

# Emergency Financial Assistance Program for SAG-AFTRA Members

## Overview

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation offers several Emergency Financial Assistance Programs to eligible, dues-paying SAG-AFTRA members who are **in urgent financial need due to an unexpected life crisis**, such as a natural disaster, accident, health crisis creating a financial burden, loss of work due to an illness, **loss of work due to a strike or production shut down**, loss of housing due to an eviction, death in the family, or other emergency crisis situations described in IRS guidelines which pertain to providing emergency financial assistance grants to individuals.

**Loss of work due to a production shutdown or strike alone does not qualify an individual for a grant under this program unless the member can show that the resulting loss of work has created an immediate financial crisis or hardship. The Foundation will review and assess applications, including financial information and documentation, to make an objective determination of each member's financial need.**

Given the unconventional nature of working in the performing arts, where work is never a guarantee, many artists must rely on second and third jobs for income, and we are unable to provide Emergency Financial Assistance Grants simply due to lack of work or unemployment. Also of note, **the Foundation is restricted from paying union dues with these emergency financial assistance funds.**

In the application for an Emergency Financial Assistance Grant, members must explain the nature of the life crisis leading to financial hardship, as succinctly as possible, and show proof of the cause of the financial hardship (e.g. a copy of a 30-day notice given by a landlord or proof of an accident that has occurred) as well as tax returns, bank statements, bills, and/or other documentation that shows immediate and urgent financial need.

**All applications are confidential and anonymous.**

*Please note: Suspended Payment, Terminated, and Fee-Paying-Non-Members (Fi-Core) are NOT ELIGIBLE to receive emergency assistance from the SAG-AFTRA Foundation. If you submit an application and fall into this category, your application will be denied.*

**Please read through ALL of the eligibility requirements before applying for an Emergency Financial Assistance Grant.**

## Eligibility Requirements and How to Apply for Emergency Financial Assistance

*Please note: Suspended Payment, Terminated, and Fee-Paying-Non-Members (Fi-Core) are NOT ELIGIBLE to receive emergency assistance from the SAG-AFTRA Foundation. If you submit an application and fall into this category, your application will be denied.*

Before filling out our online application, you must review the eligibility criteria and be prepared to digitize and upload all required documentation including any correspondence pertaining to the crisis which has caused your emergency financial situation (e.g., copies of bills, a letter from your doctor confirming an illness diagnosis, or other proof of a disaster or emergency). Applications without proper and sufficient documentation will be denied.



## **The Following Eligibility Requirements Must be Met In Order to Apply for and Receive Emergency Financial Assistance –**

1. You must be paid up on your SAG-AFTRA dues through October 2022; if you joined the union after October 2022, you must be currently paid up on your dues.
2. You must provide a copy of your current SAG-AFTRA membership ID card or confirmation by SAG-AFTRA membership department – including end date.
3. You must show documentation of an unexpected life crisis, such as a natural disaster, accident, catastrophic illness/injury, emergency medical bills not covered by insurance, house fire, eviction, evacuation, death in the family, loss of work due to a production shutdown or strike, or any other emergency circumstance described by IRS guidance pertaining to emergency hardship or disaster relief grants to individuals.
4. You will be required to show that you have an immediate financial need by providing bank statements, tax returns, bills, and other financial documentation.
5. Emergency Financial Assistance is available for people who are unable to pay their immediate basic living expenses (housing, food, utility bills or health care). If you can cover your expenses for the next few months, we ask that you wait to apply.

## **Tips on Making your Application Process Easier –**

You should prepare your documents prior to filling out the online application. You will be required to upload your documents at the end of the online application.

If your documents are not already available electronically, here are some suggested steps to create an electronic file for your paper documents.

1. Search your app store for a free PDF scanner (eg. Evernote Scannable). There are numerous free apps that are available to create electronic files for your paper documents; please use what works for you.
2. Download the free app to your phone.
3. When you are ready, open the app and scan documents.
4. This will create a PDF of your files.
5. You will need to create one PDF file for each of these categories:
  - 1 file for union card(s) or proof of membership status, if applicable
  - 1 file for last month's bank statement & tax return
  - 1 file for current lease, rent statement, mortgage/maintenance. (If unavailable, can be substituted with utility/phone bill listing your current address.)
6. Copies of any bills that you are unable to pay and would use the grant to cover.
7. Download IRS form W-9 (link provided in application)

To apply, please go to [www.sagaftra.foundation/emergencyfinancialassistance](http://www.sagaftra.foundation/emergencyfinancialassistance).

If you have questions or problems with submitting your application, please email [assistance@sagaftra.foundation](mailto:assistance@sagaftra.foundation).

## **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Emergency Financial Assistance Program for Loss of Work Due to Production Shutdown or Strike**

### **I'm an active, dues-paying SAG-AFTRA member. Am I eligible to apply for emergency assistance during a strike?**

Dues-paying members are eligible to apply but that does not guarantee you will be eligible to receive a grant. Members must demonstrate they have been directly impacted by the production shutdown or work stoppage, and demonstrate their financial need by submitting tax returns, bank statements, copies of bills to be paid, and a statement describing their financial need.

Emergency financial assistance is available for people who are unable to pay their immediate basic living expenses (housing, food, utility bills or health care). If you can cover your expenses for the next few months, we ask that you wait to apply.

### **What is the process for applying for Emergency Assistance?**

You must first submit a completed application through the Foundation's website. Our assistance department will reach out to you for an interview and then a committee will review all of the information and documents you provided to determine your eligibility to receive a grant. Please be sure to submit all required documentation with your application.

You will be notified by our staff if you are determined to be eligible for a grant. Processing grant payments normally takes one to two weeks but given the number of applicants and support staff available, it could take longer. When you speak to our social worker during the interview process they may be able to give you an idea of the time frame given the number of applications that are in the pipeline.

### **How much will I receive?**

The Foundation's Emergency Financial Assistance Grants are up to \$1,500; however, every application will be reviewed on an individual basis, and grant amounts will be determined based on eligibility and critical need.

### **How quickly will I receive the Emergency Financial Assistance?**

We are working around the clock to meet the significant need as quickly as possible, and to help those who are in the greatest crisis of need first. We ask that you please be patient once you have submitted your application. Our goal is to turn eligible applications around within 2 weeks, if not sooner.

### **Will I have to pay it back?**

You will not have to pay back an Emergency Financial Assistance Grant from the Foundation. An Emergency Financial Assistance Grant is intended as a gift; however, please consult a tax professional if you are uncertain whether any amounts paid to you will need to be reported on your personal income tax return.

If your circumstances change down the line, and you have the means to give back to your fellow SAG-AFTRA members in urgent need, we are always grateful for donations of support to the Foundation from former recipients of this vital program.

### **If this strike goes on for a long time, can I apply for Emergency Financial Assistance more than once?**

Due to the number of members who are suffering financial hardship as a result of the strike, at this time we are only able to give one grant per member (household). Depending on the duration of the work stoppage and the amount of funds raised this may change.

If you have any further questions, please email [assistance@sagaftra.foundation](mailto:assistance@sagaftra.foundation).