



## Sandy Hook School Support Fund Collaborative Recovery Fund Reimbursement Guidelines & FAQ

### **What is the Collaborative Recovery Fund?**

The Collaborative Recovery Fund, administered by the Newtown-Sandy Hook Community Foundation, provides financial assistance for brain (aka mental) health and wellness treatment to victims, SHS students and their families, SHS employees and their families, and emergency responders and their families who suffered trauma because of the tragedy at Sandy Hook School on 12/14/12. The main contributor of funds is the Newtown-Sandy Hook Community Foundation (via the Sandy Hook School Support Fund). Additional contributions have come in the past from the Newtown Lions, Rotary, and Memorial Funds.

### **Who is eligible?**

The following groups\*are eligible for financial assistance for qualified expenses

- SHS students who were enrolled in the school on 12/14/12 and their parents and siblings
- Staff who were employed at SHS on 12/14/12 or substituting in the building on that day, as well as their spouses and children
- Emergency responders who were called to either crime scene in an official capacity or who were performing duties related to the tragedy on 12/14 or 12/15, as well as their spouses and children

*\*Please note immediate family members of victims, wounded teachers, and student witnesses from the two most impacted classrooms are covered under a separate clause.*

### **What are the eligibility requirements?**

For service services outside of therapy (i.e. health & wellness related care), you must include an opinion written by a licensed medical or mental health professional that documents that the service(s) is/are a necessary part of treatment due to the impact of the events of 12/14/12. Emergency responders *may* be asked to provide documentation from the organization that employed them on 12/14/12. Please note that these requirements are in place in order to be compliant with IRS regulations governing non-profit organizations. The fund will only consider bills for services within the past three months at time of submission. The fund does not reimburse for services in advance, with the exception of annual gym memberships or social-emotional enrichment programs for youth that require pre-paid registration.

### **What type of financial assistance can I receive?**

Eligible persons can receive assistance with out of pocket brain health and wellness activities, whether or not they are covered by insurance that are utilized specifically due to the tragedy on 12/14/12. This may include; traditional therapy, expressive therapies (art, music, play), EMDR, EFT/ Tapping, equine assisted psychotherapy, acupuncture, chiropractic care, MNRI, Brainspotting, massage, social/emotional support programs, physical health/fitness related activities, and prescriptions. Preexisting conditions are not covered and insurance must be the first method of payment for any services, as applicable.



**What documentation must I provide to have eligible expenses paid and where should I submit the information?**

In addition to the note from the licensed medical or mental health professional, you must provide itemized bills and/or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) that have your name, dates of service(s), the amount owed or paid, proof of payment, the providers' name and billing address. The Fund is the final payor after utilization of insurance and therefore we must receive verification of what is or is not being covered by your insurance. Even if your provider does not take insurance you may have out of network benefits that we need to be able to determine before making payments.

Information can be mailed to the Newtown-Sandy Hook Community Foundation at 2 Washington Square, Newtown, CT 06470, faxed to 203-403-9491, or scanned and emailed to [lconnell@nshcf.org](mailto:lconnell@nshcf.org). For questions or assistance with this process please contact fund support specialist, Lucie Connell, at 203-461-2233. Please note that Lucie works approximately 10 hours per week and generally returns phone calls on Mondays. Email is the preferred method for the timeliest response.

**How much financial help can I receive and for how long?**

Eligible individuals (see page 1) can receive **up to \$1,500** (per qualified individual) for the **2017** and **2018** calendar years. Please note that amounts available are not guaranteed. They have been established based on past averages of utilization and are subject to change. Funds are not payouts to individuals. The limits are the most that the funds are able to contribute towards individual mental health & wellness care at this time. Individuals who do not use the amount they are eligible for are not entitled to roll it forward into future years, receive a direct payment, or 'give' their amount to someone else. There are a finite amount of resources remaining and the limits have been determined based on average utilization and funds available in order to be as equitable as possible and preserve funds for long term needs. Any funds not utilized will go back into the amount available for redistribution in future years. Decisions about future support will be made based on utilization and available funds.

**How long does it take for payments to be processed?**

Once all documentation (including insurance explanation of benefits) is received, claims are processed within one to two weeks.

**What if I have extenuating circumstances and/or financial hardships and still need assistance once my limit has been reached?**

For individuals with extenuating circumstances or financial hardships, a review process is in place through the Foundation to consider additional support once limits have been met. Cases will be reviewed by a small subset of our Distribution Committee. Inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Barahona, Executive Director of the Foundation at [jbarahona@nshcf.org](mailto:jbarahona@nshcf.org) or 203-460-0687. Students enrolled at SHS on 12/14 also have benefits from the Office of Victim Services (OVS) that can be accessed if limits are reached. OVS can be reached at 888-286-7347.

For further information about the Foundation or the Sandy Hook School Support Fund please visit [www.nshcf.org](http://www.nshcf.org).