

Elderly Assistance Policy

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GENERAL

1. Purpose

Elders face unique financial needs that are crucial for their health, safety and wellbeing. Financial wellbeing for older adults includes meeting current and ongoing financial obligations, feeling secure about their finances, and having the ability to make choices that enhance their quality of life like financial insecurity, fraud prevention, and decision-making support if they have a cognitive disability. Many Elders are on a fixed income, are faced with healthcare issues, food, hygiene and housing expenses and have limited employment opportunities.

This policy establishes guidelines for providing respectful, safe, and equitable assistance to eligible elderly individuals in order to support low income, handicap/disabled, Medicaid, and Medicare recipients. For the purposes of this policy, elderly shall be defined as those individuals sixty (60) years or older at the time of application.

A person who is gainfully employed shall **not** be eligible to receive assistance from this program.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all FBIC Programs who interact with or provide services to eligible elderly clients, residents, or program participants.

3. Definitions

The following definitions shall apply to this policy:

- **Elderly / Older Adult:** Any individual aged 60 years or older at the time of applying for assistance.

- **Assistance:** Support provided to help an elder with medical needs, fuel, food, hotel, and/or financial needs.
- **Entities:** FBIC Programs who can offer direct help to assist the 60+ eligible individuals.
- **“Tribe” or “Community”** means the Fort Belknap Indian Community Council representing the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes.

4. Respect and Dignity

Respect and dignity are crucial in fostering a positive and productive environment. All clients must be treated with respect, regardless of physical or cognitive ability. It is important to enhance communication and listen skills to reduce conflict. Most Elders practice culture and creating a culture of respect and dignity will help build the relation.

5. Consent

Assistance should only be provided with the elder’s informed consent unless a signed legally binding document like guardianship or conservatory order is in place. Order must be available to show proof of guardianship.

6. Confidentiality

Personal information must be protected according to privacy regulations (e.g., HIPAA, Privacy Act or local laws). Staff should discuss sensitive matters only in private. Elders have the rights to confidentiality, which is fundamental for their comfort in discussing financial or sensitive issues.

7. Types of Assistance Provided

Depending on emergencies, medical, and/or personal assistance may include:

- **Healthcare needs:** (fuel, lodging, meals) for medical appointments in Billings, Great Falls, Kalispell, Missoula, Glasgow. Some elders have chronic conditions or need long term care and have weekly appointments (**cancer, dialysis, heart**)
- **Daily living tasks:** food, electricity costs, housing expenses. Elders are on fixed income from social security to pension or disability.
- **FBIC Programs:** A request may be sent to FBIC Central Administration only if all other FBIC programs have been exhausted. Please make sure client has documentation on why services were denied by tribal program, in return client may bring denial documentation to central administration to see if they qualify for assistance.

8. Application Process

- Any amount authorized will be determined based on documented need and availability of funds.
- Payment schedule –There will be only two (2) requests paid per year.

- Assistance shall be limited to \$300 per distribution, depending upon review of application.
- Application forms for low-income assistance will be available at Central Administration and will require:
 1. Elder assistance application filled out.
 2. A form of verification for medical appointment or need.
 3. Other programs where assistance was applied for and denied (reason of denial).

9. Prohibited Actions

Staff **may NOT**:

- handle financial assets.
- exert pressure on personal decisions or give misguided information.
- engage in any form of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

10. Mandatory Reporting

~~Any suspected elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation must be reported immediately to supervisors and appropriate authorities in accordance with federal and local laws.~~

11. Documentation

All assistance that includes health, safety, or incident-related must be reported to the proper chain of command within 24 hours.

12. Review/Approval of Application

The FBIC Chief of Staff and his/her designee shall be responsible for reviewing and approving all applications and forwarding for financial distribution.

13. Review and Updates

This policy must be reviewed annually and updated as needed. A confidential log of services shall be kept on file in the FBIC Administrative Office. FBIC Council will be given a report on the services provided and outcome. Individual names will not be utilized.

14. Sovereign Immunity

Nothing in this policy can be construed as a waiver of the sovereign immunity of the Fort Belknap Indian Community Council.

Effective Date:

Approved By: Fort Belknap Indian Community Council