



# Ministers' Financial Assistance Fund

## Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to support any applications seeking assistance from this fund, are completed fully and correctly.

## Scope

The fund exists to assist those in dire financial need and was established to provide financial assistance to:

- Ministers in placement
- retired (either permanently or temporarily) Ministers of the Uniting Church;
- widows, widowers or partners of retired Ministers of the Uniting Church (or of any former denomination now comprised in the Uniting Church) who are so recognised for the purposes of the UCA Beneficiary Fund; or
- a dependent child or children of a retired Minister of the Uniting Church.

## Application Conditions

As there is no revenue for this fund as such, the granting of payment against an application is subjective and is drawn on an ad hoc basis from the General Secretary's discretionary budget, caps will need to be applied and restricted use per minister/minister's family are applied:

- \$3,000 maximum per minister in placement and limited to one application only;
- Limit of 2 applications only per minister's family to a maximum of \$2,500 per application.

## Procedure

Applicant to refer to Minister - Minister's Financial Assistance Fund - Application; or Presbytery Minister to assist applicant in this process

**\*\* Before the Lodgement of an Application for Assistance:** Potential applicants should be encouraged to discuss any potential applications with the designated assessment people in each Synod (Presbytery Minister, Associate General Secretary). As funds available from the are unbudgeted, benefits available from other sources should be considered in the first instance. Potential applicants should be made aware that the two main criteria for assessing applications for assistance from the Fund are whether or not the application is for an essential item; and whether or not the applicant has sufficient financial resources to pay for the item.

In some cases, we will be unable to provide funds/not approve an application, due to our policy regarding the level of funding and the amount of times we can access these funds per person. We can however, offer support by way of financial guidance via Mercer (details below) and we can also offer counseling & information services to help with subjects like stress and personal wellbeing via Benestar (details below).

### **Mercer Super Trust**

Graham Meadon (UCA account contact)  
Relationship Manager | Mercer Super Trust  
Tower 1, Collins Square, 727 Collins St,  
Melbourne  
Mobile: 0417 027589  
[Graham.meadon@mercer.com](mailto:Graham.meadon@mercer.com)  
[www.mercer.com](http://www.mercer.com)

### **Benestar**

You can access Benestar direct by calling 1300 360 364  
*Their website is [Benestar Employee Assistance Program](#).*  
*To create a login please use the following:*  
*Company ID – UCQLDS*  
*Token – UCQLDS01*  
*You can then select your email and password to login in the future.*

- Once logged into the **BeneHub** you can access someone to talk to for counselling or support.
- Request an EAP appointment (face-to-face, phone, video).
- Chat directly with a clinician now by using LiveChat (available Mon-Fri, 7:30 am to 7:30 pm)



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- **Examples of assistance provided by the Fund in the past:** Essential Home Maintenance, Home Modifications, Medical Assistance, Home Appliances
- **Examples of applications declined by the Fund in the past:** Cost of a new computer to be used for "Church work"; Request for cash to purchase whitegoods, Upgrade of motor vehicle, Assistance to pay off credit card debt. The Benevolent Fund offered to pay the cost of financial counselling instead

1. Fund Application to be used – Criteria on page one to be checked off, and form on page two to be completed, with supporting documentation attached
2. Application is submitted via email to the Associate General Secretary for review. If application meets criteria it is endorsed by the AGS. If further information is required or further clarification needed, the applicant and/or presbytery minister will be contacted.
3. When all criteria have been satisfied and review completed, the form will be passed onto the General Secretary for final approval. The granting of payment against an application is subjective and is drawn on an ad hoc basis from the General Secretary's discretionary budget, caps will need to be applied and restricted use per minister/minister's family will also be applied.
4. When final approval has been received, the form and supporting documentation is passed onto Finance for processing [pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au)
5. At this point, notification of approval is sent via email to the applicant and/or presbytery minister.

\*\* Regardless of whether a claim is approved or rejected, the designated assessment people within each Synod must respond to the applicant in a way that is pastorally caring and respects the applicant's dignity. A reasonably detailed explanation may be desirable.

6. Finance will make the payment direct to the bank account details provided (internal synod office reference - *Ministers' Assistance Fund #V001369*)

## Administration of the Fund

- The Fund is administered by the Ministry and Mission team as directed by the General Secretary
- Applications for assistance from the MFAF are determined by the Presbytery Minister, AGS and the General Secretary
- All documentation is kept on file under the Ministry and Mission on Sharepoint
- The Ministry and Mission maintains a Financial Support for Ministers Register. Amounts paid are shown, as are details of all claims rejected, with relevant links to documentation

## Related documents

Minister - Minister's Financial Assistance Fund - Procedure

## Definitions

Term	Meaning
Ministry Agent	Includes Uniting Church in Australia candidates, community ministers, deacons, deaconesses, interns, lay pastors, ministers of the word, pastors, chaplains, youth workers and ministers from other denominations serving in approved placements in the Queensland Synod.
Placement	An approved placement (Regulation 2.6.3(a)(i)) in a congregation or other body wherein ministry is exercised.