

Scientific and Support Staff Benevolent Association (SSSBA)

Benevolent Policy

Introduction

The SSSBA benevolent fund was established according to the SSSBA's constitution and is recognized by the Australian Charities and Non-for-profit Commission (ACNC) and has Deductibility Gift Recipient status from the Australian Taxation Office. As such, it is an approved recipient for designated giving. It has no budget for either income or expense. Its receipts consist entirely of designated giving, and its expenses consist of funds disbursed for its stated intended purposes at the direction of the Benevolent Fund Committee. The Benevolent Fund is essentially a bank account that is designated purely for donations, and is separate to any operating accounts of the SSSBA.

Benevolent Fund Committee

The Benevolent Fund Committee is separate to the Association Member Committee and its sole purpose is to process requests for assistance as well as the disbursement of funds. There is no restriction on the number of consecutive years that a member may serve on the Benevolent Fund Committee. The Benevolent Fund Committee does not consist of a fixed number of members but the members must be appointed by the Association's Member Committee following voting by the Association's members. The exception will be at the Fund start up, wherein an interim Benevolent Fund Committee will be appointed by the Association while it develops its membership base.

Purposes

The purpose of this document is to set forth the responsibilities of the Benevolent Fund Committee and the guidelines for discharging those responsibilities. It is not intended to cover all circumstances under which funds may be disbursed from the fund, only those that involve the Benevolent Fund Committee. The Benevolent Fund Committee has ultimate responsibility and accountability for the benevolent fund, and will necessarily make many decisions to disburse funds from the fund—subject to these guidelines.

The purpose of the benevolent fund is to support eligible people in necessitous financial need and help them in covering basic living expenses. The fund achieves this purpose primarily through specific disbursement at the direction of the Benevolent Fund Committee.

Oversight and Accountability

The Benevolent Fund Committee is accountable to the Association Member Committee. The Benevolent Fund Committee will interface with the Association Member Committee when necessary through the Benevolent Fund Committee Chairperson.

Income

The sources of income for the benevolent fund include:

- Workplace giving in the Australian Public Service
- Direct Deposit in the Benevolent Fund Account (on application)
- Website 'Donate Now' button, pending website tatus

Guidelines for Disbursement

General Guidelines

The benevolent 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.

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

Those requesting assistance must also be pursuing other sources of long term financial assistance and be willing to receive financial, family, or emotional counseling. The Benevolent Fund Committee will not provide help to anyone who, in its estimation, will have negative or irresponsible behavior reinforced by financial help.

Those requesting help must be willing to give the Benevolent Fund Committee permission to follow up on any of the information provided to the committee. The committee will be sensitive to confidential issues.

Recipients

Recipients of funds disbursed from the benevolent fund at the direction of the Benevolent Fund Committee are:

1. People working or who have worked in the defence science and technology community and/or their immediate families
2. Members of the community

Criteria

The stated purpose of the benevolent fund is to meet people's basic needs. Normally, these needs are defined as:

- Emergency lodging
- food
- clothing
- emergency medical treatment for conditions of a life threatening nature
- initial evaluation and professional counseling appointments (for financial assistance)

Needs that may *not* be met by the benevolent fund include:

- school expenses
- business investments, 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., hospitalisation, death, etc.)
- needs of individuals who are wanted by the law or for paying fines as a result of breaking the law
- housing renovation needs
- penalties relating to irresponsible or criminal actions
- private school fees or tuition
- business ventures or investments
- expenses relating to failed business ventures or investments

Financial assistance for counseling will be considered if it is perceived that counseling would directly enable the individual to address a current financial situation.

There is no limit to the amount that can be dispensed apart from the limit of funds available in the Benevolent Fund account.

Procedure for Disbursement

Options for Disbursement

There are currently four possible ways to provide financial assistance from the fund:

1. One off lump sum payment (deposited directly into an account);
2. Lump sum payments to medical providers or directly to utilities or other such bills as determined by the Benevolent Fund Committee;
3. Regular small payments to cover living expenses for a short period of time as determined by the Benevolent Fund Committee (e.g. \$300 a week for 2 months)
4. Interest free loan to the recipient in the form of a deposit in a bank account. Principal to be repaid on receipt of insurance payouts or relatives/recipient able to secure funds through other mechanisms.

Source of Request

A Request for Assistance Application must be filled out by the person requesting help, or by someone who is assisting the person in need.

Processing the Request

1. The Request for Assistance Application is emailed to the Secretary of the SSSBA who will send on a suitably completed form to the Benevolent Fund Committee.
2. Inappropriate, incomplete or bogus applications will not be forwarded on.
3. In a meeting or by a telephone conference, the Benevolent Fund Committee will review the request, request further information and/or come to a decision.
4. The person making the request is informed of the decision.
5. Cheques are written and disbursed or monies deposited in a nominated account.
6. A person from the Benevolent Fund Committee or their nominee will follow up with the recipient after an appropriate period to check on the status of the recipient.

This text is provided with the understanding that SSSBA is not rendering legal, accounting, or other professional advice or service. Professional advice on specific issues should be sought from an accountant, lawyer or other professional.