

Knoxville Campus Policy: HR0001-K Emergency Needs Fund for UTK Faculty and Staff	
Version 1	Effective Date: 09/24/2025

SECTION 1. Policy Statement

The Emergency Needs Fund (ENF) provides timely, limited financial assistance to eligible University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) faculty and staff experiencing unexpected emergencies that create significant financial hardship. This policy establishes the principles, eligibility criteria, application procedures, and review processes to ensure fair, objective, and confidential support. The ENF is intended to supplement, not replace, other sources of financial assistance and is funded exclusively through voluntary, non-state donations managed via a UT Foundation account.

SECTION 2. Reason for the Policy

This policy was developed to address a gap in emergency financial support available to UTK faculty and staff, who historically have not had access to the type of immediate relief available to students. By establishing the ENF, UTK aligns with best practices at peer institutions, reinforces its commitment to employee well-being, and enhances retention by offering compassionate assistance during unforeseen crises.

SECTION 3. Scope and Application

This policy applies to:

- **Eligible Employees:** Regular 75% or more UTK faculty (tenure-track and non-tenure-track) and staff (exempt and non-exempt) who have successfully completed a six-month probationary period.
- **Affected Parties:** All UTK employees, including those from the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture and the University of Tennessee Space Institute in Tullahoma, Tennessee, subject to the eligibility criteria.

SECTION 4. Procedures

- Faculty or staff seeking emergency financial assistance must submit an ENF application electronically via a secure online form. Accommodations will be provided for those unable to submit electronically.
- Specific procedures for applying for emergency financial assistance, the review of applications, and decision-making steps, along with how recipients receive support funds are outlined within the companion Procedures document.

SECTION 5. Definitions

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- **Emergency Needs Fund (ENF):** A fund established to provide emergency financial assistance to UTK faculty and staff facing unforeseen crises.
- **Qualifying Event/Emergency:** Any sudden, unforeseen event that directly impacts an eligible employee, such as a natural disaster, severe illness, or other life-altering incident.
- **Eligible Employee:** A UTK employee who meets the criteria outlined in Section 3, including successful completion of the probationary period and classification as a regular employee (75% or more of full-time).
- **Financial Hardship:** A condition where an eligible employee experiences a sudden inability to meet essential financial obligations due to a qualifying emergency.

SECTION 6. Penalties/Disciplinary Action for Non-Compliance

Failure to follow guidelines in preparation and submission of application for ENF support will prevent UTK faculty and staff having their applications considered by the Committee and an awarding of assistance. In extreme cases, misrepresentation or fraud in the application process may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with UT policies. Additionally, employees found to be misusing the fund may be required to reimburse the awarded amounts.

SECTION 7. Campus Responsible Official & Additional Contacts

- **Policy Administration:**
 - **Committee Chair:** Appointed by the Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources – serves as the primary contact for the ENF.
 - **Committee Treasurer:** Appointed by the Vice Chancellor of University Advancement – oversees financial management of the fund.
 - **Committee Secretary:** Elected among the ENF on a rotating annual basis from faculty and staff representatives ~ oversees recording of minutes and archival management.
 - **Additional Contacts:**
 - Human Resources Employee Relations Team – assists with the application intake, preliminary review, and further coordination and communication with applying faculty and staff member.
 - UT Office of General Counsel – available for confidential legal advice as needed.

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For policy clarification, interpretation, or training inquiries, please contact the designated Campus Responsible Official listed above.

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Contact: Tarah Keeler, Associate Vice Chancellor & CHRO	865-974-0424	tkeeler3@utk.edu
Policy Training	Contact: Tarah Keeler, Associate Vice Chancellor & CHRO	865-974-0424	tkeeler3@utk.edu

SECTION 8. Policy History

Version 1: 08/01/2025

This policy, which is newly created, does not replace or serve as a rescission of an existing policy.

SECTION 9. Related Policies/Guidance Documents

[HR0580 - Code of Conduct](#)

[UTK Faculty Handbook](#)