

Carolina Emergency Assist Fund Bylaws

Adopted by the Carolina Amateur Hockey Association July 20,2025

Article I – Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name

The name of the program shall be the Carolina Assist Fund, hereinafter referred to as 'the Fund'.

Section 2. Purpose and Fund Objective

Section 2.01 Nonprofit Purpose

The CAHA Emergency Assist Fund (“the Fund”) is organized under the Carolina Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA) exclusively for charitable purposes to qualify it for tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or any corresponding provisions of future Federal tax laws.

Section 2.02 Fund Purpose

The purpose of the Fund is to provide discreet emergency financial assistance to eligible participants within the Carolina Amateur Hockey Association. Specifically recreational players, coaches, officials, veterans, and their dependents who demonstrate an emergency financial need that will allow them to stay in the game. The Fund’s assets may be used as designed to improve accessibility, development, and retention across all levels of hockey in the Carolinas.

The specific goals and objectives of the fund are to:

1. Support youth house and adult recreational players, veterans and their dependents, officials, and coaches in financial need through direct emergency financial assistance that reduces or eliminates barriers to continued participation.
2. Promote retention in hockey by easing emergency financial burdens by ensuring consistent support mechanisms are available to those facing a temporary hardship.
3. Enhance development pathways for players, officials, and coaches by funding opportunities such as skills clinics, coaching education programs, certification courses, and mentoring initiatives designed to elevate local talent and improve the hockey experience.
4. Sponsor, host, or participate in events and activities that align with the fund’s mission to promote hockey participation, support the veteran community, and foster inclusive, community-driven engagement — such as charity games, awareness events, or development showcases.

Article II – Legal Status, Oversight and Governance

Section 1. Incorporation

The Fund operates under the Carolina Amateur Hockey Association’s nonprofit 501(c)(3) status.

Section 2. Oversight

The Fund President, Administrator and Advisory Board shall oversee the Fund. Final legal and financial authority resides with the CAHA Board of Directors.

Section 3. Independence of Operation

While under CAHA's nonprofit umbrella, the Fund will maintain its own identity, branding, and administrative procedures.

Section 4. General Powers

A Fund President and an advisory board shall manage the affairs of the Fund. The advisory board shall have control of and be responsible for the management of the affairs and property of the Fund. The advisory board shall have the power, directly or indirectly, alone or in conjunction or cooperation with others, to do all lawful acts which may be necessary or convenient to affect the charitable purposes, for which the Fund is organized and may exercise all the rights and powers of a nonprofit corporation under the North Carolina Nonprofit Corporation Act. The powers of the fund may include, but not be limited to, the acceptance of contributions from the public and private sectors, whether financial or in-kind contributions.

Section 4.1 Board Responsibilities

The board shall be responsible for the management and administration of the affairs of the fund, which includes but are not limited to the following:

1. Establishing policies, operating rules, and procedures to ensure transparency, consistency, and fairness in all aspects of fund administration.
2. Developing and approving yearly priorities, strategic goals, budgets, and fiscal policies that align with the fund's mission and support sustainable growth.
3. Initiating, approving, and implementing fundraising strategies including donor outreach, events, sponsorships, and campaigns to secure resources for the fund.
4. Approving all annual and interim reports including financial reports, impact summaries, and programmatic evaluations submitted to the CAHA Board or other stakeholders.
5. Reviewing and approving funding applications and ensuring equitable distribution of funds in accordance with established criteria and priorities.
6. Monitoring program impact and financial accountability through oversight of grant reports, performance metrics, and compliance with usage guidelines.
7. Providing strategic guidance and oversight to the Fund Administer including regular evaluations of fund operations, staff performance (if applicable), and alignment with long-term goals.
8. Facilitating community and stakeholder engagement by promoting awareness of the fund's mission and strengthening relationships with CAHA members, hockey associations, veteran groups, and other partners.
9. Ensuring compliance with legal, financial, and ethical standards including adherence to CAHA bylaws and 501(c)(3) regulations.
10. Implementing any additional measures the Board deems proper and expedient to promote and fulfill the objectives of the fund.

Section 4.2 Standards of Conduct General standards for board members

The Board members shall discharge their duties as an Advisory Board, including duties as a member of a committee in good faith, with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise, and in a manner the Director reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the Fund.

The Board Members are not liable for any action taken as a board member, or any failure to take any action if they performed the duties of the office in compliance with the bylaws.

Section 4.3 Conflict of Interest (COI)

A conflict of interest occurs when an individual has competing interests or loyalties because of their duties to more than one person or organization. A conflict-of-interest transaction is authorized, approved, or ratified if it receives the affirmative vote of a majority of the directors on the board who have no financial or fiduciary interests in the transaction. No transaction shall be authorized, approved, or ratified by a single director.

Section 4.4 Director Recusal from a Board Transaction that Involves a COI

Any board member who has a conflict of interest in any matter or motion brought before the board for a vote, shall recuse themselves from any deliberation or vote on the matter or motion in question.

Article III – Fund Officers

Section 1. Fund Officers

Section 1.1 Fund Officers

The officers of the fund shall be a Fund President, Fund Administrator and three additional Board members. The Fund President shall be the current CAHA Grant Committee Chair (preferred) or an individual appointed by the CAHA Board. The CAHA Board will appoint the Fund Administrator. Two additional Advisory Board members will be a CAHA Board member (active or emeritus) or CAHA Executive Director. The Fund President will select the remaining Board members. All Fund Officers serve at the pleasure of the CAHA Board of Directors. Each Board Officer shall have the authority and shall perform the duties set forth in these bylaws or by resolution of the CAHA board.

Section 1.2 Removal and Resignation

The CAHA Board of Directors may remove an officer at any time, with or without cause. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the CAHA Board. Any resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of the notice or at any later time specified in the notice and agreed upon by the Fund President.

Section 2. Fund President

The Fund President shall be the current Chair of the CAHA Grant Committee and shall provide strategic oversight and leadership for the Carolina Assist Fund. The Fund President shall:

1. Serve as the chairperson of the Advisory Board.
2. Convene and preside over Advisory Board meetings.
3. Oversee strategic planning and ensure alignment with CAHA's mission and objectives.
4. Represent the Fund in formal matters, including presentations to the CAHA Board.
5. Appoint Advisory Board members in consultation with CAHA leadership.

Section 3. Fund Administrator

The CAHA Board shall appoint the Fund Administrator. The Fund Administrator shall:

1. Manage the day-to-day operations of the Fund, including application intake, communication, and recordkeeping.
2. Coordinate the grant application and review process, ensuring transparency and adherence to timelines.
3. Serve as the primary liaison between the Advisory Board and CAHA leadership.
4. Prepare and distribute agendas, reports, and meeting materials.
5. Ensure compliance with applicable policies, procedures, and reporting requirements.
6. Maintain financial records in coordination with the CAHA Treasurer and provide regular updates to the Advisory Board.

Section 4. Advisory Board

The 5-person Advisory Board shall consist of:

1. Fund President who is the Grant Committee Chair of the CAHA Grant Committee or a CAHA Board member selected by the CAHA Board.
2. Fund Administrator
3. Two current or former (Emeritus) CAHA Board Members or Executive Director selected by the Fund President.
4. One additional individual appointed by the Fund President and selected based on demonstrated expertise in fundraising, financial aid, nonprofit governance, community outreach or general hockey knowledge.

The Advisory Board shall:

1. Develop, review, and approve eligibility criteria, application guidelines, and evaluation rubrics.
2. Review submitted applications and score them based on alignment with the Fund's objectives.
3. Support outreach and fundraising activities as appropriate.
4. Monitor funded applications and ensure follow-up reporting is completed.

Section 5. Meeting of the Advisory Board

Section 5.1 Regular Meetings

The Advisory Board shall hold regular meetings to conduct the business of the Fund. The Fund President shall set the schedule for regular meetings at the start of each fiscal year or upon appointment of a new board. Meetings may be conducted in person or via electronic means, provided that all participants can hear and interact with one another.

Section 5.2 Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Advisory Board may be called at any time by the Fund President or by any two Advisory Board members. Notice of special meetings shall be provided at least three (3) days in advance and include the time, date, format (in-person or virtual), and purpose of the meeting.

Section 5.3 Quorum and Voting

A majority of the Advisory Board members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, all actions shall be decided by a majority vote of the members present at a meeting where a quorum is established. Each Advisory Board member shall have one vote. Proxy voting shall not be permitted.

Section 5.4 Meeting Participation

Meeting attendance may occur via telephone, video conferencing, or other electronic communication platforms, provided that all participants can hear one another. A board member participating in such a manner shall be considered present for purposes of quorum and voting.

Section 5.5 Recordkeeping

Minutes shall be taken at each Advisory Board meeting and maintained by the Fund Administrator. Minutes shall include a record of attendance, decisions made, votes taken, and any follow-up actions required. Meeting records shall be available for review by the CAHA Board upon request.

Section 5.6 Action Without Meeting

The Advisory Board may act without a meeting if all members consent in writing or by electronic communication. Such consent shall be recorded by the Fund Administrator and entered into the official minutes of the Fund.

Article IV – Eligibility and Funding

Section 1. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must reside within the CAHA affiliate and meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Be a USA Hockey registered house, adult recreational, or disabled hockey player within a CAHA member association.
2. Be a veteran (active duty, former service member, or dependent of a veteran) actively involved in hockey as a player, official, or coach.
3. Be a USA Hockey-certified official, working within the Affiliate.
4. Be a USA Hockey-certified coach seeking support for development, certification, or other coaching-related expenses.
5. Demonstrate financial need that significantly impacts continued participation in hockey.
6. Fund Board and CAHA Board members and their family members are not eligible for funding.

Priority consideration may be given to applicants who:

1. Demonstrate long-term commitment to the sport.
2. Support diversity and inclusion in hockey.
3. Face significant financial hardship.
4. No history of hockey-related discipline

Section 2. Application Process

Section 2.1 Submission Requirements

Applicants must complete an official Fund application. The application may require:

1. A personal statement describing financial need and how support will impact continued participation in hockey.
2. Supporting documentation, such as financial verification, registration invoices, or equipment quotes.
3. A Development & Impact Proposal (for coaches and officials) explaining how training or certification will benefit the hockey community.
4. A Retention & Accessibility Justification describing how the funding will promote ongoing engagement in the sport.

5. A Diversity & Inclusion Statement, if applicable, outlining the applicant's role in promoting underrepresented groups (e.g., girls' hockey, adaptive hockey, or outreach in underserved areas).
6. An optional Letter of Support from a coach, association leader, or referee-in-chief.

Section 2.2 Review Process

1. Applications shall be reviewed by the Advisory Board.
2. Applications will be evaluated based on documented financial need, alignment with the Fund's goals, overall potential impact and other metrics established by the Advisory Board.
3. The review process will occur on a rolling basis, depending on available funds and application volume.

Section 2.3 Notification and Disbursement

1. Applicants will be notified of a decision within four (4) weeks of a complete application submission.
2. Approved funds will be disbursed directly to the relevant provider or organization. Personal reimbursements will be rare and subject to Fund President approval.

Section 3. Use of Funds

Eligible funding may be used for the following hockey-related expenses:

1. Player registration fees (house/recreational programs)
2. Equipment (e.g., skates, sticks, pads, helmets)
3. Coaching certification and development costs
4. USA Hockey official registration and training fees
5. Travel assistance for skill development or certification-related purposes.
6. Other hockey-related expenses, subject to Advisory Board approval

Article V – Financial Management

Section 1. Budget and Revenue Sources

The Carolina Emergency Assist Fund shall operate under an annual budget approved by the CAHA Board of Directors. The budget shall be developed by the Fund Administrator in consultation with the Advisory Board and shall include projected income and expenses for the fiscal year.

Permitted revenue sources may include, but are not limited to:

1. Allocations from CAHA program funds.
2. Charitable donations from individuals, corporations, or foundations.
3. Donations from individuals via event registrations, GoFundMe, or other means
4. Sponsorship agreements aligned with CAHA's mission.
5. Proceeds from fundraising events or campaigns.
6. Grants from external entities, as permitted under CAHA's nonprofit status.

All revenue raised for the Fund shall be managed within CAHA's financial system and comply with applicable IRS regulations and CAHA policies.

Section 2. Disbursement and Approval Process

All disbursements from the Fund shall be subject to appropriate documentation, internal controls, and multi-level approval.

1. Each disbursement shall be approved by the Fund Administrator and at least one member of the Advisory Board, with oversight of the CAHA Treasurer.
2. Disbursements must be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., invoices, registration confirmation, or purchase agreements).
3. Wherever possible, funds will be paid directly to leagues, vendors, or training programs whenever possible to ensure appropriate use and accountability.

Section 3. Financial Reporting and Accountability

The Fund Administrator, with assistance from the CAHA Treasurer, shall ensure the Fund's financial activities are tracked and reported.

An annual financial report shall be submitted to the CAHA Board of Directors and include:

1. Total funds received and disbursed during the fiscal year.
2. Number and category of recipients (e.g., players, coaches, officials).
3. Summary of covered expense types.
4. Impact metrics and anonymized narrative highlights.
5. A statement of any remaining or restricted funds carried forward.

Periodic internal reviews may be conducted to ensure compliance with CAHA fiscal policies and adherence to the Fund's intended use.

Section 4. Fund Limitations and Financial Oversight

Section 4.1 Ineligible Uses

Funds may not be used for Tier I/Tier II or travel programs, private coaching, elite camps, or any non-CAHA/non-USA Hockey-affiliated programming.

Section 4.2 Oversight

The Fund Administrator shall maintain records of all applications, disbursements, and decisions. The Advisory Board shall review aggregated reports on fund impact annually and ensure compliance with policy.

Section 4.3 Noncompliance

Any misused or unaccounted funds must be returned to the Fund. Failure to comply may result in ineligibility for future support.