

Westfield State University

Student Emergency Assistance Program

Document Number: SS008 Effective Date: January 15, 2023

1. Mission and Purpose

The mission of the Westfield State University Student Emergency Assistance Program is to provide timely and compassionate support to students facing unforeseen financial crises that could otherwise impede their academic success. We are committed to fostering a caring and supportive campus environment by offering immediate, short-term assistance to help students overcome unexpected hardships and continue their educational journey with stability and confidence. This program serves as a critical safety net, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their financial circumstances.

2. Services Offered

The Student Emergency Assistance Program provides a range of services designed to address the most pressing needs of students in crisis. Our goal is to offer practical and effective solutions that can make a meaningful difference during a difficult time.

2.1. Emergency Grants

Emergency grants are available to students who have experienced a sudden, unexpected financial hardship. These grants are not loans and do not need to be repaid. They are intended to cover essential expenses that, if not met, could cause a student to withdraw from the university.

- **Covered Expenses:** Emergency grants can be used for a variety of essential needs, including but not limited to:

- Rent and utilities
- Medical and dental expenses not covered by insurance
- Childcare
- Transportation costs for emergencies
- Replacement of essential personal belongings lost due to fire, theft, or natural disaster
- **Grant Amounts:** Grant amounts vary based on the student's individual circumstances and demonstrated need. The maximum grant amount is typically \$1,000 per academic year.

2.2. Food Assistance

We believe that no student should have to choose between buying textbooks and buying groceries. Our food assistance program provides immediate support to students experiencing food insecurity.

- **Campus Food Pantry:** The program works in close partnership with the Westfield State University Food Pantry, which provides non-perishable food items, fresh produce, and personal hygiene products to students in need. All students with a valid student ID are welcome to visit the pantry once a week.
- **Meal Vouchers:** In situations where the food pantry cannot meet a student's immediate needs, we may provide meal vouchers that can be used at campus dining halls.

2.3. Temporary Housing Support

Students who are experiencing homelessness or are at imminent risk of losing their housing can receive assistance in finding safe, temporary accommodation.

- **Short-Term Housing:** We partner with local hotels and community organizations to provide short-term emergency housing for up to two weeks.
- **Housing Consultation:** Our staff can provide guidance and support to students seeking more permanent housing solutions, including information on local housing resources and tenant rights.

3. Eligibility and Access

To be eligible for the Student Emergency Assistance Program, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be currently enrolled in at least six credit hours at Westfield State University.
- Be in good academic standing (a minimum GPA of 2.0).
- Have a demonstrated financial need resulting from an unforeseen emergency.
- Have exhausted all other possible resources, including financial aid.

4. How to Access Services

We are here to help. If you are a student in need of emergency assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

- **Location:** Student Services Building, Room 210
- **Hours:** Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- **Phone:** (555) 123-4567
- **Email:** emergency.assistance@westfield.edu

4.1. Application Process

To apply for assistance, students must complete the following steps:

1. **Submit an Application:** The application form can be found on our website or can be picked up in person at our office. The application will ask for information about your financial situation and the nature of your emergency.
2. **Provide Documentation:** You will be asked to provide documentation to support your application, such as a lease agreement, utility bill, medical bill, or police report.
3. **Meet with a Case Manager:** After submitting your application, you will meet with a case manager to discuss your situation in more detail. The case manager will work with you to determine the most appropriate form of assistance.

4.2. Appointment Scheduling

While we do accept walk-ins, we strongly encourage students to schedule an appointment to ensure that a case manager is available to meet with them. Appointments can be scheduled by calling our office or by using our online scheduling system.

5. Confidentiality

All information shared with the Student Emergency Assistance Program is kept strictly confidential. We are committed to protecting your privacy and will not share your information with anyone without your express written consent, except in cases where there is a risk of harm to yourself or others.

6. Related Resources and Referrals

In addition to our own services, we can also connect you with other campus and community resources that may be able to provide further assistance.

- **Financial Aid Office:** For information on scholarships, grants, and loans.
- **Counseling and Psychological Services:** For mental health support and counseling.
- **Career Services:** For assistance with finding part-time employment.
- **Community Legal Aid:** For legal advice and representation.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How long does it take to receive assistance?

A: We strive to provide assistance as quickly as possible. In most cases, we are able to make a decision on an application within 24-48 hours.

Q: Can I receive assistance more than once?

A: Students may be eligible to receive assistance more than once, depending on their individual circumstances and the availability of funds. However, our program is

designed to provide short-term, emergency assistance, and is not a source of ongoing financial support.

Q: I am an international student. Am I eligible for assistance?

A: Yes, international students who meet the eligibility criteria are welcome to apply for assistance.

8. Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1.0	Jan 15, 2023	Manus AI	Initial document creation.
1.1	May 20, 2023	Jane Doe	Updated contact information and office hours.
1.2	Aug 01, 2023	John Smith	Added information on the campus food pantry.