



Plano ISD
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

“Help, I’m Having a Crisis!...”

Many district employees will face a personal financial crisis at some point in their careers. Like most districts, Plano ISD offers various benefits such as multiple types of leave, a leave bank, and an employee assistance program. But, the district also provides an Employee Crisis Fund to assist financially for qualifying emergency situations. Whether helping an employee keep the utilities on, avoid an eviction, or assisting with air fare to attend a loved one’s funeral, the fund has helped many employees. Since the Employee Crisis Fund’s inception in 1990, almost \$300,000 has been awarded to over 250 employees.

The Employee Crisis Fund was originally established in honor of a retired principal by one of her family members. However, it became quickly apparent that the needs far outweighed the original investment. Since that time, the fund has been generously supported by the Plano ISD Education Foundation. In addition to all its other worthwhile endeavors (this year alone, over \$120,000 was awarded in the form of teacher innovation grants), the Education Foundation, and its community sponsors, team with HR on other initiatives such as funding recruiting trips and Recruitment Open House. The Education Foundation also awarded \$3,000 in 2010 and \$3,000 in 2011 to Health Services (part of HR) to fund medical needs for students such as glasses, medicine, and other critical needs.

When employees are in need of short-term emergency assistance, they may request funds from the Employee Crisis Fund. Applications are submitted electronically to the Benefits and Risk Management Department (part of HR) and are then reviewed by a cross-departmental team made up of at least one principal, at least one HR leader, and at least one other appointed employee. The director and assistant director for Benefits and Risk Management facilitate the process and provide confidential information regarding each applicant’s circumstances and request.

The committee considers requests throughout the year, usually communicating electronically to avoid administrators having to leave their campuses for meetings. Decisions are determined on a case-by-case basis and funding is not guaranteed. The committee strives to provide quick turnaround with approvals and denials, knowing that the issues are usually time-sensitive. The committee operates within pre-established guidelines. Generally, the maximum amount funded is \$2,000. Whenever possible, funds are paid directly to creditors by check, not awarded in cash to the employee. All applicants, regardless of whether their requests are approved or denied, are provided with a list of community resources that may also be able to assist them.

With the gracious sponsorship of the Plano ISD Education Foundation, the Employee Crisis Fund has proven to be a valuable partnership between HR and the Education Foundation. You are encouraged to visit with your district’s education foundation to determine if there are ways you can work together to recruit and retain great employees. You and your employees will be glad you did!

Please contact Tamira Griffin, Plano ISD Chief Human Resources Officer, at tamira.griffin@pisd.edu or 469-752-8255 if you have questions or would like copies of the Employee Crisis Fund guidelines.