

**Department of Florida
Auxiliary Emergency Fund
Program Engagement Plan
Chairperson Joni Taylor**

AEF - Emergency Assistance Grants

Members helping members – that's the American Legion Auxiliary's mission of Service Not Self in action. Hard times can fall upon us at any moment. That's when the American Legion Auxiliary is committed to help. AEF is a grant assistance program that provides financial assistance to eligible members of the American Legion Auxiliary who have endured a significant financial setback as the result of an act of nature (AEF-Disaster Relief) or other personal crisis (AEF-Hardship).

Established in 1969, the AEF was created with a bequest from the estate of Auxiliary member Helen Colby Small of Burlington, Wisconsin. Five decades later, the AEF is still helping fellow Auxiliary members get back on their feet. To carry on the AEF for members in need of assistance, we need your generous support of this important program.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must be American Legion Auxiliary members who have maintained membership for three consecutive years, including the current year and the two immediately preceding years. Junior members are not eligible.

Applications must be received within six months of the event. Refer to the application for specific requirements and deadlines.

Only one grant, whether for disaster relief or hardship, may be awarded to a grantee within a 12-month period.

Members can apply for both Department of Florida and National AEF Grants simultaneously, or within a 12-month period of each other.

Hardship VS Disaster Relief

Hardship:

An AEF grant may provide temporary assistance to eligible members during a time of financial crisis when no other source of aid is readily available to pay for past due expenses of shelter, basic household utilities and/or loss of income due to medical and/or employment reasons within the last 6 months. Grants may be awarded up to \$1,200 with the intent to help members who have suffered a financial setback and offer a helping hand to assist in reestablishing financial stability. One AEF grant (Hardship or Disaster) per grantee will be awarded in a 12-month period. Application must be received within 3 months of first delinquency notice. Applications are evaluated on a “CASE by CASE” basis. Funding will **NOT** be granted to pay medical expenses, credit cards, taxes, insurances, cellular/TV services, animal care, car purchase/payment, and/or home/vehicle maintenance and/or repair, or any expenses not related to shelter and basic household utilities.

See application for specific criteria. <https://alafl.org/wp-content/uploads/AEF-Application-Hardship-revised-08.2025.pdf>

Disaster Relief

ALA FL Auxiliary Emergency Fund Disaster Relief may provide immediate emergency assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members in areas devastated by a natural disaster, such as fire, flood, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, or other severe weather. The applicant must have received damage to the **PRIMARY*** residence and/or been displaced or evacuated from the **PRIMARY*** residence and had out-of-pocket expenses for food, clothing, and shelter. Funds may be awarded up to \$1,200.00. Applications are evaluated on a “Case by Case” basis.

*Seasonal or secondary residences are not eligible for AEF Funds

See application for specific criteria. <https://alafl.org/wp-content/uploads/AEF-Application-Disaster-revised-08.2025.pdf>

National AEF Grants

Grants up to \$3,000 are available from ALA National. Go to <https://www.legion-aux.org/aef> for criteria and applications.

Application Process

Both Department of Florida and National AEF applications are available online at ALAFL.ORG under the AEF Program

Print the appropriate application – Hardship or Disaster Relief

Verify that applicant is eligible and that the assistance needed meets the criteria.

Provide all necessary documentation, providing receipts, photos, anything that helps substantiate need. Make copies of everything so that you have a copy as well.

AEF Chairman Responsibilities

Building and promoting a strong Unit-level AEF program helps raise funds and increase awareness of the AEF Program.

Chairman should be familiar with both Department and National AEF Grants, the criteria needed and application process.

Fundraising ideas include but are not limited to 50/50 drawings, raffle baskets, collection cans or boxes in the canteen, and dinners or picnics with proceeds benefiting AEF.

Educate members through newsletters, flyers, and monthly meetings about AEF, including eligibility requirements and how to apply.

The AEF Chairman should be **compassionate** and **patient**. Some members may need help submitting applications online, scanning documents, or completing related tasks. Become familiar with the applications and required criteria so you can assist members effectively. **Confidentiality** and a non-judgmental approach are essential. Members may feel embarrassed to ask for help and should trust that their information will not be shared unnecessarily.

Reporting

Unit Chairperson reports are due to their District Chairperson by April 15, 2027

District Chair reports should be emailed to Department AEF Chair by May 1, 2027, and must be emailed to emergencyfund@alafll.org

Please provide narratives and pictures when available.

Awards

National Awards are given for Units and Departments contributing the largest total amount. Award based on donations received from June 1 to May 31. Please refer to Nationals page for criteria and submission forms. <https://www.legion-aux.org/member/awards/aef-program-awards> Due dates will be determined after National Convention.

Chairman Awards –

Unit awards will be for the Unit who contributes the largest donation to Department AEF and a Unit award for the Unit who contributes the largest donation to Department Disaster Relief. This information will be taken from Unit reports at year end.

There will also be an award for the Unit showing the most creative fundraising methods through pictures and their report.