

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO CHURCHES AND MISSIONS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It is the desire of the State Board of Missions to assist as many churches and missions as possible with the maximum assistance. The following programs of church assistance are available for use by Florida Baptist churches and missions.

Pastoral Assistance
Church Loan Fund
New Work Revolving Fund

Florida Baptist Convention financial aid programs are funded by mission dollars given through the Cooperative Program and the Maguire State Mission Offering. Churches or missions receiving financial assistance must give through the Cooperative Program, the Maguire State Mission Offering and associational missions. All churches have equal opportunity to give and to receive mission funds.

All applications approved after January 1, 1992, will follow the guidelines which require a church or mission to give at least 8% of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program and at least 2% of its undesignated receipts to associational missions.

There is an expanding need in Florida for the Convention's financial assistance to churches and missions. The Florida Baptist Convention's ability to respond to present and future needs depends on Florida Baptist Convention congregations supporting the Cooperative Program. The premise for the following guidelines pertaining to loans is that a church should receive financial aid in proportion to its percentage support of the Cooperative Program and associational missions.

I. In order to qualify for a loan, a church or mission must meet the following requirements:

1. All applications must be received by the Florida Baptist Convention 30 days prior to consideration by the Loans Committee of the State Board of Missions.
2. Loans shall be provided on a percentage basis equal to the percentage the applicant's gifts represent of the required 8% through the Cooperative Program and 2% to the association.
3. The applicant's Cooperative Program giving percentage for loan purposes shall be based on its average percentage of gifts for the previous year and the current year-to-date.
4. The percentage of loan eligibility for an associationally sponsored mission which applies for a loan during its first year of existence shall be based on its average percentage of each month's gifts through the Cooperative Program, i.e., if a congregation gives two percent for three months and ten percent for one month, the total of the four months (16%) shall be divided by the number of months (four) to arrive at an average monthly percentage. The same approach will be used with associational missions giving. The State Board of Missions Loans Committee may defer its decision or give a partial loan in instances where the applicant's history of Cooperative Program giving is too limited.
5. Churches or missions receiving loans must commit to give annually to the Maguire State Mission Offering for the life of the loan.
6. Applicants whose average percentage of gifts through the Cooperative Program is less than the required 8% for undesignated receipts must take the initiative to schedule a presentation on the Cooperative Program through the Cooperative Program Department of the Florida Baptist Convention.

7. The Church Revitalization & Loans Department will do an annual review of the giving record of all churches receiving loans throughout the life of the loan. If there is no giving to the Maguire State Mission Offering or if the percentage of giving to associational missions falls below the required 2% and/or the percentage of giving through the Cooperative Program falls below the required 8%, the interest rate of the loan will be increased to the prime rate, provided the rate is above 8%. The increased rate of interest will stay in effect until the next annual review. If the church returns to or surpasses the giving requirement by the next annual review, the interest rate will be reduced back to the original level. Any exception to this policy will be determined by a staff review committee consisting of the executive director-treasurer, director of Church Revitalization & Loans Department, director of the Accounting Department, and director of the Missions Division.
 8. "Applicant" is understood in these guidelines as the congregation which would guarantee the mortgage (exception: See "4" above).
 9. Because of limited funds, no church or mission may have more than one loan on the same property with the Florida Baptist Convention in effect at the same time. If the sponsoring church should desire another loan for additional buildings on the property, the unpaid balance of any outstanding Convention loan is to be repaid before the new loan is disbursed.
 10. A church or mission will be classified as new work until one of the following occurs: (1) a first-unit building is constructed; or (2) an existing building is made usable.
 11. Loans shall be considered for action by the Loans Committee of the State Board of Missions. All actions shall be reported to the next meeting of the State Board of Missions. In case of an exception to the policy, the Loans Committee will make a recommendation to the Administrative Committee of the Board for action by the State Board of Missions.
 12. All loans will bear interest at the rate currently approved by the State Board of Missions. There are no closing points.
 13. There is a legal fee for processing a loan. It will be the responsibility of the church receiving the loan to pay the legal fee at the time of closing. Any exception to this requirement must be approved by the Loans Committee of the State Board of Missions.
 14. Loan processing and preliminary consideration of all loans are the responsibility of the executive director-treasurer, the director of the Missions Division, and the director of the Church Revitalization & Loans Department.
- II. In order to qualify for pastoral assistance, a church or mission must meet the following requirements:
1. The applicant church or mission shall give at least 8% of its undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program, at least 2% of its undesignated receipts to associational missions, and commit to give annually to the Maguire State Mission Offering for a period of ten years.
 2. The applicant's Cooperative Program giving percentage shall be based on its average percentage of undesignated receipts of the previous year and the current year to date.
 3. A new mission start without a history of receipts will be eligible for six months' pastoral assistance. During this time its giving record will be established. Following the initial six months of assistance, church starting personnel will review the contribution records of the recipient congregation. Eligibility for continued pastoral assistance at the maximum funding level will be contingent on the congregation's meeting the established mission giving guideline for the entire six month period.

4. The maximum monthly amount of pastoral assistance which any congregation may receive is \$200 if it does not give the required percentages. Nonetheless, these congregations are expected to give regularly through the Cooperative Program and to associational missions.
 5. The appropriate Florida Baptist Convention program leader will do a quarterly review of Cooperative Program and associational missions giving of each church receiving pastoral assistance. Financial aid will be reduced or discontinued if missions giving guidelines are not met.
 6. Applicants whose average percentage of gifts to the Cooperative Program is less than the required percentage for undesignated receipts will be contacted by the director of the Cooperative Program Department for the Florida Baptist Convention (or other qualified Florida Baptist Convention staff) to make a presentation on the Cooperative Program.
 7. "Applicant" is understood to apply to the user of the funds, not sponsors.
- III. The following policies apply to loan and pastoral assistance programs:
1. The State Board of Missions will consider all requests for exceptions to the missions giving policies. Prior to consideration by the State Board of Missions of an exception to the policy, the church will have been informed of the policy requirement and will vote to request the State Board of Missions to make an exception. A staff member of the Florida Baptist Convention or a representative will meet with the pastor or church, or both, and the mission, if applicable, prior to a request for an exception to the policy being presented to the State Board of Missions.

These requirements go into effect for all churches and missions whose applications for loans or pastoral assistance are approved after May 29, 2009.