

All Things New Covenant Church

Benevolence Ministry - Policies and Guidelines

Purpose of this Document

This document

- Describes ATN's Benevolence Ministry
- Defines eligibility requirements and criteria for receiving assistance from the Benevolence Fund.
- Describes the request, approval and disbursement process.

Overview - ATN's Benevolence Ministry

The Bible calls us to "...serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 6:13-14)

One way we love our neighbors is by supporting them financially through our Ministry Financial planning and through the oversight of ATN's Benevolence Ministry team.

Oversight and Accountability

- The Benevolence Ministry Team, under the oversight of ATN's Leadership Team, has responsibility for overseeing decisions and actions taken in response to requests for emergency financial support.
- The Benevolence Ministry Team is chaired by the Leadership Team's Vice President and includes 2 or more other volunteers.
- The anonymity of anyone requesting assistance will be preserved with the exception of those individuals with a need to know - that is, ATN's Leadership Team and the Benevolence Ministry team. Exceptions may apply if there are concerns beyond finances.
- The Benevolence Ministry Team, consistent with predefined guidelines, determines who will receive disbursements from the Benevolence Fund, in what amount, and for what purpose.
- The Benevolence Ministry Team shall give an accounting on request to the Leadership Team of all contributions to and disbursements from the Benevolence Fund.
- The maximum support the benevolence team is authorized to provide for a single request is \$1,000. Amounts exceeding this maximum require the approval of the Leadership team.

Source of Funding

- The Benevolence Fund is a general fund expense line item of ATN's annual Ministry Financial Plan.
- Any amounts allocated to this fund are proposed by ATN's Discipleship constellation, reviewed by ATN's operations leaders, and affirmed by ATN's Leadership team.
- The Benevolence Fund may be underwritten through the receipt of special contributions by individuals and/or families wishing to make a donation to the Fund.
- In order to comply with IRS regulations concerning charitable contributions, all gifts to the Benevolence Fund must be unconditional and without personal benefit to the donor.
- Contributions to the Benevolence Fund may not be earmarked or otherwise designated for particular purposes or recipients. Such contributions will be declined.
- Financial assistance is limited to the availability of funds approved for this purpose.

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Eligibility Requirements

Any ATN Partner (i.e. Member), or person(s) recommended by an ATN Partner, is eligible and can apply to be considered for financial assistance. The applicant does not need to be associated with ATN.

Intended Purpose and Limits of Assistance

The stated purpose of the Benevolence Fund is to minister to individuals or families during a time of hardship or crisis by assisting them with one-time financial support. Generally, assistance from the Benevolence Fund is intended to cover an individual's or family's basic needs - expenses such as:

- Lodging
- Food
- Electric/gas utilities
- Medical expenses
- Other Essential living expenses

The Benevolence Fund is intended as a source of last resort, to be used when the individual or family requesting assistance has explored all other possibilities of assistance from appropriate sources (i.e., family, savings, investments, etc).

The Benevolence Fund is not intended to support multiple requests or ongoing support for a single individual or family. More than one annual request, or multiple requests over time will typically not be considered, but exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Benevolence Ministry Team.

Needs that may not be met by the Benevolence Fund include:

- Business investments, debts or anything that brings financial profit to the individual or family
- 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.)
- Paying fines or fees related to criminal behavior
- Legal fees
- Certain debts
- Penalties relating to late payments or irresponsible actions
- School tuition or fees

Note that these lists are not intended to be exhaustive; instead, it is intended to provide general guidelines in determining the type of expenses covered vs. not covered by Benevolence assistance.

Process Guidelines

The Benevolence Ministry process for reviewing and responding to requests for assistance is based on a foundation of compassion, objectivity, and fairness. In fairness, an amount granted to one applicant for a specific purpose should be comparable to the amounts granted to other applicants for that same purpose. The benevolence team will agree to appropriate amounts for various purposes.

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Request for financial assistance

All requests for assistance must be tendered in writing by the individual requesting assistance. Requests for an individual other than an ATN partner must include information about the partner recommending the assistance.

Requests are submitted by completing ATN's Benevolence Request form and giving it to a member of the Benevolence Ministry Team. *(or mailing it to the church office, Attn Benevolence Ministry, 479 Pacific Street, Suite 5C, Monterey CA 93940)*

Those requesting help must be willing to grant the Benevolence Ministry Team permission to follow up on any of the information provided to them. The Benevolence Ministry Team will be sensitive to confidentiality issues.

One or more members of the benevolence team may meet with the individual(s) requesting assistance to better understand their situation, to pray with them, and to guide them to other resources in the church and/or the community.

Application Review and approval process

Except as otherwise noted, the Benevolence Ministry team determines whether to provide financial support, how much support to provide, and how and when to provide it. The approval of the majority of team members is required and the team approving the financial support must consist of at least 3 individuals.

If the benevolence fund balance is lower than needed to meet agreed needs, the Leadership team is consulted. At the Leadership Team's discretion, and pursuant to ATN's bylaws and to the Financial team's operating policies and guidelines, the Ministry Financial plan can be adjusted to increase the benevolence fund.

Benevolence Fund Disbursements

ATN's financial team leader is responsible for making the agreed disbursement.

Disbursements from the Benevolence Fund are in the form of a gift. However, the recipient is encouraged to "pay it forward" if and when in the future they are able by making a donation to ATN to help others in need.

If practical, disbursements from the Benevolence Fund shall be made directly to the party or entity to whom payment is due rather than in the form of cash given directly to the individual or family requesting assistance.