



Providence Church

Bringing Jesus to People

Embrace Fund Policy

Definitions

Embrace Fund

The *Embrace Fund* is an officially recognized and designated permanent fund, established according to the church bylaws and constitution. As such, it is an approved fund for designated giving. Its expenses consist of funds disbursed for its stated intended purposes at the direction of the *Embrace Team*.

Embrace Team

The *Embrace Team* members will demonstrate a passion for adoption, foster care, and orphan care. There are no restrictions on the number of consecutive years an *Embrace Team* member may serve on the *Embrace Team*. The *Embrace Team* consists of 5-10 Providence Church Members, with half needed for a quorum. A minimum of one team member will also be a current council member. The *Embrace Team* shall meet as needed. All transitions on and off of the Team are recommended by the *Embrace Team* and are approved by the *Embrace Fund* team member.

Embrace Fund Records

The *Embrace Team* records are all information relating to applications, including application forms, additional financial or personal information provided by the applicant, and meeting minutes. These records are maintained by the church administrator. Disbursement records are maintained in the Providence Church financial database. A member of the team will record the minutes discussed and agreed to from the team meetings and provide them to the church administrator as records.

Purposes

The purpose of this document is to set forth the responsibilities of the *Embrace Team* and the guidelines for discharging those responsibilities. It is not intended to cover all circumstances under which funds may be disbursed from the *Embrace fund*.

The purpose of the *Embrace Fund* and its team is to help individuals and families financially, spiritually, and as a support resource as they go through the adoption process.

The mission and vision of the *Embrace* Team is to help Providence Church fulfill its biblical responsibility to care for orphans through awareness, advocacy, and by providing financial and relational support to those touched by adoption and foster care.

Oversight and Accountability

The Embrace Team is accountable to the Elders of Providence Church. The Embrace Team council member will serve as liaison with the church administrator and Embrace Team.

Income

Gifts intended for the *Embrace* Fund can simply be designated as such at the time the gift is given. Members of the congregation, however, will not be encouraged to give to the *Embrace Fund* in lieu of giving to the general fund of the church. The Embrace Team may initiate fundraising activities for the *Embrace* Fund, which must be approved by the team's serving council member. The designation of "*Embrace* Fund" or the *Embrace* Fund account number will denote contributions intended to be placed in this fund.

Guidelines For Disbursement

General Guidelines

The *Embrace* Fund is intended to give financial support for families who are called to adopt. Applicants are encouraged to also explore possibilities for financial support from family, friends, and savings. All applicants are required to submit proof of their home study or an approved formal application from their adoption agency to verify commitment to the process.

The *Embrace* Team will not provide help to anyone who, in its estimation, will have negative or irresponsible behavior reinforced by financial help.

Those requesting help must be willing to give the Embrace Team permission to follow up on any of the information provided to the team. The team will be sensitive to confidential issues.

Monies from the *Embrace* Fund may also be distributed to approved adoptive families who encounter emergency situations in their journey to bring their child(ren) home. For example, a one time gift of \$500 may be given to a family whose travel date was approved sooner than expected and who needs the funds to purchase a plane ticket. Emergency gifts will be left to the discretion of the *Embrace* Team.

If a member of the team applies for benefit from the fund, that member will recuse himself/herself from the consideration of the application. Other familial connections to the team will be considered on a case by case basis.

Criteria

The criteria established for awarding of grants to applicants include:

1. Providence Church membership or regular attendance and service for at least 6 months.
2. Formal adoption application approval or home study completion

Although these criteria are considered a nominal set, the judgment of the team will be considered to be the final determining factor in a grant award.

Procedure

Source of Request

An *Embrace* Adoption Grant Application must be completed with home study or an approved formal application from their adoption agency attached.

Processing the Request

1. The *Embrace* Adoption Grant Application is returned to the church administrator in preparation for presentation to the Embrace Team.
2. The Embrace Team reviews the request and comes to a decision.
3. The decision and relevant information are written in meeting minutes.
4. Grants will generally be awarded in the amount of \$2,000.
5. The person making the request is informed of the decision by letter or in person by the *Embrace* Team.
 - Rejection letters include a clear explanation for the decision, and if appropriate, the steps that should be taken before reapplying.
 - Approval letters include the type of assistance approved, amount and process of receiving/ disbursing funds.
6. Checks are written and disbursed to the applicant's adoption agency, not to the applicant. In some cases travel and other adoption associated costs may also be reimbursed.

Follow-up

For individuals or families who do not receive grants; financial, family, spiritual, and emotional counseling/mentoring is offered and available through Providence Church.

For individuals or families who receive grants; a form, a conversation, a photo session – or all of them will be used to keep in touch, and further promote adoption awareness.