

Church Financial Hot Topic

Record-Keeping Requirements for Benevolence Assistance

When a church assists church members or other needy individuals, the IRS requires the church to keep certain documentation and records on individuals the church has helped. The following form is a tool a church can use to help fulfill this IRS record-keeping requirement. This sample form should be filled out each time the church helps a person financially. This confidential form should be kept with the church's financial records.

Name of Applicant _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

Brief description of assistance provided by the church: _____

Reason the assistance was granted: _____

Cost of the assistance: _____

Relationship to the church members or church leaders: _____

If the applicant was related, did the applicant receive special treatment? _____

Benevolence Committee Members: _____

Applicants for financial assistance are awarded financial assistance based on financial need. Applicants are not granted financial assistance based on relationships between the applicant and church leaders or significant church contributors. The church does not discriminate applicants based upon race, color, sex, national origin, age, geographic territory, or disability. However, the church reserves the right to discriminate based on religion.

The church benevolence committee may provide short-term (emergency) assistance and longer-term aid to ensure that victims have the basic necessities such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, and medical assistance (including psychological counseling). The preferred method of providing assistance will be to pay the applicant's needs directly to a business provider. Assistance may also be provided in the form of cash grants or vouchers for goods or services. The type of aid that is appropriate depends on the individual's needs and available resources.

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