



**Sandy Hook School Support Fund
Collaborative Recovery Fund Reimbursement Guidelines & FAQ's for
Emergency Responder and Sandy Hook School Staff**

The mission of the Foundation is to devote itself to furthering and supporting operations and activities which address the short-term and long-term unmet needs of individuals and the Newtown community arising from the tragic events at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012. It has always been the intention of the Foundation to be a time-limited organization. The timeline was based on the desire to provide continued support to the community and those most impacted for a period of 10-15 years. The 13-year mark (June 30, 2025) indicated in the sunset is in synch with the graduation from high school of the youngest children that were enrolled at Sandy Hook Elementary on 12/14/12.

Who is eligible?	What type of financial assistance can I receive?	How much financial help can I receive and for how long?	What if I have extenuating circumstances and/or financial hardships and still need assistance would I be able to be consider for additional support?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff who were employed at SHS on 12/14/12 or substituting in the building on that day • Emergency responders who were called to either crime scene in an official capacity or who were performing duties related to the tragedy on 12/14/12 or 12/15/12 (police, fire, and EMS) 	Assistance with out of pocket mental health expenses, whether or not they are covered by insurance, that are utilized specifically due to the tragedy on 12/14/12. This may include services provided by a licensed mental health professional such as ; cognitive therapy, expressive therapies (art, music, play), EMDR, EFT/ Tapping, equine assisted psychotherapy, Brainspotting, Neurofeedback, and prescriptions. Physical Health & Wellness* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See below for a description of approved expenses 	Individual Cap of \$1,500 per calendar year for Mental Health Expenses. Cap of \$500 for Health & Wellness Expenses	Yes, only for Mental Health Expenses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate Family Members of Staff who were employed at SHS on 12/14/12 or substituting in the building on that day • Immediate Family Members of 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 	Assistance with out of pocket mental health expenses, whether or not they are covered by insurance, that are utilized specifically due to the tragedy on 12/14/12. This may include services provided by a licensed mental health professional such as ; cognitive therapy, expressive therapies (art, music, play), EMDR, EFT/ Tapping, equine assisted psychotherapy, Brainspotting, Neurofeedback, and prescriptions.	Family Cap of \$1,500 per calendar year.	No

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

What type of financial assistance can I receive?

- **Mental Heath/Counseling** : See above
- ****Physical Health and Wellness**: Each **staff member employed** at SHS on 12/14/12, whether present or not on the day of the shooting and **police, fire, and EMS staff who responded to the tragedy on 12/14/12** or in the days following is eligible for up to \$500 in health and wellness related expenses for things like massages, chiropractic services, physical health/fitness, and other ‘non-traditional’ treatments that are deemed helpful by a mental health professional. Physical fitness equipment is not eligible for reimbursement. The fund will reimburse in advance only for annual gym memberships or services that require pre-paid registration.

What documentation must I provide to have eligible expenses paid?

Itemized bills and/or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) that have your name, dates of service(s), the amount owed or paid, proof of payment if paid, the providers' name and billing address. **Photocopies of checks will not be accepted.**

For medication (Rx) reimbursement, a copy of the Rx and a receipt will need to be submitted. Preexisting conditions are **not covered** and ***insurance must be the first*** method of payment for any services, as applicable.

After insurance, the Foundation can cover up to \$175, \$200, \$250 per hour depending on your providers credentials (i.e. LCSWs, LMFTs, LCPs), psychologists, and psychiatrists. This includes EMDR, EFT/Tapping, and Equine Assisted Therapy. Please note these are above what is considered reasonable and customary by insurance companies).

All documentation will need to be submitted to the Foundation within **30 days** without EOB and up to **45 days** with EOB from the date of service. In order to preserve funds and adhere to the highest standards of accounting, the Foundation will have to close out the year by December 31st. If the Foundation receives invoices after December 31, 2024, the transaction will go towards your 2025 cap.

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. ***If you need assistance with insurance submissions, feel free to reach out to Lucie Connell or Clinical Manager of Human Services, Corrine Ofgang.***

In some cases, we may need 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 loss on 12/14/12. Please note that this stipulation is in place in order to be compliant with IRS regulations governing non-profit organizations.

Where should I submit the information?

All information should be sent via email to lconnell@nshcf.org.

How long does it take to process my reimbursement?

The Foundation implemented an electronic payment method in 2021. This method guarantees that all reimbursements will:

- be safely deposited into your account within 5 days; minimize lost checks; provide you with detailed information pertaining to your reimbursement (*The Foundation will still process reimbursements by check, although this method will take place bi-monthly*).

How do I enroll to receive my reimbursements electronically?

Contact Lucie Connell at lconnell@nshcf.org or (203) 461-2233. You will need to provide your Account Number, Routing Number, and Contact Phone Number.

Please keep in mind that funds are not payouts to individuals. The limits are the most that the funds are able to contribute towards individual 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. It is expected that support will be available until **June 30, 2025**, but amounts may vary.

Please contact Lucie Connell, NSHCF Executive Director for further information.

Office of Victim Services (OVS): Families may access remaining funds they may have from the Office of Victim Services (OVS) if limits are reached through the Sandy Hook School Support Fund. OVS can be reached at 888-286-7347.