

Approved: May 29, 2022

THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH CONFERENCE OF

THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

IRVING, TEXAS

GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF FRIENDS

I. INTRODUCTION

Our Conference maintains and monitors a Warm Line (helpline) for callers to request our help. We respond to each caller to schedule a visit, and we make home visits in a timely way. We meet our friends in their homes or in a convenient location for them. We serve in hope - - praying, listening, responding to their needs, and offering a listing of other local resources. Ideally, we call them back to see how they are doing, to pray again with them, and to offer other resources/job opportunities. We offer food, and we refer/redirect callers to other conferences if they reside outside our boundaries. A conference locator can be found on our Parish Plus web page.

II. ELIGIBILITY OF FRIENDS

We serve parishioners and Irving residents who reside within our assigned boundaries (a portion of 75060, 75061, 75062, and all of 75038, 75039, and 75063). The conference locator found in ParishPlus can be used to determine if callers reside within our assigned boundaries. Each friend must receive a home or phone visit before being assisted financially.

III. GENERAL ASSISTANCE

WE CONSIDER THE GREATEST NEED OF EACH FRIEND.

Our maximum financial assistance per family will be \$800 (\$400 per six months) in a 12-month period. The guideline suggesting \$400 per six months does not have to be adhered to without flexibility. For example, in the first six-month period we may assist up to \$500 and then a step-down amount of \$300 in the next.

We should try to adhere to our decision and repeat in subsequent calls what we have counseled friends to consider to do to help their situation. Each home visitor should carry copies of the confidentiality form and copies of our resource sheets should our friend not have online accessibility. All of these forms are available on our ParishPlus webpage.

The W-9 form for private landlords [several hotels come under this designation] will be needed by a home visitor only if he or she will be making payment after advocacy approval. The W-9 form is also found on our webpage.

IV. HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Ideally, ours is the “last dollar in”.

We will pay partial monthly home mortgages, partial deposits on apartments, and partial rent on apartments.

All payments are contingent upon the ability of the friends to pay their portion and that our funds prevent eviction, although the threat of eviction is not a prerequisite of our assistance.

We will continue to establish working relationships with local hotels/extended stays who will consider our charitable status, therefore waiving personal credit card down payments/deposits. Suggested hotel/extended stay locations: Budget Suites, Arya, HomeTowne Studios, OYO S, OYO N, Motel 6, Red Roof Inn, Magnuson). We will refer/direct our friends to them.

V. Emergency Assists, Non-Hotel

In an emergency, the Home Visit team may assist up to \$350 without contacting the Treasurer first. The Vincentian making the payment will be reimbursed. **As soon as possible, text or call the Treasurer to notify him or her of your payment.** When our funds are low, however, the Treasurer will alert the conference. In response to the alert, call the Treasurer for approval before paying an emergency assist. **All other requests must come to the next regularly scheduled Conference meeting for approval.**

IV. Emergency Assists, Hotels

Limit assistance for hotel stays to two nights per six-month period to allow time for friends to plan their next step. Refer to shelters and offer bus passes and food. Try to be aware of special shelters such as shelters opened during inclement weather or shelters for victims of domestic violence. Information on these shelters is on our ParishPlus webpage.

V. Food Assistance

We will assist with food, following North Texas Food Bank and Catholic Charities requirements/record keeping. We deliver to all Irving zip codes since the Mater Dei conference does not have a food pantry. Recommendation in this guideline is food assistance one time per month and no more than six times per calendar year. For example, we might assist with a food delivery for six consecutive months, but not more than six months in any calendar year. Exceptions to six deliveries include requests from friends who are disabled and/or homebound. Our partnerships with Kroger/NTFB and Panera Bread allow generous deliveries to our friends. We also provide Mobile Food Truck distribution with Catholic Charities the 3rd Saturday of each month. Friends are encouraged to come by the Holy Family of Nazareth parking lot to receive food. We will also keep a record of food deliveries on Parish Plus. Ask friends if they are receiving SNAP benefits and document in Parish Plus. Encourage them to apply if they are not receiving. Distribution is appropriate to each need. It is not always necessary to distribute one box per person. Three boxes could be appropriate for a family of five.

Information on alternative sources of food, such as food pantries in the area, is available on our ParishPlus webpage.

VI. Household Utility Bills

Utilities, by definition here, are electricity, Atmos gas, and City of Irving water.

Example of approved, advance action that will be reimbursed:

If cutoff is verified by current bill, or a call to the provider, AND IF cutoff would occur before our next Conference meeting, the minimum payment required to keep the utility on (up to our emergency maximum of \$350) may be made. Text or call the Treasurer to notify him or her of your payment.

All other requests must come to the next regularly scheduled Conference meeting for approval.

VII. Internet and Telephone

We will consider paying internet service, if that is considered the greatest need, and used for school or work.

We will pay phone bills, if that is the greatest need and to avoid cutoff. We will pay up to \$400.

We will assist/refer friends to cheaper Tracfones, free government phones, or reduced rate Lifeline phones (available by applying to the Texas Public Utilities Commission).

VIII. Automobile Expenses

Requests for car parts and car repairs.

Due to uncertainty of cost of car parts and repairs, AND the challenge of paying those bills, instead of advocating for those items, consider asking our friend, "Is there another bill we can help you with?" (Of course, the car repair may be the greatest need for some friends because it allows a wage earner to keep working or to keep important family doctor visits.)

IX. Transportation

Bus Passes

Five (5) passes per month, four times per year. Currently, five passes cost \$18.

To track distribution: record in pantry (on manila folder in white notebook), include in pantry delivery request/record, and verify delivery (verification by the delivery person) in the food record on ParishPlus.

We will assist with Greyhound expenses, if this is the most suitable and safest way to get our friend to a safe location.

Gas Cards

One (1) \$25 card per month, four times per year. Record in pantry (on manila folder in white notebook), include in pantry delivery request/record, and verify delivery (verification by the delivery person).

X. Prescriptions, Medical, Dental, Vision

We will assist with serious medical needs.

Prescriptions, if they do not qualify for free medications through the SVdP Community Pharmacy. There is a link to the SVdP Pharmacy on our ParishPlus webpage.

Medical/Dental/Vision, if it is verifiable and considered the greatest need of the friend, a single payment up to \$400 may be made. This must be brought to the Conference.

Mobility Assistive Devices are available for parishioners of the Catholic Diocese of Dallas. Call 214-379-3175. More information about this program is available on our ParishPlus webpage.

If we cannot assist, we will seek and refer friends to other community resources.

XI. Clothing Assistance

Referrals will be made to The Main Place Irving and Carter's House.

Vouchers may be offered to the SVdP Thrift Store (\$250 maximum).

The treasurer needs to be notified of all vouchers given to friends so that he or she can track them to reserve the value of the vouchers for payment in October each year.

When donated items of clothing are on hand, we will distribute to those in need.

XII. SVdP Thrift Store VOUCHERS

Vouchers may be given for:

Mattress and/or box springs up to the current cost of appropriate size bed, box springs, and frame.

Housewares, clothing, used furniture, and other items up to \$100.

The treasurer needs to be notified of all vouchers given to friends so that he or she can track them to reserve the value of the vouchers for payment in October each year.

Links to more information about the SVdP Thrift Stores and the Voucher program are available on our ParishPlus webpage.

XIII. Twinning with other SVdP Conferences

We will agree to twin with other conferences up to a maximum of \$200, if requested and if we have the funds available. When needed and with Conference agreement, we will ask for twinning from Conferences in our District. The President of our conference is responsible for communicating with other conferences about our twinning decisions.

Information about the Twinning process and Twinning Form is available on our ParishPlus webpage.

XIV. Referrals to Christ the King (CTK).

We will refer five (5) NEW friends per week who reside in HFN's area or who live in Mater Dei's area and are seeking emergency assistance. Vetting and assistance will be done by CTK. CTK will consider emergencies, but they will not consider assisting friends for hotels or extended stays. For record keeping in Parish Plus, there will be a CTK Record (# 3316, Christ as first name, The as middle, and King as last). Warmline person will record the name of the person in the comments section of the CTK Base Record. Make a separate Base Record for each referral 1) in case they call us again for pantry requests and 2) so the warmline person can easily see that the caller had been referred to CTK. Include the date. The CTK helpline number is 214.365.1247. Information on this process is included on our ParishPlus webpage.

XV. Mater Dei and referrals for emergencies.

Mater Dei does not do emergencies. We will vet emergencies for friends in Mater Dei area. In case of utility disconnections, however, we should try to contact a Mater Dei Vincentian to see if they can handle it. AFTER THE FACT: If we do not hear back from Mater Dei quickly enough to avoid disconnection and we can handle the emergency, we will ask our President to contact their President about a possible twin.

XVI. Other Considerations

1. JUDGE THE NEED, SEEK THE GREATEST NEED
2. The person on the warmline schedules the home visits for the next day and, ideally, would be one of the two advocates on the home visit team the following day. Example: Monday's warmline person would be Home Visit Advocate with a partner on Tuesday. (However, if a warmline volunteer is not available to do home visits set up for the next day, then he or she can sign up for a different day.)

3. Warmline person, on first call to friends, gathers information or gives the friend a list of the items of information that will be required by the home visit team in order to process their request for help.
4. Warmline person asks for times that the friends will be available to have a home visit team meet them the following day. Some visits may still be via phone, due to a friend's work schedule. In addition, a friend may be reluctant to have visitors in the home because of Covid. The home visit team may also decide that in certain circumstances, it would be safer for the Vincentians to conduct a phone visit.
5. Recommended number of visits per day: 2-3. Not all visits will be done the day after a friend calls the helpline.
6. If we receive a call from the parish office to assist a friend, we should ask the parish staff to refer the friend in need to our helpline. The parish office has copies of our business card to hand out to those who walk in.

XVII. GUIDELINES WILL BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY.