Hardship Fund Criteria
September 8, 2022

The Regional Hardship Committee makes decisions on a case by case basis, based on equitable access, need and available funds. Funding is provided through the OPSEU/SEFPO annual budget, and decisions are based on a list of established criteria. Fund distribution is calculated based on specific, immediate and urgent need. No more than $3000 may be provided to any one applicant at one time.

Note that applications are made in dire financial situations, and committee review must be undertaken with compassion and sensitivity.

All submitted application documents must be stored in a safe place, and personal information must be held in strict confidence. Committee members are responsible for following privacy guidelines:

- Hardship Committees should shred all sensitive documents provided by applicants as soon as a decision regarding funding has been made. Documents can be disposed of safely at the Regional Offices.
- Sensitive digital documents should be deleted from all committee member devices once a decision has been made regarding an applicant's funding.
- A single document for tracking who has received funds should be kept in a safe place, and should include only the following information: first and last name, local, amount received, date of cheque, cheque number.

Once a Regional Hardship Committee has depleted their available funds for the year, they may petition their Regional Vice-President for assistance with additional funds. They may also hold fundraising events for their regional Hardship Committee.

Committee members may refer applicants to external services for additional assistance such as credit counselling, Ontario Works, ODSP and services specific to their community.

The following additional documentation may be requested to support a hardship fund application

Proof of family income, including spousal/partner income, child support/alimony
Rental lease agreement
Bank statements including all accounts

Hardship Funds are limited, and are intended as a short term solution for temporary need. The following are not in keeping with the funds mandate.

Notices of arrears including for credit cards, student loans, bank loans
Ongoing need for income replacement
Applicants who are currently receiving strike income

Applicants who have already received funds in the current fiscal year NOTE: This may be reconsidered by the committee, based on urgent need.

Suggested documents for proof of need:
All issues immediately affecting housing, including eviction notice, rent in arrears, mortgage in arrears, house fire
Utility overdue payment notice
Childcare payment notice
Health care costs not covered by insurance
Costs related to staying away from home for medical treatments
Note: Under certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the Hardship Committee to make a payment directly to an applicant’s landlord or utility company.