

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

MINISTRY ASSISTANCE FUND

I. PURPOSE

A Crisis in Transition Fund was called forth by a decision of Annual Conference in 1981 to provide emergency assistance to pastors and families who were caught in extended transitions between pastorates or between pastoral ministry and other employment. The purpose of the Fund was to provide immediate and short-term help from the church to augment other available resources. The Fund was neither intended to provide aid for all pastors/families in transition, nor was it to be long term.

The Ministry Assistance Fund (MAF), approved by the Annual Conference in 1998, replaces the Crisis in Transition Fund. The MAF was created to assist all ordained persons, hereafter referred to as ministers. While continuing to assist those in crisis, the MAF is also proactive in that it is designed to assist people before they are in crisis situations.

II. DEFINITION

Ministers and families who face professional or personal hardship and stress may be eligible to receive assistance from the Fund. Hardship means the depletion of resources to the extent that basic living conditions are affected, requiring the need for time and support to pursue career or personal counseling and/or the inability to find funds to pursue a new location or other employment. Because factors that indicate crises or emergencies vary from person to person and are complex, definition of the same must be general, allowing for flexibility in consultation and negotiation.

III. FUND ACCUMULATIONS

The Ministry Assistance Fund, an outreach ministry for districts, congregations, and ministers, will accumulate from annual cash contributions, which will be designated gifts outside the General Board's annual budget.

Congregations are encouraged to include the Fund in their annual budgeting, apart from self-allocation, on the recommended minimum of:

Up to 100 members	\$ 50.00
100 - 200 members	\$ 75.00
200 - 300 members	\$ 100.00
Over 300 members	\$ 125.00

Ministers are encouraged to contribute to the Fund. Appeals for the Fund will be announced by the officers of the Ministers' Association and/or the General Board's Office of Ministry. District Boards and/or District Ministry Commissions, as well as concerned lay people, may contribute to the Fund. Contributions can be sent at any time to: Ministry Assistance Fund, c/o Treasurer, Church of the Brethren General Board, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120-1694

IV. GRANTS

Though the Crisis in Transition Fund was approved by the 1981 Annual Conference and renamed and redefined as the Ministry Assistance Fund in 1998, the Fund will be operative on the basis of available balances at any given time.

Applications for grants will be channeled through the District Executive/Minister or designee of the minister/family experiencing hardship. There is no limitation on the origin of the applications, except that the origin be identified. The District Executive/Minister or designee, the General Board's Director of Ministry, and the president of the Ministers' Association will consider applications on the basis of need and available Fund balances and determine the amount of the grant to be made, in consultation with the applicant.

The grant may take the form of cash, career assessment scholarship, insurance coverage, or other forms of assistance, depending on the need.

Grants are meant to provide assistance for short-term needs, e.g., assistance with medical insurance premiums for two or three months, several sessions with a personal/professional counselor, emergency housing needs, etc. A grant to a minister/family is not to exceed \$2000 in a calendar year. Applications for assistance with long-term needs should be made to the Church Workers Assistance Plan of Brethren Benefit Trust.

The Director of Ministry, in consultation with the appropriate District Executive/Minister and the president of the Ministers' Association, will process all grant applications and notify the Treasurer of final agreements reached for Fund recipients immediately after such agreements are negotiated.

V. REPORTING

Annually, the General Board's Director of Ministry will be responsible for a year-end written report of Fund accumulations, disbursements, and balances to the executive committee of the General Board, the Council of District Executives, and the Church of the Brethren Ministers' Association. The confidentiality of Fund claimants and recipients will be maintained.

VI. REVISIONS

The authority for the Ministry Assistance Fund rests with Annual Conference, and the responsibility for its administration rests with the executive committee of the General Board.

Recommendations for revising these guidelines can be proposed to the Executive Committee of the General Board by the officers of the Ministers' Association, the Council of District Executives, and/or the General Board's Director of Ministry.

Approved by the 1998 Annual Conference
Revised 1/2000

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