

CENTER TOWNSHIP OF HOWARD COUNTY
TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE
FACT LIST FOR PASTORS & CHURCHES

- The township is mandated by Indiana state statute to provide for the basic necessities of life for those deemed unable to afford to provide for themselves. The necessities are by law defined as:
 - Food, Clothing, and some non-food items such as soap, detergent, diapers, etc.
 - Shelter, usually single family units (houses & apartments), but sometimes group shelters.
 - Utilities including electricity, gas, water, sewage, etc.
 - Medicine & Medical care
- The township has specific eligibility guidelines in place to define who is indigent. The guidelines also define the process for application to assure equitability in the execution of our legal obligation.
- **The applicant must be a resident of Center Township.** Residents of other townships can apply through their local township trustee.
- In order to provide the best stewardship of taxpayer dollars, the township has an extensive investigative process to determine eligibility for assistance. This includes a state mandated application form which must be completed and signed by every adult member of the applicant's household.
- The investigative process will result in one of three decisions. An APPROVAL for assistance in which case the applicant is informed how to obtain the approved assistance. The application can be PENDED, usually meaning the applicant needs to provide more information. Or the application can be DENIED, in which case the applicant will be informed as to the reasons why, and how he/she may appeal the decision of the trustee. (FYI, Center Township denies an average of 1 of 4 applicants, usually for failure to provide required information. Of those, many return after the denial period and receive assistance.)
- In any case, the applicant will be provided a NOTICE OF ACTION. **If someone tells you they have been to the trustee's office and did not receive help, ask for the "notice of action."** The law requires that we issue a notice of action with every decision.
- While laws regarding confidentiality prevent us from discussing specifics, we encourage pastors to use our services as a "clearing house" in dealing with indigents. You may refer requests you receive for assistance to our office at 213 East Jefferson Street. Our phone number is 452-8259. (In the case of "personal referrals" [those with whom you have a church or personal relationship], feel free to contact the chief deputy [Frank Gribble] directly, and he will "oversee" the situation and keep you in the loop as much as the law allows. (Both Dr. Robert Lee, trustee, and the chief deputy are pastors and bring a spiritual mandate and understanding to the table along with the legal mandate.)
- The township should be your first line of defense in dealing with indigent care. If we are able to help provide a needed service within our guidelines and mandates, it frees the church to use benevolent funds for services which we cannot provide. Together we should be able to meet the needs of all who legitimately require assistance.
- There are certain needs with which we may not be legally able to assist, especially including deposits. As a general rule, the township cannot pay deposits for utilities or housing. If a church or benevolent fund can assist with deposits, many times we can assist with the utilities or rent. Another service with which the law does not allow us to assist is automobiles, including fuel.
- The township conducts a payee program (free of charge to qualified Center Township residents) in which we manage monthly (currently governmentally issued) checks, assuring the timely payment of rent, utilities and food, and in most cases a small weekly allowance for other expenses.
- Our standards and guidelines are publicly available, and are available through our website. We encourage you to stop in and familiarize yourself with our operation, meet the staff, and ask any questions which you might have.