SGA Emergency Fund Policy and Procedures

Undergraduate Student Government Association

Georgia Institute of Technology

Last Revised: November 1st, 2023

Introduction

The Undergraduate Student Government Association (SGA) designed the SGA Emergency Fund to provide financial assistance to students who face unforeseen circumstances or emergencies that impede their ability to thrive in college. Students can request a maximum of $500 each academic year, as defined by the Georgia Tech Academic Calendar. The fund will not be operational during the summer semester or during school breaks.

The SGA Emergency Fund is maintained primarily through donations from Georgia Tech students, but parents, alumni, and other donors are welcome to contribute as well. Because the funding is donation-based, there is no guarantee of available funds at a given time. All SGA Emergency Fund applications will be kept confidential.

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I. Allowable Expenses

The SGA Emergency Fund may fund the following expenses, when there is a circumstance that makes the expense unforeseen:

- Electronics repairs or expenses
- Housing and utilities*
- Food and groceries*
- Medical expenses (including prescriptions, copays, and deductibles)
- Emergency travel and transportation expenses (related to a death in the family or other emergency)
- Essential personal items (clothing, toiletries, etc.)
- Uninsured losses (natural disaster, fire, theft, etc.)
- Academic supplies*
- Other items the SNC, EVP or other application reviewer assesses to be necessary to the student's ability to complete college successfully.

* Please see the Additional Resources for Students section for assistance with these specific categories before submitting a request to the SGA Student Emergency Fund.

The following expenses are not eligible for funding from the SGA Emergency Fund:

- Non-essential personal items (entertainment, luxury items, etc.)
- Alcohol
- Sorority/Fraternity dues
- Weapons or illegal items
- Other items not necessary for the betterment of a student's quality of life or academic pursuit, as assessed by the SNC, EVP, or other application reviewers.
- Expenses related to non-emergency situations or events that could have been anticipated, as assessed by the SNC, EVP, or other application reviewers.

II. Eligibility

To be eligible for assistance from the SGA Emergency Fund, the requester must meet the following criteria:

- Must be enrolled—either part-time or full-time—at the Georgia Institute of Technology in the semester in which the student is requesting aid.
- Must be an undergraduate student.
- Must be requesting the money on their own behalf, not on behalf of another student or individual.
- Must have a financial need resulting from an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, as determined by the SNC, EVP, or other application reviewers.
- Must have exhausted all other GT resources to seek support.
- Cannot have already exceeded the allowed $500 in requested SGA Emergency Fund money for the current academic year.
- Must be able to provide either a receipt or detailed summary of the expense the grant was or will be used for.
  - (Note: Retroactive funding is allowed, but will not have an impact on the Student Needs Committee's decision-making process)
- (Note: If a student is already receiving financial aid money from the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid and the SGA Emergency Fund award would exceed the student's cost of attendance, the student will instead be referred to the Dean of Student's Office and the Dean Griffin Hip-Pocket Fund, which is an interest free loan. Read more here: https://finaid.gatech.edu/)

III. Application Process

Students may request a maximum of $500 each academic year through a form available on the SGA website. The SGA Emergency Fund will not be operational during the summer semester or during school breaks.

The application will include the following sections:

- Student identifying information (name, GTID, email, etc.)
- Reason for applying for emergency funding, including a description of the "emergency" that necessitated the unexpected expense and general information about the student's financial situation.
- Line items for what the money will be used for, links to items the student needs to purchase if available, etc. A general description (i.e. "Kroger – groceries") will be sufficient, but it is recommended to include as much detail as possible.
- Date for when the student needs the funding by. (Note: There is no guarantee that the student will receive the funding by that date; this will simply help the Student Needs Committee prioritize applications).
- Other resource options the student has exhausted.

IV. Student Needs Committee Review Process

1. The application will be sent to the EVP and SNC Chair. (Note: If the SNC Chair is unavailable, the EVP will perform their duties. If the EVP is unavailable, a member of the SNC can perform their duties)
2. The SNC Chair will send the student's identifying information to OSFA prior to the next SNC meeting and OSFA will determine whether the grant would impact the student's financial aid award. SGA will inform the student of this determination in the application decision email so the student can decide if they would still like to receive the grant.
3. The application will be reviewed at the next SNC meeting following the application's submission. This shall be within seven (7) business days of the application submission but may be longer if the committee does not meet that week. Applications submitted while school is not in session or during the Summer will be reviewed during the first SNC meeting following the break.
4. A simple majority of SNC members present at the meeting are required to approve the application. The committee will use the Eligibility and Allowable Expenses sections of this policy to guide their decision, but ultimately have discretion over the approval/denial to allow for flexibility.
   a. The committee will provide the EVP with the application decisions following the meeting within three business days.
   b. If an application is rejected, the SNC must provide the vote count and a brief explanation for the rejection to the EVP.
5. The EVP will email the requesting student with the committee's decision within 10 business days of the application submission, or three business days after the committee notifies the EVP of their decision.
6. The student must confirm they still need the money within five business days after they are notified of the decision. A student will only receive funds after confirming they still need the grant.

V. Distribution of Funds

Approved and confirmed grants will be distributed to students through the Bursar's Office. Awardees should ensure that they are enrolled in direct deposit to avoid check processing wait-time. Grant funds will not be directly applied to an outstanding balance on a student's account, but outstanding balances may delay receiving funds from the SGA Emergency Fund.

The student must send a receipt or detailed summary of the purchase to ug.evp@gatech.edu within one month after using the funds. Providing evidence is highly recommended, but not required if the situation is sensitive or would necessitate sharing HIPAA-protected, FERPA-protected, or other protected information. (Note: A lack of receipt or summary will result in a student's inability to apply for SGA Emergency Fund money in the future, and possible further disciplinary action).

V. Appeals Process

If an application is denied, students may appeal the decision to the Dean of Students office with additional information and notify the Executive Vice President, and the Executive Vice President will send the student's application to the Dean of Students office. The Dean of Students office will then notify the EVP of their decision. If yes, the EVP will proceed forth with the distribution of funds. If no, no further action will be taken. Receiving a rejection does not impede a student from applying for funding again for a different expense.

VI. Additional GT Resources for Students

Students must exhaust all other on-campus resources before applying for SGA Emergency Fund money. Possible resources include, but are not limited to:

- STAR Resources: https://star.studentlife.gatech.edu/
    - Dean Griffin Hip Pocket Fund - Academic, Financial, Personal Assistance | STUDENT LIFE (gatech.edu)
    - Klemis Kitchen - Klemis Kitchen – STAR Services (gatech.edu)
    - Campus Closet - GT Campus Closet – Don't have a Suit? Rent one from Us. (gatech.edu)
- Kendeda Revolving Closet - Kendeda Building Programs | The Kendeda Building for Innovative Sustainable Design (gatech.edu)
    - The Kendeda Revolving Closet is in the basement of the Kendeda Building. At the closet, students can take clothes from the rack for free.
- LGBTQIA+ Resource Center Emergency Fund - Student Emergency Fund | LGBTQIA Resource Center (gatech.edu)