

COVID-19 Relief Scholarship

Selection Guidance

The Selection Committee

In the interest of offering privacy for members on a delicate matter, it is highly encouraged the chapter designate a selection committee to review each member submission. This may be the executive committee or an assortment of the membership having volunteered for the role. It is always welcomed to include advisors should the chapter wish for additional guidance, but not required.

Once organized, the selection committee should review all cases for need submitted by members. They may NOT request any financial or tax documents. The job of the committee is to review the case for need submitted by the member and to uphold privacy for the member. It is at the member's discretion to provide specifics like financial figures when working with the selection committee. Further, it should not be a deterrent if a member does not submit these numbers, nor should it be a leg-up when considering multiple members.

When considering the recipient(s) for a relief scholarship, there are a few key components that may help a selection committee determine the member(s) that could best benefit from the financial aid.

Cost of Attendance (COA) – Expected Family Contribution (EFC) = Financial Need

Undergraduates across North America attend college with varying degrees of financial support from their families. Need-based aid is financial aid that is received if you have financial need and meet other eligibility criteria. This is often determined based on the cost of attendance (COA) at the institution minus the expected family contribution (EFC). When considering this, what amount of financial need is left over that will not be covered by scholarships (expected to be paid out of pocket).

Financial Aid Office Recommendations (Low, Medium or High Need?)

While students are protected from having sensitive information disclosed without their consent by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the chapter may wish to solicit general guidance from the campus' financial aid office. With proper notice and provision of the students seeking the relief scholarship, the selection committee could reach out to the office to solicit if students are low, medium or high need. This is helpful information when considering the total package of support the member(s) may be receiving.

Note: Pursuing this may not result in an answer from the office. Each campus has their own policies and adherence to FERPA, which may deem a request of a ranged low, medium or high need as a potential violation of the student. In addition, seeking these recommendations may not be timely when considering the disbursement of funds. If the office agrees to offer insight but is slow to respond with information, then be ready to move on and forgo inclusion of these recommendations in the consideration process.

Household Income vs. Dependents (Single-Provider Household?)

If the members you're considering receive financial support from their family, it may be important to understand what ability the parents have to contribute to the student, while also supporting other dependents in the household. Further, is the household privileged to be supported by two parents with income or is the household a single-parent household, or even more non-traditional? Providing specific financial information may not be the best approach as that is extremely personal, so perhaps asking students to describe their need in narrative form is a better approach.

Employment Status (Unemployed?)

As the world grapples with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, many have been furloughed and unemployed. Has there been any sudden change to employment for the member? Have the member's parents been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? As your fellow brothers and their families may be grappling in this area, it's important to reflect on how this aid may reduce the impact of missing income at such a critical time.

Membership Costs (Previous TIA-Financial?)

Each chapter/colony has their own budget with financial components that may make experiences affordable for its members, but certainly competitive with its peer groups. However, the General Fraternity recognizes that members may fall on financial hardships periodically. To prepare for this, each chapter/colony is allotted three Temporarily Inactive – Financial statuses (TIA-Financial) to use each semester. This status change allows for the chapter (and by extension, member) to be discounted the membership costs and General Fraternity fees for that member. Only three members may be moved to this status each semester.

A member that may have used this in the past is likely one that could be adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Relief Questionnaire

A brief self-assessment of financial need

Pre-Qualification

Please answer the following questions to help determine if you should be considered for a financial relief scholarship.

1. I have exhausted all other available resources, including family support.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. I have critical need(s) in one or more of the four areas of: food, shelter, medical needs, and/or employment-critical transportation.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. I understand I may be asked to explain my financial health to the selection committee.*
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

**An explanation of financial health is to help the chapter's designated selection committee better understand why you're seeking need-based relief. You are NOT expected to provide any financial or tax documents, only to provide a summary overview of your financial health. It is at your discretion to provide specifics like financial figures when working with the selection committee.*

If you answered "Yes" to all the questions above, please continue to the questions below to help you collect your thoughts and prepare a case for support for the chapter's designated selection committee.

If you answered "No" to any of the questions above, you may continue to the next section to help you better assess what your case for support may be. However, you may wish to consider if there are other options available to you before seeking this need-based support.

Reflection Questions

1. Do ANY of these apply to my current financial situation?
 - a. I recently lost my job and/or source of income.
 - b. I am having trouble obtaining enough food for myself and/or my family.
 - c. I have been required to relocate and do not have the resources to do so.
 - d. I do not have a permanent place to stay.
 - e. I was recently in an accident and/or have unforeseen medical expenses.
 - f. I am currently in an unsafe living situation.
 - g. Other.
 - h. None of these apply to my current situation (please explain below).
2. Are ANY of these resources currently available to me?
 - a. Income from a job
 - b. Income from other sources (i.e. stipend)
 - c. Financial assistance from family or friends that does not need to be repaid
 - d. Loans from family or friends that are expected to be repaid

- e. Temporary place to stay with family or friends
- f. Financial aid, grant assistance, or scholarships
- g. Public benefits (i.e. Social Security, Disability, SNAP, WIC, TANF)
- h. Veteran benefits (self or from spouse or parent/guardian)
- i. I do not have access to any of these resources.

Narrative

This narrative is the only thing you are expected to turn into the selection committee. The narrative will be your application. To help the chapter's designated selection committee, collect your thoughts and put into your own words why you are requesting emergency relief funds. Consider your answers above while doing so.

Note: After you've completed this questionnaire, you are welcomed (but not required) to include it as a complement with your case for support submitted to your chapter's selection committee. As a reminder, you are NOT expected to provide any financial or tax documents, only to provide an explanation to make your case and have an overview of your financial health. It is at your discretion to provide specifics like financial figures.