

The Peacham Emergency Relief Fund

The Selectboard of the Town of Peacham has established the Peacham Emergency Relief Fund. The purpose of this fund is to assist current Peacham residents who are being impacted by financial emergencies. Funds will be used to help residents directly affected from an unforeseen emergency such as a house fire, storm damage, heating or utility needs, etc., as well as those having economic distress because of loss of income, for example, due to job loss, unexpected financial obligations, etc. Financial grants will be made to individuals or families based upon the criteria recommended by an Advisory Emergency Relief Fund Committee ("Committee") with final approval of disbursement by any available member of the Selectboard. When the Selectboard voted to accept this proposal for the Peacham Emergency Relief Fund, they also voted to allow any one of the three Selectboard members to sign a warrant for checks from this fund (consistent with 24 V.S.A. 1623) thus preventing further delay in funds reaching recipients.

Fundraising

Fundraising will be coordinated by the Committee. Solicitations will be made by:

- Direct mailing to all Peacham households (paid for by the Fund)
- E-mail solicitations through existing networks
- Posting on websites: Town of Peacham, For the Love of Peacham, Front Page Forum, etc.
- Face-to-face asks (if and when possible) and/or telephone solicitations to known philanthropists

Gifts of checks (or cash) need to be made out to the Town of Peacham (memo line: Emergency Fund) and are tax deductible, provided no other conditions are required by the donor. All gifts to the fund will be anonymous and there will be no donor recognition of any kind. Gifts of all sizes are accepted and welcomed. While there is no specific dollar goal for the fund, it is expected that thousands of dollars would need to be raised to meet the expected need.

Administration

The fund will be administered as a restricted fund by the Town of Peacham and its accounting overseen by the Town Treasurer/Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk. Funds will not be invested so as to be available for immediate use. The fund will be audited as part of the Town Audit conducted for the current fiscal year.

Distribution Criteria

Priority will be given first to those individuals or families who are year-round residents of Peacham who are experiencing financial distress for whatever reason. Only current Peacham residents are eligible to apply.

Residents need to submit a one-page written application, on-line or through the mail. Additional documentation to support their request is required. Requests will be reviewed by the Peacham Emergency Relief Fund Advisory Committee which is comprised of the following members: two of the five Town Justices of the Peace, and five people appointed by the Town Selectboard. (Currently those individuals are: Jean Dedham, Mark Washburn, Cynther Greene, Jeff Berwick, Ralph Crocker, Margerat Maclean and Sarah Kempton). If any committee member reasonably recognizes they are likely related by blood or marriage to an applicant, then such committee member will disclose to the committee that they may have a potential conflict of interest, and withdraw from providing any input, discussion or influence over that vote. The Committee shall send its current recommendations for funding to the Town Clerk/Treasurer for disbursement.

Application Process and Distribution Criteria

The application process is designed to be simple and equitable, putting no additional stress on the applicant, and ensuring there is a fair process for distributing grants. The following is process and criteria for administering the fund.

1. Applicants need to complete a simple one page application available on-line or from the Town Clerk.
2. The Town Clerk and or the Fund Administrator will receive the request and redact any personal and/or identifying information, ensuring the application is anonymous for purposes of Committee review.
3. The redacted application will be sent to all Committee members within 5 days of receipt.
4. The Committee will review the applications and prioritize grant requests based on the following criteria:
 - Requests from individuals who have suffered economic hardship for whatever reason. Priority will be given to those whose domestic security is in jeopardy. These considerations would include the loss of housing, transportation, home heating, or the ability to obtain sufficient food for themselves or their families. Supporting documentation such as eviction notices, overdue bill notices, etc. will be required.
5. All applications are accepted anytime and decisions/recommendations of the Committee will be sent to the Town Clerk/Treasurer after the Committee makes a final decision. All grant recommendations would be confidential. Additionally, payments would be made directly to vendors, landlords, hospitals, etc. No funds will be sent directly to the applicants.
6. Award size will depend on available funds but anticipated to be between \$200 and \$2,000. Applicants can apply more than once.

(Town logo)

Peacham Emergency Relief Fund: Application

SMALL GRANT APPLICATION

Application for funding to help Peacham residents directly affected by current or on-going financial emergencies.

Name: (first) _____ (last) _____

Email: _____

Address: (mailing) _____ (Physical): _____

Town: _____ State _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Amount requested: _____

How will the funds be used:

Why are these funds needed:

How many people will these funds help: #of adults _____ #of Children _____

Have you applied or received funds from other sources: Yes or No?

If yes, what from where: federal, state, local agencies/nonprofits, etc. What is the status of the request(s)?

PLEASE ATTACH THE BILL OR INVOICE AND VENDOR INFORMATION AS CHECKS WILL BE PAID DIRECTLY TO THEM.

The Peacham Emergency Relief Fund was established to support our community in this time of hardship. Applications can be submitted at any time. The funds will be awarded on the following conditions:

- This is for immediate need and hardship. The applicant has no other reserve funds and the applicant has exhausted all other sources of funding.
- There are sufficient funds available in the Peacham Emergency Relief Fund.
- The applicant confirms they are year round residents of Peacham.
- The applicant agrees to use the funds for stated purposes.
- The applicant may be asked to report on the use of the funds at a later date.

If you agree to the above listed conditions, type or sign your name below.

Other resources:

Vermont 211 is the statewide referral agency that provides listings of financial and other assistance agencies by countyCommunity Action Agencies (CAAs) are non-governmental agencies that can provide assistance such as financial help with residential utility bills, if the utility has issued a disconnection notice.”

<https://vtlawhelp.org/financial-help-utility-bills-vermont>

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/entries/energy/energy-assistance/bill-payment-assistance>

https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/vermont_assistance_programs.html

<https://www.hud.gov/states/vermont/renting/energyprgms>

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/publications-resources/consumers/assistance>

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/fuel-assistance>

Besides the financial assistance PERF can offer, offering a list of resources applicants can use to find their way through to [additional] help may be useful to them. Not just email addresses, but telephone numbers as well may be more helpful for some.