

UPSIDE DOWN

:MEET THE NEED FIRST

Benevolence Grant Ministry Guide

17 Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 19 By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life. (1 Timoth6 6:17-19)

Introduction

When individuals and families experience economic hardship, churches and ministries have an opportunity to meet needs in a unique way. Although other agencies and organizations might have deeper financial resources, people of faith understand that we can offer more than just financial security.

This resource has been developed to help ministries and churches develop a system to leverage financial resources. The aim isn't to just "meet the need," but "meet the need first." The initial need presents opportunities to build a relationship and allow God to transform lives.

There are many questions when beginning this type of ministry. This guide seeks to provide healthy solutions in five steps:

Step 1: Planning (Page 3)

Step 2: Awareness (Page 6)

Step 3: Screening (Page 7)

Step 4: Determination and Payment (Page 8)

Step 5: Follow-up (Page 9)

Utilizing the five steps, best-practices, and principles in this guide will open doors to minister to the deeper needs of the soul.

Step 1: Planning

Before taking any steps to establish a benevolence grant ministry, make a commitment to the following principles

- Value Leaders
- Make Partners
- Set and Follow Policies
- Double Up on the Follow Up

Value Leaders

Focus on Self-Care

A long term focus necessitates the prioritization of self-care among those providing help. Proper boundaries and sufficient Biblical rest are the only ways to ensure perseverance. Short term interactions pale in comparison to the benefit of long-term relationships. Self-care may feel selfish, but is actually self-less under a long term focus.

Make Partners

Focus the Mission

For most churches/organizations, it is unrealistic to be all things to all people. With a limited focus, you can better work alongside community partners and reduce duplication. It can be hard to say no. But the result is doing a few things well and effectively.

Set and Follow Policies

Focus on the long term

Meeting any and all immediate needs is tempting. However, meeting an immediate need without a strategic focus may not be in someone's long term interest. We also risk being driven by our own emotions. Instead, decision-making should be based on what is best in the long term and what is sustainable for everyone involved. We want to be **light**, not **lightning**.

Develop a process

Structure is love. We should be driven by compassion (secondary to prayer). In the long term, the most compassionate way to meet tangible needs is to define a process and stick to it. It is also the most effective way to be fair. A process will discourage manipulation, and will ensure that "quieter" people are not overlooked. A uniform process creates an expectation which leads to healthy relationships. A process is also the best way to counteract bias and racism. With a process you can be intentional instead of merely reactive.

Keep data systematically

Mercy ministries are most effective when you are involved in people's lives. A system of gathering data will bring accountability to all people involved in a helping relationship and expand the helper's understanding of the situation. Data is also the best ways to involve financial givers who cannot be involved directly.

No direct funds

For many people, receiving a check or cash is harmful. There is no fair or flawless way to identify those people. A "no direct funds" policy promotes healthy relationships through consistent and fair expectations. Most needs can be met through goods, services, or direct payment to a third party. This policy is held by the vast majority of long term ministers to tough or economically diverse neighborhoods.

Double Up on the Follow Up

It's about big change, not big numbers

Only help as many people to whom the church/ministry can follow-up

Relief and release

Providing relief (meeting tangible needs) is important and Biblical. There may be times of simply showing God's love in tangible ways through relief. However, it should never stand alone. There should always be an intentional interplay between relief and release with release as the ultimate goal. Release ultimately is defined as freedom from sin through Jesus Christ and spiritual growth.

Step 2: Awareness

Questions:

- How will people be aware of the service?
- How will the ministry be aware of needs?

Solution:

- Establish an outreach program to assess the holistic needs of individuals

Best-Practices:

- Collect contact information of individuals at ministry events
- Develop an outreach team who make phone calls to check in on the well-being of contacts. Consider using the church's existing deacon ministry as the outreach team.
- Train outreach team to ask questions regarding individual's holistic well-being (physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual). Offer immediate prayer for needs, but keep in mind "under-promise, over deliver." Outreach team should not make promises on assistance that can be provided.
- Create a system to collect data and information gathered by the outreach team.

Remember the following principle:

- Serve the unserved—Since there may be some very large programs administered by other agencies, look for the people falling through the cracks

Sample Resources Available:

- Graffiti 2 Phone Call Outreach Form (Page 11)
- Graffiti 2 Grocery Box Form (Page 12-13)

Step 3: Screening

Questions:

- How do we know what is needed?
- How do we make sure we aren't being taken advantage of?

Solution:

- Create an easy application that is done in interview format to make contact with individuals and hear their story

Best Practices:

- Create a form and train screeners to gather information with compassion and care (not simply "fill out this form"). Forms should be simple and contain at least the following:
 - What is the problem that created the need?
 - What is being requested?
 - What action will the organization take?
- Where appropriate, request written documentation to substantiate the request.
- Information should be gathered regarding other programs and resources available in the region. Screeners should work to connect the individual with these other resources that are available.
- Screeners should offer spiritual support and prayer.

Remember the following principle:

- The bigger the city, the more personal we need to become. It is often more important to hear a person's story than to grant their request.

Sample Resources Available:

- Graffiti 2's Benevolence Grant Form (Page 14-16)

Step 4: Determination and Payment

Questions:

- How do we know whether to make the grant?
- How do we determine how much to grant?
- How do we ensure fairness and prevent abuse?

Solution:

- Establish criteria and work with a team.

Best Practices:

- Limit financial assistance to a specific dollar amount
- Grant determinations should use the “rule of three”—approval of grants should involve a group. Consider a procedure that requires two signatures or a record of two approvals.
- Make funds available directly to vendors
- If paying rent or other bills, take into consideration the individual’s ability to make future payments. If unable to do so, help individual with other resources, budgeting, and finding employment.

Remember the following principles:

- Kindness crosses cultures—it’s not about the size of the gift that makes a difference, it’s the kindness connected to the gift. Small grants allow a ministry to focus on relationships.

Step 5: Follow-Up

Question:

- After we make a grant, what do we do next?

Solution:

- Do ongoing follow up to walk alongside individuals by offering ongoing support, assistance with other resources, and opportunities for a relationship with Jesus.

Best Practices:

- Understand other government and agency resources that are available and assist a person navigating those bureaucracies.
- In some cases, consider providing additional, larger grant to individuals who are taking appropriate steps and allowing ongoing support.
- Offer support groups to individuals dealing with job loss or grief
- After the major crisis is over, have a time to gather, remember, and celebrate
- Connect individuals to other ministries of the church
- Be aware and willing to create new ministries that grow out of this initial ministry that will help meet future needs (ESL, GED, Job Training)

Remember the following principle:

- It's about big change, not big numbers—Only help as many people to whom the church/ministry can follow-up.

Sample Resource 1



Graffiti 2 Phone Call Outreach

Instructions

Access your contact list from the shared doc in Google Drive. All contact information is confidential and should be handled discreetly and should not be removed from the doc shared.

Set aside time to make phone calls. Prior to making calls, begin your time with scripture reading and prayer. Tune your ears to God.

When placing phone call and no one answers:

- Leave a voicemail and follow up with a text stating: "My name is _____ and I am making phone calls for Graffiti 2. Call or text me back if you have any prayer needs or need any help."
- Make a note of your voicemail and text in the Google Doc. Call again at a later time.

When placing phone call and someone answers consider these talking points:

- Hello my name is _____. I am with Graffiti 2.
- Ask – How are you doing?
- Ask – Are you in need of anything?
- Ask – Is there anything you would like for us to pray for?
- Confirm their contact information and fill in any missing information.
- If you are comfortable pray with them right now on the phone. If not let them know you will pass the request on to staff.
- Inform them of any announcements and opportunities to connect with Graffiti 2
- Invite them to text "graffiti2" to 31996 for future announcements
- Ask if you can call them again in the future
- **Remember, under promise over deliver.** Don't make any promises on services that can be provided. Before confirming ability to deliver services, emphasize that you need to check with Graffiti 2.

Document all communications. Make sure to write clear notes for any request needed. Include name, need and prayer request. For any urgent needs or prayer concerns contact _____

Sample Resource 2



Grocery Box Form

Personal Information

Date: _____ Recipient Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Number in household: _____

Has anyone in your household been directly affected by COVID-19? _____ Yes _____ No

Resource Awareness Questionnaire

1. Would you like more information about meals available at schools? _____ Yes _____ No
2. New York City has resources (including groceries) available for those directly affected by COVID-19, would you like more information? _____ Yes _____ No
3. Are you aware Graffiti 2 is meeting for virtual services? _____ Yes _____ No
4. Does your household have any other pressing or urgent needs due to loss of income? _____ Yes _____ No
5. Can I or someone else at Graffiti 2 follow up with you by phone? _____ Yes _____ No
6. Can I take a moment to pray for you? _____ Yes _____ No

Notes

Grocery Box Counseling Guidance

General Guidance

- Take notes paying particular attention to how you or someone else might follow up at a later time.
- Under promise, over deliver—Graffiti 2 may have additional resources to assist, but do not make any promises.
- Take time to listen, sometimes a person just needs to be heard.
- If there is a concern or need in which you are unsure how to address, refer the individual to Josh or Andrew.
- Be willing to take time assisting the individual, walking them through any of the processes—the bigger the city, the more personable we need to become.
- Don't forget to follow-up with the individual at a later time.

If the answer is “Yes” on the Resource Awareness Questionnaire:

1. If individual needs assistance finding their local meal hub, use the following resource:
 - a. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/food/free-meals>
2. If individual wants more information about resources for those affected by COVID-19, use the following resource:
 - a. <https://cv19engagementportal.cityofnewyork.us/>
 - i. This resource is reserved for individuals that have . . .
 1. Experienced symptoms of COVID-19
 2. Tested positive for COVID-19
 3. Have come into contact with someone who may have COVID-19
 4. Currently in quarantine
3. If individual would like information about virtual services, encourage them to do the following:
 - a. Text the word “graffiti2” to 31996
 - b. Ask if you text them the Zoom information:
 - i. <https://zoom.us/j/6427353186>
 - ii. Meeting ID: 642 735 3186
 - iii. Meeting password: g2bc (lowercase)
4. Take notes on any financial needs, paying particular attention to needs that might benefit from receiving a benevolence grant. Provide this information to Andrew or Josh. Do not make any promises.
5. If permission is given to follow up, provide contact information to Kerri Johnson for her to assign to G2's Phone Call Outreach Team. Additionally, schedule a time in your personal calendar to give the person a phone call.
6. Ask, “How can I pray for you?” Take time to listen, paying attention to spiritual needs. If appropriate, share the gospel. Don't forget to pray!

Sample Resource 3



Benevolence Grant Form

Personal Information

Date: _____ Recipient Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Number in household: _____

Has anyone in your household been directly affected by COVID-19? _____ Yes _____ No

Information about Need

What is owed?

Who is owed? (contact information)

What is the normal form of payment?

Action Taken

Resource Awareness Questionnaire

1. Would you like more information about meals available at schools? Yes No
 2. New York City has resources (including groceries) available for those directly affected by COVID-19, would you like more information? Yes No
 3. Would you like information about applying for cash assistance through HRA? Yes No
 4. Would you like more information regarding the IRS stimulus check? Yes No
 5. Would you like more information regarding applying for unemployment? Yes No
 6. Are you aware Graffiti 2 is meeting for virtual services? Yes No
 7. Does your household have any other pressing or urgent needs due to loss of income?
 Yes No
 8. Can I or someone else at Graffiti 2 follow up with you by phone? Yes No
 9. Can I take a moment to pray for you? Yes No
-

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Benevolence Grant Counseling Guidance

General Guidance

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- Under promise, over deliver—Graffiti 2 may have additional resources to assist, but do not make any promises
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- Be willing to take time assisting the individual, walking them through any of the processes—the bigger the city, the more personable we need to become.
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 - i. This resource is reserved for individuals that have . . .
 1. Experienced symptoms of COVID-19
 2. Tested positive for COVID-19
 3. Have come into contact with someone who may have COVID-19
 4. Currently in quarantine
3. If individual would like more information about HRA Cash Assistance use the following resource:
 - a. <https://a069-access.nyc.gov/accesshra/>
4. If individual would like more information about accessing stimulus check use the following resource:
 - a. <https://www.irs.gov/>
5. If individual would like more information about unemployment or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, use the following resource:
 - a. <https://www.labor.ny.gov/home/>
6. If individual would like information about virtual services, encourage them to do the following:
 - a. Text the word “graffiti2” to 31996
 - b. Ask if you text them the Zoom information:
 - i. <https://zoom.us/j/6427353186>
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