

# Rancho Bernardo Community Church

## Family Assistance Fund Policy and Guidelines for Applicants

### Disbursement from Deacons Family Assistance Fund

#### A. General guidelines

The Family Assistance Fund is intended as a source of last resort, to be used when the family or individual requesting assistance has explored all other possibilities of help from family, friends, savings, or investments. It is intended to be a temporary help during a time of crisis and not a source of income for monthly and routine expenses.

Assistance from the Family Assistance Fund is intended to be a one-time gift. In unusual circumstances, the Family Assistance Fund Committee may decide to help more than one time.

Under no circumstance is a gift from the Family Assistance Fund to be considered a loan, No gift may be repaid, either in part or in full, in money or in labor. The recipient may desire to give to the church or the deacons at a later time, but should understand this is not a reimbursement of the gift from the Family Assistance Fund.

Those requesting help must be willing to give the Family Assistance Fund Committee permission to follow up on any of the information provided to the Committee. The Committee will be sensitive to confidential issues and will do everything possible to preserve confidentiality of the requesters and their situation.

#### B. Recipients

In order of priority, recipients of funds disbursed from the Family Assistance Fund at the direction of the Family Assistance Fund Committee are:

1. Church members
2. Regular attendees
3. Preschool Family
4. Dependent Child of RBCC Church Member
5. Employee of the church
6. Community member recommended by a church member

#### C. Criteria

The purpose of the Family Assistance Fund is to meet peoples' basic needs. Normally these needs are defined as, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- Housing
- Utilities
- Food
- Clothing
- Medical/Dental treatment
- Transportation expenses, such as to or from a place of employment, medical appointment, etc.
- Car repairs not covered by insurance
- Home repairs not covered by insurance
- Funeral expenses

- Counseling (Pastor referral to Christian Counselor required)
  1. A Pastor will be contacted for all counseling requests, and a visit with the Pastor may be necessary.
  2. Parental consent in writing will be required for requests for dependent minors to receive counseling
  3. Each Adult requesting counseling assistance (whether for themselves or a minor dependent) must sign an agreement indicating they:
    - Accept the agreed-upon co-pay arrangements;
    - Will comply with established procedures if they need to change an appointment with the counselor;
    - Agree to continue with the counseling for the agreed-upon number of sessions; and
    - They understand that if they terminate counseling before the completion of the agreed upon number of sessions, they will be responsible for any applicable cancellation fees.

Needs that shall not be met by the Family Assistance Fund include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- School expenses, including private school fees or tuition
- Business expenses or investments, or anything that brings financial profit to the individual or family
- Credit card bills
- Needs of individuals who are wanted by law enforcement or for paying fines as a result of breaking the law
- Legal Fees
- Penalties resulting from irresponsible actions

Generally, assistance from the Family Assistance Fund will not exceed \$1,500 per person or family per fiscal year with a lifetime limit of \$3000.

#### **D. Emergency Food and/or Gas Cards**

\$25.00 grocery or \$25.00 gas cards are available through the Parish Nurse and will be included as part of the lifetime limitations.

#### **Application Process**

##### **A. Initial Meeting with RBCC Representative**

- All individuals or families requesting assistance through the Family Assistance Fund must first meet with the church representative.
- A Request for Assistance application must be filled out by the person requesting help or by someone who is assisting the person in need. Copies of the form are available from the Deacon Moderator by emailing request to: **deacons@rbccpc.org**
- The application should be returned to the Deacon Moderator where it will be forwarded to the Associate Pastor for Congregational Care. Upon his recommendation, the case (confidentiality

will be protected) will be forwarded to the members of the Family Assistance Fund Committee for approval. In ALL cases, the applicant will be required to submit proof of need (e.g., eviction notice, turn off notice, etc.), and the Committee reserves the right to award an amount less than the amount requested. Those requesting assistance will be offered pastoral counseling if appropriate.

**B. Processing the request**

The applicant will be informed by the Deacon Moderator or Associate Pastor of the decision of the Committee. Every possible effort will be made to process the request within one week.

Checks from the Family Assistance Fund will be payable to the third party agency to which the applicant owes money. No cash will be given to any applicant.