



HEART'S DESIRE FUND — FUNDING GUIDELINES

MARCH 2022

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the criteria used to determine Heart's Desire Fund Awards and Emergency Funds. The **Heart's Desire Fund (HDF)** makes it possible for vulnerable mothers to pursue post-secondary education. Friends has the flexibility to respond to additional immediate needs through the **Emergency Fund**, serving as a crucial stop gap for NFP participants. Friends review essays from interested mothers and letters of recommendation from their nurses. We channel funds from donors to pay tuition and necessary additional resources.

By removing the financial obstacles that face these moms, donors empower them to gain the education that will launch them on a career path and break the cycle of poverty. Financial assistance also reduces their stress, freeing them to devote their emotional energy and attention to their children during the critical, earliest years.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

Eligibility

- Applicants must be current clients of the NYC Nurse Family Partnership program — clients who are pregnant should apply only if they expect to complete their endeavor prior to the birth.
- Applicants may apply twice in one year and once more in the second year of the program. Funding priority will be given to those most in need and based on the resources available. Please see further information later in this document about repeat applicants.

Note - Emergency Fund requests are a separate process with a separate application that can be considered at any time, irrespective of the number of previous applications.

Deadlines/When to Submit

- We will accept applications on a rolling basis from **January 1 through December**. **If there is a change to our deadline, NFP staff will be notified by memo.**

Terms of Awards

- Funding awards generally do not exceed \$1,800. Priority will be given to those most in need of funding and based on available resources.



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Applicants will be assessed on an as needed basis and Applicants may not receive the full amount requested. If the client need is greater than the award granted, the client should provide an explanation of supplemental funding that may be available to bridge the gap.

Requests more than 6 months out: To ensure adequate funds are available for all those in need, we encourage clients not to apply for courses or certifications that begin more than six months in advance of their application date.

Types of Awards

- Applications are accepted for education/career advancement. Awards are considered for tuition, certificate programs, and necessary additional resources such as Metro Cards, laptops, books, business related requests, and short-term child care. We will reimburse for courses. The types of awards are outlined further in this document.
- Applications for emergency needs should help forestall a serious issue for which a one-time payment may have a great impact including preventing homelessness, food insecurity and/or the well-being of mother and child. We will also consider requests for help with moving expenses or other pressing medical needs related to the health of mother or baby. Please find further information on emergency requests later in this document.

Application Process

- All applications must be accompanied by a nurse recommendation or they will not be considered.*
- All applications must sufficiently answer the following standard questions:**
 1. **Why** is the client requesting a Heart's Desire Fund award at this time?
 2. **How** will the assistance the client is requesting directly impact her education and/or employment goals and help her achieve her “heart’s desire”?
 3. **How and when** would the client be addressing these desires without our assistance? For example, would she be taking out a loan? Would she be borrowing from a family member or friend? Would she be putting off her plan to get this degree or certificate? If so, for how long? Other comments? How might she fund this opportunity if we don’t cover the full amount?
 4. **What** hardships would be relieved for the client if she received this award (financial, emotional, doing without things she or baby need (specify needs)?

Review & Approval Process



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- Applications are reviewed and decisions made by a board committee. Staff will return decisions within a week's time unless there are extenuating circumstances or outstanding questions.
- Clients are informed by email of a decision and asked to fill consent and payment forms. Signing the consent form acknowledges the amount of the award, terms of the award and conditions. The form also asks their permission to use their story and photos. Payments of awards will be made only upon completion of any forms requested.

Post Award

- We will follow up with clients to see how things are progressing and if the award helped them in achieving financial stability. This helps us in demonstrating our impact to our funders and supporters.

REPEAT APPLICATIONS

- We will accept a maximum of 2 applications per client within one calendar year.
- If a client wishes to apply for a **third** Heart's Desire Fund award, she will need to apply in the next calendar year; third applications will be based on financial need and fund availability; 1st and 2nd time applicants will have priority over 3rd time applicants. Staff will identify 3rd time applicants as such.
- Reapplicants must show evidence of successful use of a previous award, including a transcript or evidence of certification, if applicable.
- Repeat applicants should fill out a new application in its entirety.

HEART'S DESIRE AWARD REQUESTS

- TUITION / OTHER SCHOOL FEES
 - We will reimburse for tuition/certificates (for courses the client enrolled in while an NFP client) or pay an outstanding tuition balance prohibiting a client from returning to school provided the client details their plans for the future and how such reimbursement will open new paths and allow them to pursue their Heart's Desire.



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- Any tuition/fees not covered by our award or financial aid will remain the client's responsibility, and the client must explain her plan to cover those costs.
- If a client is applying for a tuition subsidy and has no way of funding the amounts that we cannot pay (our funding amount is typically \$1,000-\$1,800), the client should have their nurse make an inquiry before submitting the application.

TEXTBOOKS

- Awards are made for textbooks. If the books are not already purchased, a price list must be provided in order for purchase. If books have been purchased already, reimbursement is contingent on the client providing receipts.

COMPUTERS, PRINTERS, TECHNOLOGY & METROCARDS

- Clients may request a laptop or printer for school or work or to pursue school or work. If a laptop or printer is being requested to pursue work, they should explain how the requested technology will advance their career goals.
- Approved items will be shipped to the client, if the delivery address is secure. Otherwise items will be shipped to the nurse for her to deliver to the client.
- Computer and printer choices are made by our organization.
- **Metrocards:** With the Fair Fares NYC discount, participating New York City residents can receive a 50% discount on either subway and eligible bus fares, or Access-A-Ride. Pay-Per-Ride, 7-Day (Weekly) and 30-Day (Monthly) Unlimited Ride options are all available for those using the Fair Fares MetroCard on subways and eligible buses. Clients can check their eligibility [here](#). They can apply online [here](#). As it can take up to 30 days for review so we will provide a month unlimited card and clients should send us confirmation they've applied to the program online. If they are not eligible we will consider funding full price metrocards.

SHORT-TERM CHILDCARE

- Awards are made for short term child care or on a case by case basis. To receive an award for childcare, the applicant must explain how she will arrange for childcare after the funds from the award have been exhausted.

Business related requests



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- Awards are made for business or entrepreneurial endeavors including equipment to start up or further a business as well as funding for an LLC or related business needs.

EMERGENCY FUNDING

- To be eligible for emergency funds, clients should have an immediate financial hardship resulting from an emergency, accident, natural disaster or other unexpected critical incident for which a one-time payment will allow for a resolution to hardship. The expense should be unforeseen and all other resources are insufficient or unavailable. Requests typically do not exceed our limit of \$1800 and are based on priority and resources available. **Any emergency request will not be counted toward the limit of 2 applications per year; these are prioritized based on need and resources available .**
- **In their application clients and nurses should make clear what resources they've exhausted and how this funding will forestall serious hardship.**
- Emergency funding requests might include a one-time rent payment, help recovering from a natural disaster, illness or pandemic-related illness emergency, safety needs (including changing a lock), medication or other costs related to a safe and healthy pregnancy, replacement of essential items related to a fire, theft or natural disaster, one-time utilities payments that enable clients to work or apply for jobs. If a nurse is unclear if her client's situation would qualify she can contact Heart's Desire.

NURSE RECOMMENDATION

- All applications must be accompanied by a recommendation letter which verifies the information provided in the client's application but also supplement any gaps in information that is needed to make an approval.
- Nurse recommendations should detail: **1)** the client's needs, **2)** why the nurse believes she is worthy of our support, and (in the case of Heart's Desire Fund awards) **3)** what evidence indicates she is likely to follow through with her plans.



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PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

While the above provides a detailed description of our decision-making process, one of the unique points of Friends and what has made our work with NFP so successful is our ability to pivot when needed and fill gaps. We are committed to listening to nurses, nurse supervisors and administrators in determining what needs clients may have that we can support. For example, we understand the mental health toll that the pandemic has taken on moms and that client mental health is a NYC NFP priority, therefore we will continue to be flexible in thinking about client funding needs.

As we develop or fund unique priorities we will share those with nurse supervisors to ensure that clients and nurses stay up to date on our funding priorities.

We are proud of our ability to be flexible in meeting clients' unique needs and we encourage nurses to reach out to us to discuss anything that's not covered in this document.