

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MARK BENEVOLENT FUND (MBF) GRANTS - TYPE OF HELP AVAILABLE

What help is available to Freemasons and their families?

The MBF can provide financial support for Freemasons and their dependants who are experiencing financial hardship, if they fall within the guidelines for assistance. Grants may be made towards essential daily living costs or unexpected needs.

How long does a Grant last for?

Grants for general living expenses are intended to last for a minimum period of one year. Grants for unexpected needs are dealt with individually as and when the need occurs.

When can I reapply?

For general living expenses the Lodge Almoner will be sent a renewal application form three months prior to the anniversary of the last application, so that it can be ascertained whether the applicant is still in need of assistance. Unexpected needs are treated on an individual basis.

What help is available to people living in care homes?

The MBF is not, under normal circumstances, able to accept third-party top-up liability for applicants who may now reside in a Care Home.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Who can apply for a grant?

Any Brother initiated into a Lodge under the Grand Lodge of MMM, or who has joined from another Constitution, may apply to the MBF for financial assistance. This applies for up to 5 years after resigning. If at the time of the death of a Brother he would have been qualified, the MBF Committee may, if it thinks fit, grant assistance to his widow, or any other person with whom he had been closely connected immediately before his death, for general living requirements.

Can the MBF provide short-term or emergency assistance?

Yes. In exceptional circumstances a grant can be approved and payment issued quickly. The MBF is also able to support individuals experiencing temporary hardship.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Why do you need so much information on the application form?

A complete picture is essential if the MBF is to provide support that fully reflects the needs of the individual. As grants take the form of financial support it is essential that the MBF has details of the applicant's income and expenditure and all investments.

Can the application form be completed over the telephone?

No. The application form must be completed during a face-to-face meeting with the applicant in their own home. This is essential as it provides an opportunity for the Visiting Brother to identify problems that may not otherwise be apparent.

How long does it take to process an application?

Following receipt of the application by the Provincial Grand Almoner, a decision on whether or not to submit the application to the MBF is usually taken within days. Delays may occur if the form is incorrectly completed or if further information is required.

I am a Mark Mason who would like to apply, but I don't want members of my Lodge to know. Is this possible?

Complete confidentiality is our sincere intention. The Almoner of your Lodge will normally be the one to visit you and complete your financial details on the form. Other members of your Lodge will not be made aware of the confidential details. If you do not want any member of your Lodge to know your personal details, even the Lodge Almoner, then you should contact the Provincial Grand Almoner who will deal with your application personally.

I disagree with the decision taken. Can I appeal?

No, but a further application can be made if the applicant's financial circumstances have changed.

Can the application form be submitted electronically?

Yes.

How does the Committee reach its decisions?

The Committee reviews cases in accordance with guidelines it adopts each year in April. These are not rigid rules and every case is treated on merit.

What is the deadline for submitting an application?

There is no deadline for submitting an application, but please be aware that a result can take up to fourteen weeks.

MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS

I (or my dependents) have an urgent need to see a medical consultant, which cannot be arranged on the NHS for many weeks. Can I get help?

Yes. Contact the Provincial Grand Almoner personally. He will guide you through the process. Payment can be made for a private consultation.

NOTE

If in doubt speak to the Provincial Grand Almoner.