Revised-9/3/2020

**Benevolence Policy**

**ZERO** needs among us

**ZERO** lost people

**ZERO** unconnected people

**ZERO** gods before him

**ZERO** unfulfilled callings

Our vision as a BENEVOLENCE TEAM is not complete until ZERO PEOPLE in our community are living UNCHANGED BY JESUS.

Our mission is to meet the needs among us by presenting a blend of caring, sharing and love to those requesting assistance while encouraging them to become connected with church and introducing them to people whose lives have been changed by their relationships with Jesus.

**Purpose:**

The Benevolence Ministry’s purpose at Frontline Church is to obey the Biblical directive. Through this directive, the Ministry cares for widows, orphans, and identifies and meets the essential needs of people who are unable to care for themselves and their families. The benevolence fund is intended as a source of last resort, to be sought only for families or individuals requesting assistance who have explored all other possibilities, such as help from family, friends, savings, investments, or any other resources. This fund is intended to be a temporary help during a time of crisis.

# Oversight and Accountability:

The Benevolence Team is accountable to the leadership team and staff of Frontline Church.

# Means:

Benevolent assistance from the Church can take the form of payment to vendors, vouchers redeemable at local merchants, as well as goods or services. A benevolence fund has been set up for this purpose and is maintained as a benevolence account which is separate and distinct from the general funds of the Church. The only regular source of income to support the benevolence fund is

through special offerings taken on a regular basis. Individuals may also designate gifts to this account at any time.

# Types of Benevolence Assistance:

Individual and family needs that will be eligible for benevolence assistance will be provided so long as the following required conditions are met:

### Emergency Needs:

Needs will be considered as “emergency” when assistance is required due to an immediate need for food, clothing, or transportation. Other very limited circumstances requiring *immediate action* for or on behalf of an individual lacking the resources to resolve the situation will be considered.

### Short-Term:

These include a broad range of needs, usually short-term in nature and usually due to an unforeseeable financial emergency. In addition to the needs listed under emergency needs, this category might also include medical costs not covered by insurance, auto repairs, funeral expenses, shelter, essential utilities, and counseling services. These usually require *quick* but not *immediate action*.

*(Example: out of work because of surgery.)*

### Long-Term Needs:

These are needs that extend beyond the short-term, and are often due to the loss of a job, an extended illness or disability, and or the death of the Breadwinner.

*(Example: abandonment by a spouse or inability to earn enough to meet daily needs.)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Benevolence Type** | **Approval Requirement** | **Turnaround Time** | **Length and Limit** | **Other** |
| **Emergency** | 2 staff approval | 48 hours | $50 max  x2 orphans/widows  50% non-attender | Required:Access Check  Only one incident/year |
| **Short-Term** | Benevolence Team | 7 days | Limit=$1000 per year  +$500 for orphans & widows | Required:Access Check  Max Requests=3/year |
| **Long-Term** | Both | 14 days | Yearly limit of $2000  +$1000 for orphans & widows | Required:Access Check  Max Request=1/year  Other Requirements may apply |

# Control:

The leadership team and staff of Frontline church administer the Benevolence Policy of the Church. They have the ability to delegate operational authority to specified individuals under controlled circumstances, as outlined below:

**Volunteers**: Volunteers are appointed by the church staff member who oversees benevolence. These individuals are those who are a part of the Benevolence Team and currently evaluate the needs of those requesting assistance from the church’s benevolence fund. When a request meets the criteria set forth by the church and is approved by the Benevolence Team, a member of church administration staff distributes funds to vendors or refers those seeking counseling to professional services. At least two Benevolence Team members must approve the request unless the team exceeds three members, then the majority of the volunteer team must approve the request for assistance. All approvals are discussed and approved by the Benevolence Team. Individual members are not authorized to make decisions independently. If a family or individual needs assistance in an amount exceeding $1,000 within a fiscal year, additional funding must have the approval of the church staff member who oversees benevolence.

**Pastoral Staff or at least two other staff members:** may also have the option to grant emergency assistance in the amount of up to $50. (Example: someone asks for help with gas or food). It is not recommended that cash be given for Emergency needs, See table above under Types of benevolence Assistance for details.

A person with long-term needs related to poor money management may be asked to participate in a financial class such as Financial Peace University before additional services can be offered.

The first priority of benevolent assistance is to widows in need (including those single due to divorce or abandonment). This also applies to orphans, an “Orphan” at Frontline Church will be interpreted as any child lacking one or both parents because of death, divorce, or separation. Assistance is also available for other members or attendees of the church who are in need (including the poor, those in ministry or being trained for ministry, and church supported missionary families). Assistance may be provided to individuals in need, families, and particularly to widows and orphans. This includes those who do not attend the church, but who have a connection with a ministry partner of the church.

Church Staff is eligible for benevolence assistance, however, it should be noted that the dollar amount is considered income and must be reported to the Internal Revenue Service on the employee’s W-2 Form.

# Process:

**Emergency assistance:** may be granted by anyone given such authority (see “Control” section above) upon request; however, before providing such assistance, the individual must complete the emergency application. The individual should also be asked whether they are already receiving assistance through the church or any other organization. If such assistance is already being provided, the individual should be referred back to the person who has previously assisted them.

**Short-term assistance:** the needs of an individual or family will be assessed by the Benevolence team. Based on the findings, assistance may be approved (or denied). If approved, a plan of action is implemented which may include a referral to budget counseling or other training.

**Long-term assistance:** to the disabled or unemployed will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Continued eligibility for these individuals will be reviewed annually (disabled) or quarterly (unemployed).

**Denials:** If assistance is denied for any reason the individual may appeal by submitting a letter of explanation to the staff person that oversees the benevolence.

# Benevolence in Small Groups:

This statement sets forth the benevolence policy of Frontline Church. It is not intended to replace or direct the efforts of individual members of the church in carrying out their own private acts of mercy and benevolence.

Small groups may provide benevolent assistance to their own members, or their friends and acquaintances. If this is done without the resources of the church’s benevolence fund, such efforts are commended and encouraged. These types of donation will be considered as informal acts of kindness, and will not be treated as tax-deductible donations by the church.

If a small group provides someone with benevolence assistance on their own, they are eligible to request reimbursement from the church. To receive reimbursement, the request must go through the appropriate benevolence process first.

It should also be noted that an individual giving a monetary gift to the Benevolence Fund may suggest their gift be used for a particular family or individual. However, it should be made clear that the Benevolence Team or staff are under no obligation to honor that request since gifts to the benevolence fund may not be earmarked for specific, individual recipients.

# Procedures:

Individuals requesting benevolence assistance from Frontline Church must fill out a Benevolence request form which is available online at [frontlinegr.com/help](http://frontlinegr.com/help). With the exception of emergency benevolence assistance, all applications should be completed and the requested assistance should be shared with a Frontline church staff representative.

Those requesting assistance are giving their consent to the Benevolence Team to verify and follow up on any information provided to the committee.

# Criteria:

The stated purpose of the benevolence fund is to meet people’s “basic needs” when they are unable to provide resources to meet those immediate needs on their own.

**Normally “basic needs” are defined as life essentials:**

* Shelter
* Food
* Clothing
* Medical treatment
* Transportation to and or from a place of employment
* Funeral expenses
* Internet when seeking employment or when required for school

**Needs not qualified through benevolence fund:**

* School or business expenses or anything that brings financial profits to the individual or family
* Paying off credit cards (exceptions may be made when charges reflect an emergency or crisis (*payment at the hospital or doctor*).
* Fines related to court or related to breaking the law
* Housing for unmarried couples
* Legal fees
* Late payment penalties
* Private school fees or tuition
* Business ventures or investments

# Processing Requests:

The request for assistance application should be returned to the church office or filled out online. The application will then be forwarded to the Benevolence Team, who will assign a member to contact the individual.

After speaking with the approved staff representative from Frontline, the member presents the request to the Benevolence Team and a decision is made. It will be communicated to individuals that **ALL** decisions are made by the team.

The staff member who interviewed the individual will inform them of the Benevolence Teams decision.

Checks are written and dispersed by Frontline church staff. Payments will be made to vendors rather than the individual making the requests, unless otherwise indicated. These payments will be recorded in the individuals file.

Revised 9/3/2020