

Church Financial Hot Topic

Benevolence Policy and Procedure - Sample

Application Process:

1. Benevolence applicants must make an appointment to come in for the application and interview process. Appointments are scheduled Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00AM-12:00PM.
2. Applicants must have a valid Georgia Driver's license. The address on the driver's license must match where he is currently residing. If the addresses do not match, the applicant must have the license changed (free of charge) before the applicant can make an appointment.
3. The church offers assistance with utility bills (power, water, or gas), mortgage payments, and rent. Applicants must bring in their current bill, mortgage stub, or lease agreement. A copy of the bill will be made and attached to the application, along with the driver's license.
4. Applicants must live in the state of Georgia.

Interview Process:

1. During the interview, the interviewer will go over important details of the application such as:
 - a. Income (wages, child support, disability, SSI, tax returns)
 - b. Bills, non-necessities such as cable, internet, cell phones (have they been discontinued).
 - c. How many adults are living in the home? Are they working?
 - d. Are you a member of another church? If so, has your home church assisted you?
 - e. If we are unable to assist you, what other options do you have? Family, friends?
 - f. If we are able to assist, what will you do next month when your bills are due?
 - g. Most importantly – as you conclude the interview – take this opportunity to share the Hope only found in Christ and pray for them.

Decision Process:

1. Assemble a committee of (three or more) that will make decisions regarding the applications. This will keep the decision-making burden from falling on one person.
2. Establish guidelines. These are the ones we follow. These are not written in stone, they are only guidelines.
 - a. The maximum assistance for a person is \$200. If assistance is given, he is not eligible to apply again until 6 months have passed.
 - b. What bills do we assist with? Utility bills (power, water, gas), mortgage payments, and rent.
 - c. We do not assist with any deposits, gasoline, insurance, car payments, cable, phone, internet, lawn care, security systems, homeowner association fees, medical/dental bills, pharmaceuticals, car repairs, hotel bills, and funeral expenses.
 - d. Since we are limited with assistance, it might be a good idea to have a list of outside resources to share with the applicant. The resource list might include: local co-op benevolence ministries, homeless shelters, battered women's shelters, food pantries, health and dental clinics.

Follow up:

1. Once the decisions have been made, submit the necessary paper work to the business office for the assistance. NEVER give the applicant a check or cash. Pay the bill or mortgage/rent directly to the business. Make sure the landlord's mailing address is on the lease agreement.
2. After the committee has met, someone will call the applicant with the status of his application.

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