

Is your congregation participating in
**ACCESS Operation Second Mile
Program?**

ACCESS/OSM works to eliminate duplication of services and help you be good stewards of your benevolence budget as well as keep in touch with other area church programs.

Letting **ACCESS** make your financial payments helps secure the anonymity of your program and decrease the endless requests for assistance. (You know that once word gets out that you are helping, your phone will ring off the hook with other requests.)

Signing up is simple.... Just contact us and we will get your congregation on the OSM list.

(Please do not refer clients directly to **ACCESS**, unless you contact us first.)

ACCESS Operation Second Mile

750 First St., NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
616-774-2175
FAX: 616-988-8714
www.accessofwestmichigan.org

email:
caseworker@accessofwestmichigan.org

"Celebrating the activity of God in our midst, the mission of ACCESS is to provide opportunities for ministry by linking congregational, individual and community resources with human needs to help eliminate poverty in Kent County."

Operation Second Mile (OSM)

caseworkers offer your staff/benevolence deacons assistance in responding to financial requests by:

- **Checking past history of clients-** Our current OSM database has over 5500 entries of individuals and families who have requested and/or been assisted with financial needs. We also have access to the **ACCESS** food pantry database so we can verify identifying information as well as let you know if they are not taking advantage of this resource.

- **Provide information about current**

community resources-

OSM caseworkers keep up to date on agencies who are offering assistance, as well as specifics about requirements to access that assistance. Helping clients utilize community resources first will save limited congregational resources.

- **Assess and verify the client needs** (as

requested)—OSM caseworkers can contact landlords, other agencies, utility companies, employers, etc., to verify information given to you by individuals.

- **Issue checks to landlords, utility companies, etc on behalf of your**

congregation—Not having your church's name on a check will allow anonymity and help protect you from an endless stream of requests for financial assistance. OSM can write checks immediately for clients, and bill your church later for reimbursement.

- **Help connect your staff/benevolence deacons with each other through**

informational emails—OSM caseworkers can email your request for additional financial assistance to area churches in an effort to add to your commitment to help.

- **Offering suggestions or ideas for resolving the situation**—OSM

caseworkers have compiled a list of ideas used by other benevolence teams. We will offer assistance in setting boundaries and parameters. It's ok to say no at times.

- **Post alerts on individuals making**

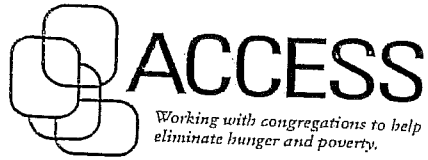
requests—Through our connections with area congregations and food pantries, **ACCESS/OSM** caseworkers are often made aware of the occasional abuses of assistance. We will email you alerts as we receive them.

- **Alert your staff about new community**

resources— OSM

caseworkers attend community meetings and receive emails from agencies. If there is anything new, we will be sure to let you know.

- **ACCESS Training Programs & Workshops** Be sure your name is on our mailing list!



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Quick Guidelines for Dealing with Benevolence Requests

Casework Services
for Congregations

Operation
Second Mile

Food Pantry
Network

Pantry Resource
Centers

Food Stamp
Outreach

Poverty Simulations

C.A.R.E.S.
Advocacy, Education
and Training

Fundraising Events

Holiday Giving
Network

County Wide
Food Drive

Food For Families
Food Drive

Care Week
Food Drive

Congregational
INFO Meetings

1. Determine what the need is.
2. Get the basic facts: Name, address, telephone number, last four digits of their social security number, and who is in the family (i.e., adults, children and the ages of the children).
3. What are the circumstances that led to this situation?
4. If the benevolence is granted, will the individual be able to handle the bills next month?
5. Verify the information.
6. Never give the individual cash.
7. Call the ACCESS caseworker at 774-2175. Together we can work to find the best solution for the situation.

It is best if the call comes directly from the church. It could be a pastor, deacon, secretary, or benevolence committee member. This conveys to the caseworker an intent to be involved with the individual / family.

ASSISTANCE REQUEST FORM

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|---------------------|
| First Name - | Last Name - | Social Security last 4 digits # | |
| Street Address - | | Birthdate | |
| City - | Zip - | Home Church - | Home Phone - |
| Request Amount - | | Request Date - | |
| Situation : | | | |
| Landlord Name/Number Utility/Account Number | | | |
| Other Agencies Contacted - | | | |
| ACCESS Info (774-2175 FAX 988-8714 email: caseworker@accessofwestmichigan.org) | | | |
| Deacon/Phone - | | | |
| Deacon Response - | | | |
| Additional Notes - | | | |