

National Federation of the Blind Survivor Assistance to Facilitate Empowerment (SAFE) Fund

What is the SAFE Fund?

The Survivor Assistance to Facilitate Empowerment (SAFE) fund is a dedicated financial resource for providing therapy support to survivors. In 2021, the annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind adopted a board resolution establishing a fund for supporting individuals who have been harmed by those who violate the Federation's Code of Conduct. By establishing the SAFE fund, the National Federation of the Blind made a dedicated financial resource for providing therapy support available to survivors.

What does the SAFE Fund Cover?

The SAFE Fund pays the cost of trauma-based therapy to assist in a survivor's recovery process. The fund will cover twelve individual therapy sessions and may cover additional sessions at the request of the therapist and upon approval by our third-party claim's administrator. If the survivor has insurance, the fund will require that it be used; however, the fund will pick up the cost of any co-pays or other charges not covered by insurance. If the survivor is not insured, the fund will pick up the entire cost of therapy as defined here.

Who is eligible to receive funding?

Any person who has filed a Code of Conduct report that was substantiated may apply for funding if they wish to seek trauma-based therapy as part of their recovery process. Those whose claims of sexual misconduct, harassment, or discrimination have been sustained are automatically eligible for the fund. Individuals who have a claim of misconduct related to harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, background, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, marital status, age, genetic information, disability, or any other characteristic or intersectionality of characteristics sustained through the organization's code of conduct process are also automatically eligible. In addition, individuals who have been identified by the Federation's external investigator or the 2021 Special Committee as having been impacted in the past have been deemed eligible by the Federation's board of directors.

How do I apply to participate in the SAFE Fund?

The Federation has retained the services of a third-party claims administrator to oversee the SAFE Fund. Survivors who are eligible to receive support through the

SAFE Fund will be contacted by the Federation's external investigator or counsel to the Special Committee. If a survivor consents to having their information shared with the third-party administrator, the survivor will be put in touch with them. From there, the survivor may elect to initiate support from the fund as described above.

Will Federation leaders know if I elect to receive support from the fund?

No. Only the Federation's external investigator, counsel to the Special Committee, and external legal counsel will be aware that you have agreed to have your name forwarded to the third-party administrator. From that point forward, only the third-party administrator will know which individuals use the support available from the SAFE Fund. To ensure financial accountability, the Federation will receive regular reports on the number of people using the fund and the resources spent. However, no personal identifying information will ever be shared with leaders of the Federation.

Are there additional program requirements?

Once an individual is eligible for the fund and elects to participate, the only requirement is to utilize the funding in the manner allowed by the fund. This will require the eligible individual to work closely with the third-party administrator to set up all arrangements. Individuals must utilize the funds provided to participate in one-on-one therapy provided by a trauma-certified therapist unless no trauma therapist is available in their geographic area. In that instance, the third-party administrator will approve the selection of a certified therapist who does not specialize in trauma. Upon request, the claims administrator can provide a list of available appropriately licensed therapists.

How will I access funding?

The claims administrator will work with the survivor and the selected therapist to set up a billing and payment system. Additional information about this aspect of the fund will be provided when the eligible individual elects to communicate with the third-party administrator.

What is the deadline for applying to the fund?

The NFB Board of Directors understands that survivors may need time to decide whether or not to seek therapy. Therefore, no deadline for application has been established at this time.