Student Crisis Fund

About the Student Crisis Fund:

The Division of Student Affairs established the UMD Student Crisis Fund in 2001 after the September 11th tragedy and after an unexpected tornado ripped through the University. The tornado claimed the lives of two students and destroyed thousands of dollars’ worth of campus and personal property. It was out of these tragedies that the Student Crisis Fund was born.

The Student Crisis Fund serves to keep students on the path to academic success during a personal and unexpected crisis. The fund helps any currently enrolled student who faces an unanticipated emergency that requires immediate financial need.

Since its creation, the Student Crisis Fund has replaced textbooks and clothes lost in an off-campus fire, helped a student who was unable to pay for a medical prescription, helped to support students facing food insecurity, and even helped pay medical expenses for another student’s emergency surgery.

Funding is provided by private donations – students who receive money will not be required to repay it, but will hopefully make a donation in the future when they are financially stable.

Application and Disbursement Process:

Through the Student Crisis Fund website (crisisfund.umd.edu), students are directed to complete an application to be considered for awards. Students will be asked for basic information, to describe their circumstances of the emergency need and what other sources of funds are available. See attached copy of current application.

We currently host the application through a Google Form and the “Form Approver” add-on which allows for email approvals, though we are also considering other forms currently due to the volume of applications and constraints on email limits. The Google Form links to a Google Sheet which utilizes an add-on called “Form Mule” which allows us to set up the ability for auto-reply emails regarding the receipt of an application and status change of application.

Upon receipt of an application, one of our crisis fund team reviewers (currently 2 people have this ability) will review the application and decide on approval/rejection and determine the
amount of funding that is to be awarded. After a decision is made, a member of our team will submit the awards to the Student Award System which will process the award as a direct deposit or ceremonial check depending on the situation. (Typically, our office will use ceremonial checks for the crisis fund as that function allows us to bypass awards going towards offsetting student account balances, but given reduced operations and status of campus, we have been able to shift the “ceremonial check” function to direct deposit for awards, and mailing checks for those who do not have direct deposit on file.) Typically, when students pick up the ceremonial check, they are asked to show a student ID card and to sign a statement that they will use the funds honestly and for the purpose intended. With the current direct deposit function and reduced campus operations, this step of the process has been suspended.

To assist in the management of applications, decisions, and emails, an email reflector has been created for the group that allows each person on our team to receive emails. This has allowed coverage during leaves of absence and for others to assist in the continuity of operations as needed. For this purpose, our group uses studentcrisisfund@umd.edu as our main email address that can be used for contact to all members on the team.

The greatest strength and the greatest weakness of this program is the ability to deliver funds quickly in an immediate crisis. Because the application is very simple, requires one review, and does not require back up materials, we are able to move very quickly when an application is received. The time from application to money in the student’s hand can be as short as one day, but averages 2-5 days. In times of crisis, we don’t want to want to create an extra burden for students seeking assistance. We take their statements as a demonstration of their need and do not ask them to submit supplemental materials that may add more stress to their situation – e.g. seeking proof from a landlord or family member that they’ve been removed from their living situation; proof that they can’t pay for necessary prescriptions, etc.

Criteria for Application:

Each application for crisis fund awards is individually reviewed by members of the crisis fund team. The following are items that are taken into consideration for each application:

- Current enrollment status (only students who are currently enrolled in classes are eligible for awards)
- Severity of crisis and impact on student
- Planned use of crisis funds (funds cannot be used for tuition or fees)
As reviewers consider each application, they take into consideration other resources that may be available for the student in place of monetary resources. At times this may include directions about the Campus Pantry for food insecurity, or work with the Division of IT for technology requests.

**Contacts for Additional Information:**

Development efforts related to the Crisis Fund:
- Ed Kenny, edkenny@umd.edu

Application/Tools use related to the Crisis Fund:
- Mike Paszkiewicz, paz@umd.edu
- Sarah Williamson, smruz@umd.edu

Application decisions related to the Crisis Fund:
- Brooke Supple, bsupple@umd.edu
- Mike Paszkiewicz, paz@umd.edu
Student Crisis Fund Application

* Required

1. UID *
2. First Name *
3. Last Name *
4. Email Address *
5. Are you an Undergraduate or Graduate student? *
6. Which College is your major in? *(we list out the colleges at UMD)*
7. Are you currently enrolled in classes? *
   Yes    Skip to question 9
   No     Go to question 8
8. Please explain why you are not currently enrolled. *

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

9. By typing my name in the box below, I certify that the information in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. *

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PLEASE NOTE: The average amount awarded is $500. Student Crisis Funds can not be used to pay for tuition and fees.
10. Amount Requested *

11. Please describe your current situation and why you need this award. *

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12. What do you plan on using the funds for? Be specific. We have a very limited amount of funds to disburse and would like to distribute them to the students most in need. *

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13. Additional Information

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• Checks take 2-5 business days to be cut.

• You can only receive Student Crisis Funds once.

• We will contact you when the check is ready.