

Approved By: President

Date Approved: July 9, 2025

Effective Date: July 9, 2025

1. **Summary:** This policy establishes the criteria by which student benevolence funds can be distributed to students of the College.
2. **Rationale:** This policy ensures that benevolence funds are distributed in a consistent and equitable manner to qualified students.
3. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide financial assistance to students facing unforeseen emergency situations that significantly impact their ability to continue their education and maintain their well-being. The Benevolence Fund is designed to serve as a safety net for students experiencing extreme hardship.
4. **Entities Affected:** This policy applies to all enrolled students of the College who demonstrate a genuine financial need due to an unexpected crisis.
5. **Definitions:** not applicable

6. Policy:

Criswell College maintains a Student Benevolence Fund to assist currently enrolled students who are experiencing emergency financial hardships that threaten their immediate health and well-being. The fund is overseen by the Student Benevolence Committee, which includes the Dean of Students, the Student Success Director, and a representative from the Business Office. This committee oversees all requests, evaluates applications, and ensures the appropriate use and integrity of the fund.

The Benevolence Fund is supported through voluntary donations from faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the College. As funds are limited and dependent on contributions, availability is not guaranteed. Financial assistance is provided as a gift, not a loan, and does not require repayment. Applications are held in confidence and are available through the Student Services Office. There is a maximum funding limit per student within an academic year.

Eligibility and Use of Funds

To be eligible for assistance, students must:

- be currently enrolled and in good academic and disciplinary standing.
- provide documentation of financial hardship (e.g., medical bills, eviction notices, or proof of job loss).
- demonstrate that the request is due to a verifiable emergency or crisis.

Approved assistance is generally limited to the following:

- Medical emergencies

- Inadequate access to food or essential groceries
- Emergency rent or utility needs (in select cases)
- Essential academic materials (e.g., textbooks, technology for online learning)
- Emergency transportation (e.g., car repairs, bus fare)
- Situations involving loss of housing, death of an immediate family member, or victimization by a crime

Clause: Requests for help with tuition, credit card debt, books (except in essential cases), or general living expenses typically do not qualify for benevolent assistance.

Additional clause: The Student Benevolence Committee, under the supervision of the Dean of Students, reserves the right to review all applications and make final decisions based on documented need and available resources.

Application Process

1. Submission – Students must submit a Benevolence Fund Application to the Student Services Office, including a personal statement explaining their need, supporting documentation, and a budget breakdown.
2. Review & Decision –
 - a. The Student Benevolence Committee will review applications within five business days.
 - b. The Committee may request additional documentation or an interview with the applicant.
 - c. Applicants will receive a decision via email.
3. Disbursement of Funds – If approved, funds will be disbursed directly to the service provider (e.g., landlord, utility company) whenever possible. If direct payment is not feasible, the funds may be provided to the student.

Award Limits

Individual awards are subject to a cap per academic year, which may vary based on fund availability. A student may apply for additional assistance in separate emergencies but is not guaranteed approval. Repeated applications for non-emergency needs will not be considered.

Repayment & Accountability

Funds granted through the Benevolence Fund are gifts, not loans, and do not require repayment. However, students who receive assistance are encouraged to contribute back to the fund when they are financially able. Misuse of funds or providing false information will result in disciplinary action, including potential repayment requirements.

7. Procedure:

- a. **Implementation:** The Student Services Office is responsible for maintaining procedures by which this policy can be implemented.
- b. **Responsibility for Compliance:** Vice President of Student Affairs and Student Benevolence Fund Committee.
- c. **Notification:** This policy will be posted on the College's website and a summary of the policy will be published in the College's *Student Handbook*.
- d. **Policy Review:** This policy will be regularly reviewed according to the College's policy review procedure.

For the Office of the President only:

Policy version: 3.0

Policy number: 2.020

Related policies:

Policy History

Version 1.0	Not Available
Version 2.0	August 25, 2017
Version 3.0	July 9, 2025