

# **CHRISTUS Ochsner SWLA Foundation**

## **Associate Helping Hands Fund – Employee Assistance Policy**

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Effective Date: April 12, 2022

Approval By: CHRISTUS Ochsner SWLA Foundation

Policy Initiated by: CHRISTUS Ochsner SWLA Foundation

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### **PURPOSE**

Associate Helping Hands Fund

This program was established for the purpose of providing limited financial assistance to any CHRISTUS Ochsner Health Southwestern Louisiana Associate, CHRISTUS Health Contract Associate Partner or non-physician Ochsner Associate who is experiencing personal short-term crisis situations. The fund is set up to be used to assist with essential expenses such as housing, food, utilities, medical expenses, etc. in emergency situations.

### **POLICY**

#### Eligibility for the Associate Helping Hands Fund

Any CHRISTUS Ochsner Health Southwestern Louisiana Associate, CHRISTUS Health Contract Associate Partner or non-physician Ochsner Associate working in the CHRISTUS Ochsner Health Southwestern Louisiana ministry meeting the qualifications listed below is eligible to apply for assistance. Family members of Associates are not eligible for assistance. ***The maximum amount an Associate may receive from the Associate Crisis Care Fund is \$1,000 (or an amount determined by the Committee).*** In the event of a catastrophic natural event (hurricane, earthquake, tornado), additional maximum ranges will be considered by the Associate Helping Hands Fund Committee in collaboration with local and regional CHRISTUS Human Resources leadership.

To be eligible for consideration for assistance, the Associate must:

1. Been employed as a CHRISTUS Ochsner Health Southwestern Louisiana Associate, CHRISTUS Health Contract Associate Partner or non-physician Ochsner Associate working in the CHRISTUS Ochsner Health Southwestern Louisiana ministry for at least (1) year.
2. Have worked for more than 1000 hours within the previous 12 months.
3. Have recently (within the immediate past 60 days) been, through no fault of their own, subject to an act of nature or other significant catastrophe or crisis, which is currently, after reasonable efforts at mitigation, causing significant, documentable hardship, financial or otherwise, to the Associate and their immediate family.

Employees may request assistance by completing an application form and attaching all documentation needed. The CHRISTUS Ochsner Health Southwestern Louisiana Directors and Senior Leadership may apply on behalf of an Associate with the Associate's consent. Applications for the Associate Helping Hands Funds are available through the Foundation.

Questions regarding the Fund should be directed to CHRISTUS Ochsner Southwestern Louisiana Foundation at (337) 430-5353.

### Associate Helping Hands Fund Committee

The Committee is responsible for reviewing, considering and awarding the distribution amount to the Associate through the Associate Helping Hands Fund. The Committee is comprised of:

- Executive Director of Development, Foundation
- VP of Mission Integration
- Human Resources Director

The major source of funds for the Associate Helping Hands Fund will come through fundraising efforts by the CHRISTUS Ochsner Southwestern Louisiana Foundation, voluntary contributions through outright gifts and funds, cash or check or by payroll deduction. Checks should be made payable to the CHRISTUS Ochsner SWLA Foundation, designated to the Associate Helping Hands Fund. Gifts are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

If at any time the Associate Helping Hands Fund is depleted, review of requests will cease until Associate contributions, hospital gifts or other fundraising activity restores the funds.

Funds will be used to assist in offsetting extraordinary financial stress resulting from an act of nature or other significant catastrophe or crisis which is currently, after reasonable efforts at mitigation, causing significant, documentable hardship, financial or otherwise, to the Associate and their immediate family. The fund will not assist with routine auto or home repairs, divorce-related expenses, insurance premiums, deductibles or co-pays or financial mismanagement (excessive credit card debt or “payday” loans).

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

1. Those who are interested in applying for Associate Helping Hands funds may obtain an application from the CHRISTUS Ochsner Southwestern Louisiana Foundation and return it to the Foundation upon completion.
2. After the application is reviewed and validated by HR for employment requirements, the form is sent to the Committee for action. Applications are kept confidential.
3. Verification of the crisis and need, including the amount of assistance requested, will be conducted by the Committee. All applications are confidential, and the Committee will not be aware of the applicant’s identity. The Employee will provide the Committee with the following:
  - a. Details of the act of nature or other significant catastrophe or crisis which is currently, after reasonable efforts at mitigation, causing significant, documentable hardship, financial or otherwise, to the Associate and their immediate family (as are appropriate).
  - b. Specific financial needs (specific need and amount).
  - c. Other resources to which referred (related to financial need).
  - d. Copy of the associates most recent paycheck (name removed) if requested.
  - e. Copy of any pertinent financial information (name removed) if requested.
  - f. The complete listing of each creditor and amount owed, if this is the basis for the application.
4. The Associate Helping Hands Fund Committee will:
  - a. Determine eligibility
  - b. Check history of his/her prior fund applications/assistance
  - c. If approved, the CHRISTUS Ochsner SWLA Foundation will process the payment.

- d. The Committee Administrator will notify the Associate of the decision by email or letter. Checks will be mailed to creditors if applicable.

4/2022