

Benevolence Procedures

Suggested procedures for handling benevolence by Frank Sommerville, JD, CPA:

I suggest that the church adopt a written policy spelling out limits of the church's benevolence.

1. The policy should require a written application from the proposed recipient.
2. The application should require a copy of an identifying document, such as a driver's license.
3. The application should also include a copy of the unpaid bill, if the bill is the source of the need.
4. At least two unrelated individuals should make all decisions regarding the request.
5. The church should retain the application and related documents, plus the decision document at least three calendar years after the decision was made.
6. Also, the policy should require a separate application for each need.
7. The church should have its policy reviewed by competent legal counsel.
8. Finally, when faced with borderline requests, the church should consult with competent legal counsel before making the gift. By following this procedure, the church can fearlessly face any IRS inquiry about its benevolence.

Source: <http://churchexecutive.com/archives/benevolence-the-right-help-given-the-right-way>