supportive documentation?**

The completed AEF application and required supportive documentation in which funding is sought should be sent by email to [AEF@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:AEF@ALAforVeterans.org). When emailing multiple documents, please send each one as an individual attachment, such as a PDF, and include all pages of each document in the attachment. Application can also be mailed to American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, ATTN: AEF, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

**Once my AEF application is submitted to the National Organization, how will I receive updates on the status of my application?**

All correspondence regarding your AEF application will be via email. Be sure to check your spam and junk email folders and mark [AEF@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:AEF@ALAforVeterans.org) as a safe sender.

**How often does the committee review AEF applications for funding consideration?**

The AEF Review Committee meets weekly to review submitted, complete applications containing all of the necessary documentation for funding consideration. All applications scheduled for review by the committee weekly must be received by Monday and include all of the necessary documentation for the committee to review later in the week. Applications received after Monday, incomplete applications, or should additional documentation be needed from the applicant, may experience delays due to requesting more information from the applicant.

Under normal circumstances, submitted and complete applications containing all of the necessary information and proper documentation can receive a decision from the committee in approximately 14 business days. Submitted AEF applications lacking information or documentation will extend this timeline.

**When the AEF Review Committee reviews my application, what type of funding decisions are made?**

The decisions of the AEF Review Committee may be the following: grant awarded, grant deferral, or grant denial. For a grant award, the applicant will be awarded a specific amount of funding based on the applicable documentation provided by the applicant. For a grant deferral, the information provided with the application is insufficient and the AEF Review Committee needs additional information to make a final decision on the application. If a deferral is granted, the applicant will be contacted to provide more specific information within an allotted time limit for the committee to consider for funding at a future meeting. For a grant denial, the applicant's request was fully denied for any amount of funding and the reason will be outlined in the grant denial correspondence back to the applicant.

**If my AEF application is approved, how is my payment processed and when will I receive it?**

If your awarded funding is in your name, which often happens with AEF disaster applications, you have a choice to receive an electronic fund transfer (EFT) or request paper check issued. If EFT is preferred, you must include with your application a copy/image of a voided check from your bank where the funds are to be deposited. If a paper check is preferred, it is processed for payment by the ALA within 10 days and mailed via USPS. Please allow several days for the check to be delivered

to your specified address by standard mail. If a voided check is not provided with your application, a paper check will be issued for your funding award.

If awarded funding for temporary assistance to pay for shelter and/or utilities, only a paper check will be issued and in the name of the company being paid. These paper check(s) will be processed for payment by the ALA within 10 business days and mailed via USPS to your home address specified on the AEF application. Upon the applicant receiving the check(s), the applicant is responsible for either dropping off or sending the payment to the designated payee to complete the payment to the company.

**If my application is denied for funding, am I able to apply for assistance again in the future?**

Funding denial by the AEF Review Committee of a completed and reviewed application does not prohibit the applicant from submitting a different application (disaster or hardship assistance) in the future as long as the applicant meets eligibility guidelines.

**Once a decision is rendered by the AEF Review Committee on my application, is there an appeal process of the decision for the applicant?**

No. All decisions by the AEF Review Committee are final.

**How do I find AEF resources?**

Website: [www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF). Mailing address: American Legion Auxiliary, ATTN: AEF Program, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268. Phone: (317) 569-4500. Fax: (317) 569-4502. Email: [AEF@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:AEF@ALAforVeterans.org).

**As an ALA member, if I have been a donor to the AEF program in the past, can I still apply for funding assistance from AEF?**

Yes. There is no rule that says you cannot receive funds if you previously contributed to the AEF.

**If I am a recipient of funding through the AEF program, what can I do as a recipient to help the ALA and other ALA members?**

As a recipient of AEF funding, sharing your story of how the AEF program assisted you during challenging times is vital to the program. Sharing your story creates awareness to ALA members on applying when they are in need of assistance and helps to secure donations to keep the AEF strong for ALA members in the future. If awarded funding, the grant award email sent will include a media release form to share your story. The form allows various options on how your story will be shared and an opportunity on how your name may be listed or not listed pertaining to your story.

**How can I help the AEF program?**

Learn more about the AEF program by visiting [www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/AEF).

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When disaster strikes or an ALA member is experiencing a personal crisis, please make them aware of the AEF program. Get creative and start a fundraiser initiated by your ALA entity involving American Legion Family members, the public, and your community with donations specifically benefiting the AEF program.

Ways to donate:

- Online: one-time donation or monthly donations — [www.ALForVeterans.org/donate](http://www.ALForVeterans.org/donate).
- Text to give: text: AEF to 1-844-940-3450 and click on the giving link to complete the donation form.
- Mail: American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, ATTN: Development Division, 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.
- AEF donations made by ALA members: Did you know? When you donate \$100 directly to ALA National Headquarters within the ALA fiscal year (October – September), the donating member will receive by mail a beautiful *Members Helping Members* gold pin. AEF pins are sent quarterly from ALA National Headquarters to the member's home address once a qualifying donation is made.