

- > Reach out to other veterans service organizations to establish potential relationships. This can be as simple as meeting with their representatives to understand their programs and explaining what the Legion can provide. This way, during an emergency, each group can refer victims to the other for additional aid.

UNDERSTAND NEF

- > Make sure that the coordinators and others on the scene understand the differences between NEF and TFA. This will help in ensuring that coordinator will be able to assess the victims' needs quickly and direct them to the proper application and program.
- > Distribute NEF materials to districts and posts so that they can be prepared.
- > Communicate, communicate, communicate. Make sure that coordinators and others understand their mission, have their key players in place and are familiar with the nuances of NEF so that when a disaster strikes, The American Legion can quickly and efficiently provide financial support to victims in need.

To donate or learn more about the National Emergency Fund, go to www.legion.org/NEF

HELP THOSE IN NEED

The American Legion's NEF program provides money to affected Legion Family members and posts. One hundred percent of donations to NEF are turned into grants. Administrative and fundraising costs are paid from a separate account.

TO DONATE:


Proceeds from fundraisers, individuals or groups may be donated to NEF by visiting **www.legion.org/NEF** or mailing a check to **The American Legion, National Emergency Fund, P.O. Box 1954, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

ADDITIONAL COPIES

To print copies of this and other NEF brochures in this series, please visit **www.legion.org/publications**.



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THE AMERICAN LEGION'S
NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND

What to do **BEFORE** an emergency



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It is important to identify Legion members who can help deliver aid to victims.
Photo by Eldon Lindsay

ABOUT THE NEF

The American Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF) provides much-needed grants to Legionnaires, posts and others in the Legion Family recovering from a disaster.

In order for this program to remain successful, there must be emphasis placed on two critical initiatives before a community is faced with a sudden emergency. Those two areas are:

- > Establishing a team and game plan to implement when a disaster occurs.
- > Securing donations to be paid out in the form of grants to victims.

Departments and posts can provide leadership in both areas so that NEF can be counted on to provide financial assistance when necessary.

“ If we didn't have a point person, the victims wouldn't have gotten half, or even a quarter, of the money because nobody would have known what to do. Also, you need local contacts so that when an emergency arises, you can contact those people.” – Jim Clifford, who coordinated NEF efforts during flooding in North Dakota

SET UP A TEAM

- > Departments should identify their NEF coordinator(s). They should be well-versed in how NEF applications are gathered, how the grants are distributed and have the flexibility to head to disaster scenes at a moment's notice. The individuals should be strong communicators, be able to work through logistical challenges and demonstrate leadership skills.
- > Departments in larger states or those that are affected more often by natural disasters should consider identifying regional NEF coordinators. This would help ensure that someone with knowledge of the program can react quickly and, if need be, receive assistance from other coordinators.
- > Coordinators should have team members on call to respond to emergencies. Depending on the size and scope of a disaster, a team could be comprised of at least five other people:
 - Two people to process the applications and follow up with the victims. They would assist with getting information to the claimants, including letting them know when and where to get their check, what additional information is needed and other details.

- A driver with a vehicle who would be responsible for picking up supplies for the NEF team (food, water, notebooks, etc.) and victims (clothes, water, boxes, etc.)
- A courier who would be responsible for delivering the NEF checks from department headquarters to victims at the staging area.
- Someone to spread the word about what the Legion offers and connect with those eligible for NEF, Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) or other Legion programs. This person would be on the ground, finding those who qualify.

IDENTIFY RESOURCES

- > The team should create a procedure for establishing a command post. Ideally, this includes a large vehicle to transport bottled water, computer equipment and other supplies. (See www.legion.org/NEF for a downloadable checklist of items to bring.)
- > Recruit Legion Family members to be on call for emergencies and establish a phone tree to get a team on the ground quickly. Members of the Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion can provide logistical help, assist in distributing food and help in other ways.

