

HelpWest Employee Benevolence Program

Guidelines

ARTICLE I. PURPOSE

On behalf of the faculty and staff of the University of West Georgia (UWG), the HelpWest Employee Benevolence Program steering committee is committed to a self-governed effort to provide appropriate relief to eligible employees of the University who are facing financial hardship. This charitable enterprise from which such relief will be drawn shall be known as the "HelpWest Employee Benevolence Program".

ARTICLE II. GOVERNANCE

The HelpWest Employee Benevolence Program shall be governed by the HelpWest Employee Benevolence Program steering committee in compliance with the policies and procedures of the University, University of West Georgia Foundation, and the University System of Georgia.

The committee will be made up of the Ombuds Office (which does not vote) and a voting representative from each University division, the Faculty Senate, and Staff Advisory Council. Non-voting advisory members may serve on the committee as appropriate. Each spring, the committee will elect a chair-elect from among its members. The chair-elect will serve one year in that role, one year as chair, and one year as past chair. The chair, chair-elect, and past chair will maintain their voting rights on assistance requests if they were elected as a voting member of the committee. Terms for the chair-elect, chair, and past chair positions will commence at the start of the fiscal year.

ARTICLE III. APPLICATION PROCESS

Any request for aid from the HelpWest Employee Benevolence Program shall be made by submitting an application to the Ombuds Office. This application shall be accessible through the Ombuds Office website or by contacting the Ombuds Office directly.

- The Ombuds Office will keep identifying information related to requests confidential, except as required by other University policies and procedures or by law.
- The HelpWest Employee Benevolence Program committee shall approve or deny requests according to the criteria noted in the following section, and to the extent that funds are available.

- Decisions of the committee are final.
- The person requesting assistance will be notified of the committee's decision by the Ombuds Office within two business days.
- Upon approval of the request for assistance, funds shall be made payable directly to the beneficiary.
- Supporting documentation may be requested to determine approval of the request.

ARTICLE IV. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The HelpWest Employee Benevolence Program committee evaluates employee requests and makes decisions regarding disbursement of funds according to the following criteria:

- Requestor must be a full-time or part-time appointed employee of the University of West Georgia.
- Requestor's need for financial assistance must be directly attributed to or caused by undue hardship or crisis. Examples include large medical bills, extensive loss of property due to fire or other natural disaster, or other unexpected financial challenges due to circumstances beyond the requestor's control.

ARTICLE V. RECORDKEEPING

- The UWG Foundation is the official office of record for the HelpWest account.
- All supporting documentation submitted with requests will be retained by the Ombuds Office for the current fiscal year +1 and then be destroyed.

ARTICLE VI. AWARDS

- Awards shall not exceed \$500 per recipient per twelve-month period except in unusual circumstances as approved by the Committee.
- If the request stems from a payroll error, requestors will be expected to pay back the funds when the error has been corrected. In other circumstances, the funds do not need to be paid back.

ARTICLE VII. NON-DISCRIMINATION

The HelpWest Benevolence Program committee adheres to the non-discrimination policy of the University of West Georgia.

