



Benevolence Fund Policy

Last Revised: Sep 23, 2024

South Mountain Community Church is one church that meets in many locations. The advantage to this multisite model is that all campuses, young or old, have the same opportunities to help those in need in their community. By hosting one singular benevolence fund, SMCC can have a larger impact to help those in need throughout Utah. With this in mind, there are procedures that protect the organization from making careless or absent-minded decisions when dispersing funds. The following procedures are subject to the New Testament guidelines and SMCC guidelines documented throughout this document.

Policy

1. Purpose

- a. The purpose of the South Mountain Community Church (SMCC) Benevolence Policy is to establish an outline for an objective, unbiased process for the evaluation of requests for assistance from the Benevolent Fund.
- b. Provide eligibility requirements and criteria for receiving assistance from the Benevolent Fund.
- c. Outline the request, approval, and disbursement requirements.

2. Oversight and Accountability

- a. Financial assistance will only be considered if adequate funds are available in the Benevolence account.
- b. The policies and guidelines set forth in the SMCC Benevolence Fund are guided and directed by New Testament Biblical Principles.
- c. The Executive Pastor of Church Operations, under the oversight of the Lead Pastor (LP) and Elder Board, shall have overseeing the administration of the Benevolent Fund and the Biblical stewardship of the money held therein.
- d. The anonymity of anyone requesting assistance will be preserved except for the Campus Pastor (CP) LP, the Executive Pastor of Church Operations, and Members of the Elder Board. Exceptions may apply if there are concerns beyond finances.
- e. Request for \$500.00 or less: The CP can initially approve or deny the Benevolence gifts up to but not exceeding \$500.00.
 - i. Final Review, approval, and disbursement of funds is the responsibility of the Executive Pastor of Church Operations .
- f. Request for \$501.00 up to \$2000.00: The LP can approve or deny the Benevolence gifts up to but not exceeding \$2000.00.
- g. Requests exceeding \$2000.00 must be approved by the SMCC Elder Board.
- h. The initial application and all associated paperwork will be maintained by the Executive Pastor of Church Operations.



- i. A report will be provided to the Elder Board at the end of each fiscal quarter showing the Benevolence Fund transaction amounts and descriptions for that quarter.
3. Recipients of Assistance
 - a. Those attending a SMCC Campus with some regularity and are, in the judgment of their Campus Pastor, sufficiently engaged with the SMCC Campus to meet the intent and spirit of the New Testament Guidelines set forth in Section 4.
 - b. Those who do not attend an SMCC Campus but in the estimation of the Lead Pastor are deserving of compassion funds under the spirit of New Testament benevolence set forth in Section 4.
4. New Testament Guidelines for Church Benevolence
 - a. Benevolence is first and foremost for people within the church. Aid was given to those who were committed to the local body of believers first. This provided a way for the local church to know the extent and legitimacy of the need of the one applying for aid.
 - i. Acts 2:44-45 "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need."
 - b. It is important for SMCC to be compassionate in all situations. We may not be able to meet people's material needs but in our compassion, we will do what we can to help get everyone the assistance they need.
 - i. 1 John 3:17-18 "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."
 - c. We may deny help to those who do not qualify as "truly needy" in order not to exhaust the resources needed to meet the needs of the people who CANNOT help themselves — people like widows and orphans.
 - i. James 1:27 "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."
 - d. We will attempt to follow Scriptural guidelines in determining who we give assistance to and who we do not.
 - i. 1 Timothy 5:5-8 "The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."
5. Additional SMCC Guidelines for Church Benevolence
 - a. Financial support is given by SMCC only after family, government aid, and the requestor's SMALL GROUP has been engaged for help.
 - i. If after all those sources of financial aid prove to be wanting, then the benevolence fund may be considered.



- b. In order to receive aid from SMCC the applicant **MUST WORK** if they **CAN WORK**, and work is available. If other work cannot be found, and we can find work for them at SMCC, we will gladly pay them for that work. If not, we will partner with them in locating a job.
- c. If the applicant has **RELATIVES** that can help, they **SHOULD** help. We understand that many relatives are not willing to help because they feel that they have been used in the past. This crisis may be an opportunity for reconciliation, and we will assist with that in any way we can.
- d. SMCC will not, under any circumstances, give checks or cash to an individual or families directly. Doing so may lead to disqualification for our 501c3 designation.
 - i. SMCC will first default to writing checks directly to companies (i.e. utility companies, lenders, etc.).
 - ii. Under specific circumstances, SMCC may provide an individual or family with a gift card to the appropriate merchant (i.e. grocery store).
- e. Supporting documentation for financial aid of any kind (i.e. utility bills, loan details, mortgage statements, etc.) must accompany the application. The Central Operations Team will keep a copy of supporting documentation on file with the application.
- f. The stated purpose of the Benevolence Fund is to meet peoples' basic needs. These needs are defined as, but not limited to:
 - i. Lodging
 - ii. Food
 - iii. Clothing
 - iv. Medical Treatment
 - v. Transportation to/from a place of employment
 - vi. Funeral Expenses
 - vii. Initial evaluation and professional counseling appointments
- g. Needs that do not meet the criteria for approved Benevolence funds include and are not limited to:
 - i. school expenses, business investments, or anything that brings financial profit to the individual or family
 - ii. paying off credit cards. Exceptions can be made when an individual has had to use a credit card in a crisis or emergency (e.g., hospitalization, death, etc.)
 - iii. needs of individuals who are wanted by the law or for paying fines as a result of breaking the law
 - iv. housing for unmarried couples
 - v. penalties relating to late payments or irresponsible actions
 - vi. private school fees or tuition
 - vii. business ventures or investments
- h. If the applicant is in need of financial assistance because of **SELF-INFLICTED POVERTY** (drug abuse, gambling, other misconduct) then in order to receive aid, they **MUST** attend classes and/or get counseling that will address those issues in order to qualify for the aid.

- i. In rare occasions, Benevolence funds can be used for relief for families in other countries. These funds should be administered by someone who is vetted by the leadership of SMCC.
- j. Benevolence funds may be requested and approved to cover fees for SMCC ministry events. In these situations, the pastor overseeing the event may determine that having the individuals who cannot afford the fees at the event will serve a special evangelical or spiritual growth opportunity.

Approval Process

1. Applications must be reviewed by the Executive Pastor of Church Operations (or designee) prior to funding. If the application does not meet the requirements set forth in this policy the Central Operations Team will work with the Campus Pastor to see what may be done with the application to meet policy guidelines.
2. Once a potential applicant has been made known to the Campus Pastor (CP), the CP (or designee) will provide a copy of this policy and an application form to the potential applicant.
3. The applicant reads the policy and may then complete the application form and return it to the Campus Pastor (or designee) with supporting documents.
4. The Campus Pastor (or his designee) will review the application and meet with the applicant.
 - a. If the CP does not believe the applicant warrants financial assistance, the CP will:
 - i. Notify the applicant and provide a graceful and truthful explanation for the denial to the applicant.
 - ii. Forward the application denial to the Central Operations Team to maintain on file.
 - b. If the CP believes the application warrants approval AND the amount requested is \$500 or less, the CP will then forward the application to the Executive Pastor of Church Operations for review and funds disbursement.
 - c. If the CP believes the application warrants approval AND the amount requested is over \$500, the CP forwards the application to the LEAD PASTOR for review and further approval.
5. Upon receipt of a CP approved application, the Executive Pastor of Church Operations (or designee) will:
 - a. Review the application for completeness and compliance with this policy.
 - i. If the application is incomplete or does not comply with this policy, the Executive Pastor of Church Operations (not a designee) will return the application to the CP with an explanation and give the CP an opportunity to resubmit.

- b. Review the files and determine if the applicant has previously applied for church benevolence and if the amount of these applications or the dollar amounts requested is excessive in the judgment of the Executive Pastor of Church Operations (not a designee).
 - i. The Executive Pastor of Church Operations, along with the CP and the Lead Pastor, will determine what to do with the application.
 - c. Review the balance of the SMCC Benevolence account and other pending applications to determine if funds are available to support the application.
 - i. If funds are not available, the Executive Pastor of Church Operations will notify the CP and Lead Pastor who will also notify the Elder Board.
 - d. If the amount requested is \$500 or less, notify the Director of Finance to disburse the funds.
 - i. Upon completion, the Director of Finance will notify the Executive Pastor of Church Operations, CP, and applicant.
 - ii. Upon completion the Director of Finance will file the application.
 - e. If the amount requested and approved is over \$500, the Lead Pastor will notify the Finance Director to disburse the funds.
 - f. On a quarterly basis provide a summary report of applications received and their disposition status to the Lead Pastor and Elder Board.
6. Upon receipt of a CP approved application for a request exceeding \$500, the Lead Pastor will:
- a. If the amount requested is \$2,000 or less, decide whether or not to approve the request.
 - i. If the request is denied, the Lead Pastor will inform the Executive Pastor of Church Operations and CP as to the reason so that the CP may explain gracefully and truthfully to the applicant as to why the application was denied. The application is then returned to the Executive Pastor of Church Operations for filing.
 - ii. If the request is approved, the Lead Pastor will inform the Executive Pastor of Church Operations and CP. The Executive Pastor of Church Operations will complete disposition of the application per paragraph 4d above.
 - b. If the amount requested is above \$2,000, bring the matter before the Elder Board for approval or disapproval.
 - i. If the Elder Board passes a motion to disapprove, the Lead Pastor will complete disposition of the application per paragraph 5.a.i above.
 - ii. If the Elder Board passes a motion to approve, the Lead Pastor will complete disposition of the application per paragraph 5.a.ii above.