**Frequently Asked Questions**

Don't see your question answered? Email us directly at: StaplesShareFund@staples.com

**Who is eligible for a grant?**

* All current US Retail associates residing in the U.S. (including U.S. subsidiaries) who are full-time or part-time associates (except for seasonal and/or temporary associates) are eligible to apply to the Share Fund in times of severe financial need; however, the significant qualifying circumstance must occur while employed with US Retail Staples and the associate must be active or on a company-approved leave of absence at the time the grant payment is made.

Associates residing in Canada, please visit the [Staples Canada Employee Share Fund](http://myweb1.staplescan.com/CAShareFund_EN/index.html) website.

Associates of Staples, Inc. (NAD), please visit the StaplesCauseForCaring@staples.com website.

**What is a qualifying event?**

* The Share Fund defines a qualifying event as an unforeseen event that has happened within the last six months and has caused a severe financial hardship. Qualifying events include the following:
	+ Natural disaster (wildfires, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, wind/ice storms, etc.)
	+ Illness or injury
	+ Death
	+ Homelessness due to the following:
		- Unforeseen sale or foreclosure of a home/apartment rented from a private landlord.
		- Condemned or uninhabitable home/apartment rented from a private landlord
	+ Involuntary unemployment for spouse or associate’s second job (layoff, position elimination, company closure, etc.)
	+ Domestic abuse or violence that causes the associate to feel unsafe in their home
	+ Military deployment
	+ Covid-19 Job Impact
* Share Fund may consider specific unavoidable emergency situations not listed above on a case-by-case basis.

**What is a qualifying expense?**

* The Share Fund defines a qualifying expense as past due rent/mortgage/property taxes, past due basic utilities (electric, gas, water/sewer, garbage ONLY), and food. The Share Fund may also help pay security deposits for new housing, and specific expenses related to the death of an immediate family member (funeral expenses and emergency travel expenses).

In the case of a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, tornado, etc., the Share Fund may also help pay for emergency housing, and uninsured/underinsured repairs to a primary residence.

**How do I apply for a grant?**

* If you have a severe financial need due to an emergency, you may qualify for the Share Fund. To apply, go to first <http://www.staplessharefund.org/> , download our **Direct Grant Application Prep Pack** and **New Tenant/Temporary Housing Form** (if applicable) and review the Application Check List included in the Prep Pack.

Once you have gathered all the required documentation, go to the Share Fund website, <http://www.staplessharefund.org/>, and click the "Apply" link in the main navigation at the top of the page. After applying, email required supporting documents to **StaplesShareFund@Staples.com.**

**Will US Retail Share Fund** **reimburse an associate for expenses they have already paid?**

* US Retail Share Fund provides assistance in situations where the associate has no other means of paying the necessary expense. If the expense has already been paid then there is no longer a financial need. Generally, Share Fund will not consider reimbursement of paid expenses.

**What documents do I need to supply?**

* All applications for a Share Fund grant must provide proof of the qualifying event (varies based on the event) and proof of the qualifying expense (copies of past due bills). Please see our **Direct Grant Application Prep Pack** for a full list of required documentation for each qualifying event.

US Retail Share Fund may require additional information not included in the Prep Pack list and will inform the applicant via email or phone to request this information.

**How long does it take to decide on a Share Fund** **grant application?**

* US Retail Share Fund strives to turn around a response within 5–7 business days (excluding weekends and holidays) from the time a ***complete*** application is received. Lack of proper documentation will result in an immediate denial of an application. We will reconsider an application once the associate provides the required documentation. As a result, processing time may be extended in cases where we are missing documentation, signatures or if other information is needed.

Please see our **Direct Grant Application Prep Pack** for a full list of required documentation for each qualifying event or contact the US Retail Share Fund for more information. For associates in need of help in obtaining new or temporary housing, please download and complete our **Tenant/Temporary Housing Form**.

**Which family member does the US Retail Share Fund** **consider as eligible immediate family?**

* The Share Fund considers the associate, their spouse or domestic partner, minor children and other dependents for whom the associate is 100 percent financially responsible, as eligible. Typically, immediate family members are those who can be covered by the associate's insurance.

Parents, grandparents, siblings or other relatives are not considered dependents unless the associate can show they are 100 percent financially responsible for that relative (i.e., a copy of the most recent tax return showing dependents).

The only exception is for the death of an associate’s parent(s). The Share Fund may provide assistance for funeral expenses for the associate’s parent, if the associate is financially responsible for the expense.

**What if my immediate family member also works for a Staples company? Can we each apply for a grant for the same event?**

* No. The US Retail Share Fund will review grant applications by reviewing a household’s total need for the same qualifying event.

**How often can I apply?**

* Generally, an associate may only receive one grant award of up to $2,500 for the same qualifying event. Associates may only apply four times in a fiscal year (February to January) regardless of whether those applications are approved or denied. Likewise, an associate may only receive a maximum of $4,000 in a fiscal year (February to January) if they have more than one qualifying event.

**Can the Share Fund** **be used for medical expenses or bills?**

* No. Federal law prohibits Share Fund from making any grants designed to replace or supplement US Retail Staples compensation or benefits to its associates. Due to this law, the Share Fund ***cannot*** provide grants to help pay for medical expenses.

**What if I leave the company prior to receiving the grant?**

* Associates must be employed at the time of the disbursement of the grant. The only exception is if you are part of a reduction in force. If you have already submitted your application and then are laid off prior to the disbursement of the grant, assuming your application meets the criteria of US Retail Share Fund, you will be eligible for a grant.

**What other resources should I try besides US Retail Share Fund?**

* Share Fund grants are not meant to replace other available resources such as medical/life insurance, short/long-term disability coverage, personal savings, 401(k) hardship loans, assistance from family members, etc. Associates should also consider contacting the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) managed by New Directions. New Directions can be reached at 1-800-624-5544 or at [eap.ndgn.com](https://eap.ndbh.com/Home/Login?ReturnUrl=%2F) and use code Staples.

When faced with the death of an immediate family member, US Retail Staples offers funeral planning and concierge services through The Hartford's group life insurance program to help mitigate the expense. For more information, call The Hartford's Funeral and Concierge Services at 1-866-854-5429 or go to [www.everestfuneral.com/hartford](http://www.everestfuneral.com/hartford) and use code HFEVLC.

**What constitutes Share Fund** **fraud?**

* Falsification or alteration of supporting documentation
* Use of grant funds for anything outside the stated purpose for which funds were provided
* Intentionally misrepresenting the financial hardship or qualifying event
* Intentionally withholding relevant information that would ultimately result in a denied application
* Intentionally attempting to deceive the US Retail Share Fund support team
* The Share Fund takes fraud very seriously. The above are violations of the US Retail Staples Code of Ethics. Any confirmed fraud, whether it is successful or not, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from US Retail Staples.

**How can I donate?**

* There are many ways to support Share Fund, including: automatic payroll deduction, one-time or recurring credit card donation, or running a fundraiser within your US Retail Staples location.

The most effective way to support the Share Fund is to set up an automatic payroll deduction on [Associate Connection](https://associateconnection.staples.com). For one-time or recurring credit card donations, please visit the [US Retail Share Fund Site](http://www.staplessharefund.org/)

**What is the US Retail Share Fund tax ID number?**

* The tax ID number is: 46-3476388

**Is my donation tax deductible?**

* US Retail Share Fund is a 501 (c) (3) organization. Donations are tax deductible. Our Federal Tax ID is 46-3476388

**Can I designate my donation to an associate or associate's family member?**

* Donations to the Share Fund cannot be targeted to a specific individual(s). Grants will be allocated according to the rules and procedures of the Share Fund.

**If I sign up for automatic weekly payroll deductions, how long do I have to give?**

* As long as you want, you can opt out anytime. For example, if you want to cancel or change the amount of your contributions, just log into [Associate Connection](https://associateconnection.staples.com) and change your weekly payroll deduction preferences. You can also set an end date when initially signing up.

**How can I get involved with the organization?**

* You can donate to support the work of the Share Fund. If you want to volunteer in other ways, please email us at StaplesShareFund@staples.com and we will get back to you. If you have ideas, please send them along.

**How do I contact the** Staples Inc. Cause for Caring**?**

* The Staples Inc. Cause for Caring
500 Staples Drive
Framingham, MA 01702
* Email: StaplesCauseForCaring@Staples.com