

Benton Township
Monroe County, Indiana

Township Assistance Guidelines

Revised, February 2014

The Benton Township Assistance Standards and Guidelines are established in accordance with Title 12 of the Indiana Code, from which the Trustee draws authority. The applicable sections of the Indiana Code drawn up to establish these guidelines are listed herein.

<u>Section of Guidelines</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. Introduction	Pg. 3
II. Trustee Office Hours	
A. Location and Hours	Pg. 3-4
B. Deputy Trustee	Pg. 4
III. Application Process	
A. Initial Assistance	Pg. 4
B. Case Investigator Assigned	Pg. 4
C. Continuing Assistance	Pg. 4-5
IV. Applicant Residency Requirement	
A. Township Residency Required	Pg. 5
B. Institutional Time Not Counted	Pg. 5
C. Temporary Residence With Friends, Relatives Not Counted	Pg. 5
V. Eligibility Requirements	
A. General Requirements	Pg. 5
B. Employment Requirement	Pg. 6
C. Employment Requirement Exemption	Pg. 6
D. SSI/SSI (D) Reimbursement Authorization	Pg. 6
E. Other Resources/Assets	Pg. 6-7
F. Assistance of Relatives	Pg. 7
G. Bills 30 Days Past Due not Eligible	Pg. 7
H. Acceptable Expenditures for Basic Necessities	Pg. 7
VI. Income Guidelines	
A. Countable Household Income	Pg. 7
B. Lump Sum Income	Pg. 7-8
VII. Determination of Needs/Forms of Assistance	
A. Trustee to Determine Needs	Pg. 8
B. Food	Pg. 8
C. Non-Food Items	Pg. 8
D. Shelter	Pg. 8-9

E. Utilities	Pg. 9
F. Medical Services	Pg. 9-10
G. Traveler’s Aid	Pg. 10
H. Funeral Expenses	Pg. 10-11
I. Recovery of Benefits	Pg. 11
VIII. Work Fare	
A. Requirement	Pg. 11-12
B. Supervision	Pg. 12
IX. Other Program Eligibility	
A. Requirement to Apply for Other Assistance	Pg. 12
B. Application for Public Assistance Required	Pg. 12-13
C. Reduced Benefit for Failure to Apply Other Benefits	Pg. 13
D. Protective Payee	Pg. 13
X. Reasons for Denial	
A. Failure to Comply With Guidelines	Pg. 13-14
B. Wasted Resources	Pg. 14
XI. Trustee Obligation/Notification of Decision	
A. No Verbal Denials	Pg. 14
B. Decision Notification	Pg. 14-15
C. Continuing Aid Reapplication Notification	Pg. 15
D. Appeals Process	Pg. 15
C. Reporting Abuse and Neglect of a Child or Dependent	Pg. 15
XII. Availability and Annual Review of Guidelines	
A. Guidelines Posted	Pg. 15
B. Approval and Annual Review of Guidelines	Pg. 15-16
Addendums to Guidelines	
Addendum I. Definitions/Examples	Pg. 17-18
Addendum II. Maximum Income Eligibility Standards	Pg. 19
Addendum III. Allowable Medical Services	Pg. 19-20
Addendum IV. Benton Township Assistance Chart	Pg. 20
Addendum V. Benton Township Budget Form	Pg. 21
Addendum VI. Application for Burial Assistance	Pg. 22

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I. INTRODUCTION (IC 36-6-4; 12-20-5-1 thru 12-20-5.5-6)

In the state of Indiana, the Township Trustee is charged with the responsibility of servicing and assisting poor and needy persons residing in the township. The office of the Trustee is designed to provide temporary relief in emergency situations when a township resident has exhausted other means of relief. See Addendum I.

Applicants requesting assistance from the Trustee are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity. Likewise, the Trustee expects that the Township staff be treated with respect and courtesy by all applicants. The office of the Benton Township Trustee will provide assistance based on the following guidelines, which are posted at the Township office and on file with the Monroe County Commissioners.

The Trustee may provide assistance with food, shelter and utilities and certain other basic necessities. In order to qualify for and receive assistance, applicants must meet the requirements of these guidelines. ALL APPLICANTS AND ALL ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS MUST:

1. Be residents of Benton Township;
2. Meet income guidelines;
3. Be employed full-time (minimum 35 hrs./wk.); seeking full-time employment; performing workfare; or medically exempted from performing work;
4. Cooperate with the Township's investigation of their circumstances by providing information and signing an application;
5. Apply for any and all other public assistance programs for which they may be eligible;
6. Seek assistance from their family

This section is intended simply as an overview. Types of assistance available and eligibility criteria are explained in detail in other sections of these guidelines.

Benton Township evaluates each applicant based on these standards and will not discriminate based on race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, political affiliation, source of income, national origin, disability status or any other arbitrary condition which operates to defeat the broad statutory purpose of providing assistance to needy families.

II. TRUSTEE OFFICE HOURS

A. *Location and Hours (IC 12-20-5.5-2)*

The office of the Benton Township Trustee, Michelle Bright, is located at 7616 E. State Rd 45 Unionville, IN 47468. The office is staffed periodically throughout the week, with appointments available upon request. The telephone number is (812) 339-6593.

The office will also be closed for the staff to participate in programs or seminars conducted by the Indiana Township Association (ITA) or other agencies, including internal training or staff meetings. A 24-hour notice will be posted prior to the closing.

Appointments may be made by contacting the office and making arrangements with either the Caseworker or Trustee. The individual shall be given an application for assistance and a list of documents and/or forms needed to complete the application. When all of the documents have been compiled, an appointment will be scheduled for an interview. In order to accept an application for consideration, the application must be complete and must contain all supporting documentation.

B. Deputy Trustee (IC-36-6-7-2; IC 12-20-4-2)

The Trustee shall appoint a Deputy Trustee who shall have all powers of the Trustee in the Trustee's absence. The Deputy Trustee is Andrew Snooks.

III. APPLICATION PROCESS (IC 12-20-6-0.5 thru 12-20-6-10; IC 12-20-7-1 thru 12-20-7-6; IC 12-20-8-1 thru 12-20-8-7; IC 12-20-16-1 thru 12-20-16-17)

A. Initial Assistance

Applicants are entitled to seek Township Assistance by filling out and signing an application/affidavit, form T.A. 1, and other forms, and by affirming their current financial situation. ALL APPLICANTS MUST USE THIS FORM AND THE APPLICANT MUST SIGN THE FORM IN THE PRESENCE OF A TOWNSHIP CASEWORKER. No verbal requests will be considered. Applicants needing special aid, readers, or interpreters to make an application should notify a caseworker/investigator regarding the type of accommodation needed.

Applicants will be required to cooperate with an investigation of their personal finances, family responsibility, and eligibility to receive other types of assistance. This investigation may include a home visit. Applicants may be requested to provide "relevant information" that the Trustee may consider in determining eligibility (See Addendum I). ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION MUST BE PROVIDED AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION, OR THE APPLICATION MAY BE DENIED. As soon as reasonably possible, applicants will be required to apply for any other assistance for which they may be eligible. The application will not be considered complete until all information the applicant is required to provide is received, and the application is signed by all adult household members.

Knowingly and willfully falsifying the affidavit, misrepresenting the facts, or withholding vital information is considered fraud. If the township finds that an applicant or household member has obtained Township Assistance from any township by these actions, the township will refuse to extend aid for sixty (60) days. A criminal referral to the County Prosecutor's Office may be made.

B. Case Investigator Assigned

When an applicant first visits the Trustee's office, an investigator will be assigned to handle the case. All contacts with the Trustee's office should be made through the applicants' investigator, who will pass on the necessary information to the Trustee. During the application procedure, the investigator may ask that the applicant meet with the Trustee. Failure to keep an appointment with the Trustee may be considered non-cooperation and may be grounds for denial of any assistance requested.

C. Continuing Assistance

To receive Township Assistance on a continuing basis, a current application/affidavit must have been

filed with the Trustee's office within 180 days of receiving such assistance. If at the time assistance is requested, a current application/affidavit is not on file, applicants will be required to complete a new one. Applicants must provide any updated information, which may have changed since their most recent application including income, available resources, employment status, number in household and other pertinent matters.

IV. APPLICANT RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT (IC 12-20-8-1 thru 12-20-8-7)

A. Township Residency Required

A person seeking temporary Township Assistance from Benton Township, other than emergency transportation out of the township, must be a resident of Benton Township. A person is a resident of the township if the person: 1) has located in the township; 2) intends to make the township the person's sole place of residence; and 3) is a citizen or permanent resident of the United States with a valid work permit.

Individuals in the United States without permission of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) are ineligible to receive assistance. Documentation of legal resident alien status and proof of cooperation with the INS will be required.

A person who locates in the township primarily to apply for assistance or is receiving assistance from another township will not be eligible for assistance from Benton Township. The Township Trustee may consider all relevant information (see Addendum I) that supports or refutes the person's intent to make the township his or her place of residence. It will be presumed that the person moved into the township primarily to apply for assistance if the person requires assistance in order to establish residence in the township.

B. Institutional Time Not Counted

Time spent in any institution, or in any public or private charitable institution or hospital, or in any place while in the armed forces service of the United States, shall in no event be considered in determining legal settlement. Institutionalized persons will be considered residents of the township where they lived before their admission.

C. Temporary Residence With Friends, Relatives Not Counted

Residence and Household shall not be construed to mean temporary living arrangements made available by relative (see Addendum I), friends, acquaintances, or private or public social service agencies.

V. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A. General Requirements (IC 12-20-5.5-1 thru 12-20-5.5-6; IC 12-20-6-0.5 thru 12-20-6-10)

In addition to being residents of Benton Township, all applicants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age or provide legal proof of emancipation. Applicants must provide proof of identification. Applicant and all members of the applicant's household must cooperate with the Trustee's investigation of eligibility for assistance.

The Trustee may refuse to provide assistance that would pay for goods or services provided during a period that an applicant has previously applied for and been denied Township Assistance by Benton township or by any other township.

B. Employment Requirement (IC 12-20-10-1 thru 12-20-10-4)

Every adult member of the family of the applicant’s household, who is physically and mentally able to work, must be employed full-time or be actively seeking full-time employment or the application may be denied. The Trustee may refuse to provide assistance that would pay for goods or services provided during a period that an applicant has previously applied for and been denied Township Assistance by Benton Township or by any other township.

For the purposes of these guidelines, “full-time employment” shall mean income-raising activity that raises at least the equivalent of 35 hours per week time the current federal minimum wage.

All eligible household adults will be required to show evidence of employment or if unemployed, of seeking employment at a minimum of three establishments each week. All eligible household adults will be required to maintain an updated employment file with Work One. All able-bodied adult members will be required to keep their employment card updated and be willing (registered) to accept employment at the federal minimum wage level. The Township may also require any adult member of the household to complete a Township Employment Search Form prior to receiving continued Township Assistance.

If the Trustee offers work to those able, or if employment at a reasonable compensation is offered by another person, no assistance shall be furnished unless and until such work is accepted and performed.

The Trustee may require that an applicant or household member(s) attend job training courses as a condition of continuing assistance.

C. Employment Requirement Exemption (IC 12-20-11-1)

An applicant or household member may be exempted from working, seeking employment or performing workfare for a specified period if they either:

1. Show a licensed medical doctor’s written statement of medical disability less than 30 day old; or
2. Are enrolled in and attending adult education or vocational courses at the referral of the Trustee; or
3. Are required to provide care for a household or family member due to health, age or disability, as confirmed by a doctor’s written statement less than 30 days old; or
4. Applicant or household member is a minor or over sixty-five (65) years old.

The Trustee may require and provide for any medical examination necessary to determine if an applicant or household member is able to perform work.

D. SSI/SSI(D) Reimbursement Authorization (IC 12-20-27-1.5)

On the date of application, a person applying for assistance who claims disability and is applying for SSI or SSI(D) benefits must sign a SSI Reimbursement Authorization Form supplied by the township office.

E. Other Resources/Assets (IC 12-7-2-44.7)

The Township Assistance program is designed to provide for basic living needs when no other resources are available. “Countable” assets such as bank accounts, investments, property other than that required for living; vehicles not required for transportation to work; anticipated assets (i.e., upcoming payroll checks, unemployment checks, child support, income tax refunds, social security checks and refundable

portions of tuition payments) are considered resources available to the applicant and may affect eligibility for assistance.

Based on the circumstances in each case, the Trustee may determine that certain “countable” assets must be liquidated before assistance is granted; or that their market value be deducted from any assistance granted.

F. Assistance of Relatives (IC 12-20-6-9(a); IC 12-20-6-10(b))

If an applicant has relatives able to assist the applicant, the Trustee’s office may call on such relatives to seek their assistance either with material relief or by offering employment. If the relatives refuse, the Trustee may assist the applicant.

If an member of the household has a relative living in the township who is able to assist, the trustee shall, before granting aid a second time, ask the relative to help either with material relief or by furnishing employment. (IC 12-20-6-10(b))

G. Bills 30 Days Past Due Not Eligible (IC 12-20-16-3)

The Trustee shall not be required to pay rent, mortgage, or utility bills that are more than 30 days past due, nor shall the Trustee be required to pay bills incurred in another township. Inability to provide a bill to substantiate a request for assistance may result in a delay in processing the request; refusal or failure to provide such a bill may be grounds for denial of assistance.

Persons who request assistance for rent, mortgage, or utility bills that are more than 30 days past due will be required to submit relevant income and documentation of expenditures as required by other sections of these guidelines for the period in which the debt was incurred to determine if the applicant met all conditions for receiving assistance during that period. (See Example in Addendum I.)

The Trustee may assist in payment of non-qualifying bills only if the applicant can prove that all reasonable effort was made to provide for the service during the period in question, and if the applicant meets all other requirements of these guidelines.

H. Acceptable Expenditures for Basic Necessities (IC 12-20-5.5-6)

Applicants are expected to apply their resources toward basic necessities (See Addendum I). Expenditures for items other than basic necessities, or for excessive expenditures not justified by medical or employment needs will be deducted from an approved applicant’s benefit level, or may be used as a basis for denial if the amount exceeds the applicant’s benefit level or the amount of assistance requested.

VI. INCOME GUIDELINES (IC 12-20-5.5-6)

A. Countable Household Income

An applicant’s countable household income (See Addendum I), for 30 days prior to the application, or for the period in which assistance is requested, must be less than the monthly amounts listed in Addendum V of these Guidelines in order to be eligible for Township Assistance. Applicants must also meet all other requirements of these Guidelines.

B. Lump Sum Income

If lump sum income, such as tax refunds, court settlements, financial aid refunds, retroactive social security payments, insurance settlements, or workman's compensation received in the last 90 days and combined with other countable household income, is more than three times the qualifying monthly income, 90 days' income may be considered in determining eligibility.

Applicants whose income falls within the guidelines must prove that their necessary living expenses are greater than their resources in order to be eligible for assistance.

VII. DETERMINATION OF NEEDS/FORMS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED (IC 12-20-16-1 thru 12-20-16-17)

A. Trustee to Determine Needs

The Trustee shall determine if an eligible applicant has any of the following immediate needs and has the authority to provide assistance in the most economical and practical manner.

B. Food (IC 12-20-16-5)

The Trustee may furnish food necessary to maintain health. Food vouchers may be issued on a daily, weekly or monthly basis and shall not exceed the weekly amount of current federal food stamp benefits as listed in Addendum V.

Only good nutritious foods shall be purchased with food vouchers along with necessities such as soap, laundry supplies and paper products. Vouchers are not to be used for the purchase of candy, soft drinks, tobacco products, snacks, imported foods, cookies or alcoholic beverages. Purchase of such items shall be considered abuse of food vouchers and will be grounds for future denial.

Any individual or family applying to the Trustee for food shall be referred to the Food Stamp Office to determine eligibility as required by law. The Trustee will not provide vouchers to supplement food stamps except in the extreme circumstances such as loss, theft or medical emergency.

C. Non-Food Items (IC-12-7-2-20.5)

Necessary household supplies such as soap, laundry supplies, and paper products will be issued in the weekly allotments listed in Addendum V.

D. Shelter (IC 12-20-16-17)

The Trustee may help provide shelter as needed on a month-by-month basis. Assistance will be provided in whatever form necessary to provide or prevent the loss of shelter so long as such aid constitutes the most economical and practical means of providing shelter. The Trustee may provide for an inspection of current or proposed shelter to ensure its habitability prior to granting shelter assistance. The landlord must agree not to evict the applicant during the period covered by the township purchase order.

The Trustee will not issue a rent voucher to supplement any rent subsidy; supplement or other government rent assistance unless a special emergency need exists. The Trustee will not pay rent deposits or late fees or damage or maintenance costs. The Trustee may not provide rent or mortgage payment without proof applicant will be able to pay the following month's rent or mortgage.

The Trustee will not pay legal costs related to an eviction.

The Trustee may not pay cost of an applicant's shelter with a relative (See Addendum I) who is the applicant's landlord if the applicant lives in the same household as the relative; or if in separate housing from the relative which is unencumbered by a mortgage or has not been previously rented by the relative to a different tenant at reasonable market rates for at least six (6) months.

The Trustee is not required to pay for additional shelter costs as a result of the applicant keeping pets. A service dog is considered a medical necessity, not a pet, but the need must be documented by a physician's statement.

The Trustee will not provide housing assistance for an applicant who resides in a substance abuse halfway house or treatment facility.

Rent vouchers shall be provided in amounts not exceeding those listed in Addendum V.

E. Utilities (IC 12-20-16-3)

The Trustee may, as necessary to prevent the loss of service, authorize the payment from Township Assistance funds for essential utility services including water, gas, and electric services; and if used for heating or cooking, coal, wood, liquid propane or fuel oil. Sufficient fuel services shall be provided to maintain the residential shelter at 68 degrees Fahrenheit during the months when conditions require heat.

Basic telephone service may be provided only if necessary for medical or employment purposes. You must provide the Trustee with a written statement from either the doctor or employer stating the reason for telephone service. The Trustee will not pay late fees, trip charges, or taxes.

All utility bills must be in the name of the applicant or an adult member of the household. The Trustee will not pay deposits or reconnect fees. All applicants will be required to apply for the Energy Assistance program. Applicants may be asked to sign a deferred payment agreement with the utility company if the Trustee determines this to be economical and practical. If the Trustee determines that a utility is going to be disconnected regardless of the amount of Township Assistance provided, the Trustee may decide not to provide such utility payment. The Trustee will not pay utility bills that are more than 24 months old. **IMPORTANT: IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY ADULT MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD TO SEED ASSISTANCE BEFORE THE UTILITY IS ACTUALLY DISCONNECTED TO PREVENT THE OVERUSE AND WASTING OF ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICES.**

Utility allowances will be determined in accordance with the standards established in Addendum V.

F. Medical Services (IC 12-20-16-2)

The Trustee shall in cases of necessity pay for medical services, incurred during a period of eligibility, including doctor's fees, allowable medical supplies, prescriptions and special dietary needs unless these goods and services are available through other government programs. The Township will see that medical service is furnished to persons otherwise qualified for aid under the guidelines.

The Township is under no obligation to provide medical services and/or prescription medications that are excluded for payment by either Medicaid or the Medicare program (IC 12-20-16-2(b)). The Township is not responsible for paying for insulin if the Township has evidence that the individual has the financial ability to pay for the insulin. The Township will pay only for medical service which is applied for and approved by the Trustee prior to the service being rendered. The Trustee may pay for

emergency medical services if the otherwise eligible person is treated as an emergency patient due to an accident or sudden illness. However, a medical emergency does not exist in situations where the illness/injury could have been treated during a routine office call by a family doctor, and the applicant could have made contact with the Township Office before such a visit.

State law establishes specific restrictions on the types of medical assistance, which Trustees may provide. For more detailed information, see Addendum III.

Prescription Drugs for Senior Citizens: Application to be made to Trustee using same procedure as for other Township Assistance. Applicant must be a Benton Township resident and age 65 or over. See Addendum V for income, home value and savings account guidelines; and for monthly aid limit.

G. Traveler's Aid (IC 12-20-9-6)

The Trustee may provide assistance to persons or family units passing through the Township and to permit their return to place of legal residence. Non-residents applying for traveler's aid shall be informed of their future ineligibility for assistance and will be required to cooperate in signing a statement acknowledging their understanding of their eligibility status. This statement may be used as the basis for denial of future assistance. Applicants requesting gasoline assistance must provide a valid driver's license and proof of insurance.

Applicants requesting transportation assistance to a location outside the township will be required to complete workfare obligations before assistance is granted. They will also be required to provide verification that their destination is their residence.

H. Funeral Expenses (IC 12-2-16-12)

The Trustee may provide for mortuary and burial expenses at the lowest possible cost, not to exceed \$1,600 for burial expenses and \$1,100 for cremation, if not eligible for Medicaid or VA burial benefits. Applicants will be required to attest that the deceased has no resources (including insurance policies) available to them with which to pay funeral expenses by completing an application for township assistance prior to making arrangements with a funeral home.

The Trustee will pay for a cremation rather than a burial unless there is a prior objection in writing by the deceased individual or a surviving family member. If there is good cause to believe that a written objection to cremation may exist or will be made by a relative, then a period of three working days will be provided. If no objection is received within three days, the Trustee will determine whether to do a burial or cremation. See Addendum 7.

Funeral home and burial expenses covered by the township are for basic goods and services only as agreed upon by the Township Trustee and Funeral Home Director (a standard package). Either visitation the day prior to burial or same day of burial is included (not both). The cost of a gravestone is not included. The deceased person's family is allowed to upgrade the funeral, burial goods or services at their own expense up to the current Medicaid standard of \$1,750 for funeral services and \$400 for cemetery costs if the township has agreed to provide assistance. The township should receive a death certificate and an itemized statement (invoice) from the funeral home before making payment.

- 1) If an individual dies in the township:
 - a) Without leaving money, real or personal property, other assets that may be liquidated, or other means necessary to defray funeral expenses; and
 - b) The individual is not a resident of another township in Indiana; then

c) The Township Trustee shall provide a person to superintend and authorize either the funeral and burial or cremation of the deceased individual.

2) If the Township Trustee determines that the deceased individual is a resident of another township in Indiana, the Township Trustee shall notify the trustee of that township, who shall then provide a person to superintend the arrangements.

3) The Trustee may deduct from the maximum amount

- a) Any monetary benefits that the deceased individual is entitled to receive from a state or federal program.
- b) Any money that another person provides on behalf of the deceased individual above the Medicaid standard described in paragraph three.

4) A Township Trustee who provides funeral and burial or cremation benefits to a deceased individual is entitled to a first priority claim, to the extent of the cost of benefits paid against any money or other personal property held by the coroner under IC 36-2-14-11.

I. Recovery of Benefits (IC 12-20-27-1; IC 12-20-27-1.5)

A Trustee who furnishes Township Assistance may file a claim for the value of that assistance against the estate of a township assistance recipient who dies, leaving an estate; and is not survived by a spouse, disabled adult dependent or dependent child less than 18 years of age.

The estate includes any money or other personal property in the possession of a coroner.

If a Trustee anticipates that a Township Assistance applicant or a member of the applicant's household is likely to receive a judgment, compensation, or a monetary benefit from a third party, the Trustee may require the applicant of the affected household member to enter into a subrogation agreement; or sign a Social Security Administration's reimbursement authorization.

These agreements cover repayment of any Township Assistance benefits provided by the Township during interim period:

- Beginning when the agreement or authorization is signed; and
- Ending when the applicant or member of the applicant's household receives the judgment, compensation, or monetary benefit or leaves the household.

This section does not apply to any assistance for which workfare has been satisfactorily completed.

VIII. WORK FARE (IC 12-20-11-1 thru 12-20-11-5)

A. Requirement

All applicants and all adult household members will be required to work in return for assistance. The Trustee may arrange work for the Township or some other local government or non-profit agency unless one of the following conditions exists:

1. Applicant or household member is not physical or mentally able to perform the proposed work and possesses a statement less than 30 days old from a licensed medical doctor stating such;
2. Applicant or household member is a minor or over sixty-five (65) years of age;

3. Applicant or household member has full-time (35 hrs./wk.) employment at the time assistance is given and maintains full-time employment for an unbroken period of 60 days beginning the day assistance is granted;
4. Applicant or household member is needed to care for a person as a result of that person's age or physical condition, as confirmed by a doctor's statement less than 30 days old; or
5. The Trustee determines that there is no work available for the applicant or household member;
6. The individual obligated to perform the work is, at the direction of the Township Trustee, attending courses as specified in IC 12-20-11-3, a job training program under IC 12-20-12-1, or another job training program approved by the Township Trustee.
7. Individuals currently receiving SSI monthly benefits are not automatically exempted from workfare. In order to be exempted, an SSI recipient must still meet one of the exempting reasons listed above.

B. Supervision

All work will be coordinated by the Trustee's Office. Assistance will be worked for at no less than the Federal Minimum Wage. Applicants and household members shall be required to work off relief at the time and place assigned. The Trustee may require that workfare obligations be completed before any assistance is granted. Failure to work as scheduled or failure to fulfill workfare obligations within a reasonable period required by the Township Trustee is a basis for denying further assistance to the recipient or the recipient's household for not more than 180 days (from the next application date), unless the recipient shows good cause for not performing the work.

The Township Trustee may require a Township Assistance applicant or an adult member of the applicant's household to satisfy all obligations to perform work incurred in another Township before additional Township Assistance is granted. However, in case of an emergency, the Trustee may temporarily waive the work obligation incurred from another Township and provide temporary assistance to an applicant or a household in order to relieve need or immediate suffering.

IX. OTHER PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY (IC 12-20-6-5) (IC 12-20-6-5.5)

A. Requirement to Apply for Other Assistance

In each application, the Trustee shall examine the applicant's circumstances and shall determine if the applicant might qualify for any other public assistance programs. Should the Trustee determine that eligibility for other programs may exist, the applicant will be required to apply for such programs within 15 days, or no future assistance will be awarded for 60 days.

B. Application for Other Public Assistance Required

- (a) This section does not apply in an emergency.
- (b) If, before granting Township Assistance, the Township Trustee determines that an applicant or a member of an applicant's household may be eligible for public assistance other than poor relief, the applicant or household member shall, when referred by the Township Trustee, make an application and comply with all necessary requirements for completing the application process for public assistance administered by:
 - (1) The Division of Family and Children and County Offices; or
 - (2) Any other Federal or State Government entity.
- (c) An applicant or a household member who fails to:
 - (1) File an application as specified in subsection (b); and

(2) Show evidence that the application, as referred by the Township Trustee was filed not more than (15) working days after the Township Trustee's referral; may be denied Township Assistance for not more than (60) days.

C. Reduced Benefit for Failure to Properly Apply Other Benefits

Failure to properly apply public monies or private charitable donations received by the applicant from other programs may result in denial of assistance. An applicant or household member who has had benefits reduced from other public programs because of voluntary actions or non-compliance with program requirements will have equal reductions made by the Township from any benefit the applicant may qualify to receive.

D. Protective Payee

The Trustee may report to other Government Agencies (Division of Family & Children or Social Security Administration) the misuse of funds by a recipient. When reporting misuse of funds, the Trustee may officially recommend that the recipient's payments to be placed in the hands of a protective or designated payee. The Township may refuse to extend aid to an individual or household member until such time or the person initiates and executes the proper papers for obtaining a payee to handle the finances.

X. REASONS FOR DENIAL (IC 12-20-5-1; IC 12-20-5.5-1)

A. Failure to Comply With Guidelines

Failure to comply with any requirements set forth in these guidelines will be grounds for denial of assistance. In addition, any of the following shall be considered grounds for denial of assistance:

1. Willful giving of false information.
2. Voluntary termination of gainful employment; firing for just cause, (e.g., absenteeism, theft, failure to pass an employee's drug screen, refusal of gainful employment except as exempted by these guidelines within the past (60) days.
3. Use of violence, intimidation or abusive language in or around the Trustee's Office or premises.
4. Failure to follow printed work order requirements as explained and outlined in the workfare agreement.
5. Failure to accept free or low cost shelter arrangements provided by relatives, the Township or others.
6. Abuse or voluntary termination or reduction of any other programs in the past 60 days offering assistance for basic necessities, including TANF, Food Stamps, subsidized housing or other programs for which the applicant may be eligible.
7. Eviction from subsidized housing for violation of regulations or guidelines; or voluntary termination of housing assistance by moving without just cause in the past 60 days.
8. Failure or refusal by any household adult to sign the Township waiver authorizing release of information concerning the application.
9. Ineligibility for Food Stamps due to alien status.
10. Having sufficient income to provide for necessary living expenses, regardless of meeting Township income guidelines.
11. Failure to respond to Trustee's request for documentation of applications pending for other types of assistance for which the applicant may be eligible.
12. Past abuse of food voucher privileges or other Trustee assistance.
13. Excessive, unnecessary and/or luxury expenses.
14. Failure or refusal to sign Township Reimbursement Form for SSI.

15. Failure to file paternity actions when necessary and appropriate or failure to take necessary legal action to pursue child support.
16. Failure or refusal to cooperate with the Trustee in determining eligibility for assistance.
17. Conviction of an offense under IC-35-43-5-7 (Welfare Fraud). Persons convicted of a misdemeanor are ineligible for Township Assistance for one year from their conviction; ten years if a felony conviction.
18. Habitually reporting the theft or loss of money or food stamps will result in denial.

B. Wasted Resources

“Non-necessities” or “non-essential expenditures” (also known as “wasted resource”) include:

- Those items prohibited from purchase with food vouchers including: candy, soft drinks, tobacco products, snacks, imported foods, cookies, alcoholic beverages, pet food and pet supplies; whether purchased with cash or vouchers;
- Court costs, probation fees, garnishments or other costs incurred through or by the criminal or civil justice systems (i.e. bail, user fees for an in-home detention program, restitution, substance abuse fees);
- Bank penalties or overdraft charges;
- Cable TV, Satellite Dishes, or other entertainment costs;
- Childcare expenses that are not required by employment or medical purposes;
- Transportation expenses not justified or required for medical, employment or employment-seeking purposes;
- Payments toward living costs incurred by other households;
- Loan and credit card payments (pay day loans, rent-to-own payments, etc.);
- Personal loans made by the applicant to other persons;
- Non-basic phone charges (i.e. long distance charges, caller id, call waiting, cell phone (when home phone is available), pagers, internet charges);
- An automobile is not, by statute, recognized as a basic necessity. Therefore, automobile payments and other related expenses may not be considered an acceptable expense, unless it is necessary to maintain current employment. Then, the reasonableness of the expenditure will be considered.

The total amount of payments made toward non-necessities for the period in which assistance is being requested will be deducted from an approved applicant’s benefit level; or may be used as a basis for denial if the amount exceeds the applicant’s benefit level; or be used as a basis for denial if the amount for which the request for assistance is being made is less than the total amounts dedicated by the applicant for payment towards non-necessities. Example: a request is made for a one-month utility bill but the applicant has expended more than the cost of the utility bill on provision of non-necessities during the period for which the request for assistance is made; the request for assistance will be denied.

XI. TRUSTEE OBLIGATION/NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

A. No Verbal Denials (IC 12-20-6-7; IC 12-20-6-8)

In order to protect the rights of all applicants who are potentially eligible for Township Services, no citizen will be verbally denied assistance. All applications must be in writing on the appropriate forms, and all determinations of eligibility will be made in writing on Form TA-1A.

B. Decision Notification (IC 12-20-6-7; IC 12-20-6-8)

Applicants are entitled to a decision on their completed applications within seventy-two (72) hours or three (3) working days (excluding weekends and holidays) unless the investigation cannot be completed because the applicant has not submitted the required information, or the township is unable to gather necessary information.

If the Township experiences difficulty in gathering necessary information, a “Pending” decision may be issued allowing the township an additional seventy-two (72) hours or three (3) working days to complete the investigation. Should the Township be unable to access the required information within 72 hours of issuing the “Pending” decision, the Township may deny the application.

All decision notifications will include the following information:

- The type and amount of assistance granted, denied, or partially granted;
- Specific reasons for denying all or part of the assistance requested;
- Information advising the applicant of the procedures for appeal to the Monroe County Commissioners.

C. Continuing Aid Reapplication Notice

In situations where applicants are receiving continuing aid from the Township, they will be notified when such aid is to be reduced or terminated. Aid recipients will receive a Form TA-1A explaining the reason for the action and the section(s) of these guidelines used to reach the decision. This form will be made available not less than ten (10) days prior to the proposed action and aid will continue until an appeal or new application is decided.

D. Appeals Process (IC 12-20-15-1 thru 12-20-15-9)

If any action taken by the Township Trustee is not acceptable to any applicant, they may appeal the decision to the Monroe County Commissioners in Bloomington, Indiana. A form describing the process for appeals is attached to the TA-1A form used to inform applicants of the Trustee’s action.

E. Reporting Abuse and Neglect of a Child or Dependent

The Township shall report all suspected cases of abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. Un-emancipated youth requesting Township Assistance will automatically be reported to the Monroe County Office of Families and Children.

XII. AVAILABILITY AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF GUIDELINES (IC 12-20-5.5-1)

A. Guidelines Posted

All decisions regarding the eligibility of applicants will be based on these standards and guidelines and in accordance with Indiana Law. The guidelines will be posted in the Office of the Township Trustee at all times and will be filed with the County Commissioners. Any member of the public will be permitted to inspect and copy them. Copies will be made available to interested public and private social agencies at their expense.

The Township Trustee may provide benefits beyond those listed when special need is shown. The amount and length of assistance, when added to all other income and resources, shall be sufficient to meet the needs as determined by the Trustee.

B. Approval and Annual Review of Guidelines

These guidelines shall supersede any and all previous guidelines. The appendices listed on the next page are also incorporated as part of these guidelines.

These guidelines are effective when signed and posted by the Township Trustee and filed with the Monroe County Commissioners. They are approved by the Township Board and will be reviewed annually. The Trustee shall make technical adjustments in these guidelines to reflect changes in applicable Federal Standards and Indiana Statutes subject to the annual review of the Township Board.

- Addendum I. Definitions and Examples
- Addendum II. Maximum Income Eligibility Standards
- Addendum III. Allowable Medical Services
- Addendum IV. Benton Township Assistance Chart
- Addendum V. Benton Township Budget Form
- Addendum VI. Application for Burial Assistance

Signed This _____ Day of _____, 2014

President, Township Board

Township Trustee

ADDENDUM I – DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

The following definitions and examples are provided to further explain portions of the Township Assistance Guidelines and Standards.

Section I – Introduction

IC 12-20-17-1 states that “If a Township Trustee determines by investigation that a Township Assistance applicant or a Township Assistance applicant’s household requires assistance, the Township Trustee shall, after determining that an emergency exists, furnish to the applicant or the household the temporary aid necessary for the relief of immediate suffering. However, before any further final or permanent relief is given, the Township Trustee shall consider whether the applicant’s or household’s need can be relieved by means other than an expenditure of Township money.”

IC 36-1-2-4.5 defines “emergency” as “a situation that could not reasonably be foreseen and requires immediate action.”

Section II – Application Process

“Household members” or “members of the applicant’s household” includes “any person who lives in the same residence as the applicant.” (IC 12-20-6-0.5)

“Relevant information” which the Trustee may require and consider in determining eligibility includes but is not limited to:

- Names, birthdates, and social security number for all persons living in the household.
- Car registration and insurance policy on all vehicles.
- A completed budget sheet for the previous 30 days, or for the period in which the request of assistance is being made.
- Expense receipts for the previous 30 days, or for the period in which the request for assistance is being made.
- Bank Statement showing activity for the past 30 days or for the period in which the request for assistance is being made.
- Financial aid statement from University that shows the date and amount of aid distributed in the past 90 days.
- A valid utility bill and a current lease that includes the names of the applicant and all adult household members.
- Acceptable residency documentation includes current driver’s license, motor vehicle registration, utility bill, US Postal Service change of address notification, and current lease for housing;
- Verification of medical status if unemployed and seeking to avoid workfare.
- A valid prescription for any medication request; (IC12-20-6-9)

Section III – Applicant Residency Requirement

“Relevant information” used to determine residency is defined in Section III.

“Relative” includes: the spouse, parent, stepparent, child, stepchild, sibling, stepsibling, grandparent, step grandparent, grandchild, or step grandchild of a Township Assistance applicant or household member.

Section IV – Eligibility Requirements

“Living necessities” or “basic necessities” or “acceptable expenditures” include those needed to provide food, shelter, clothing, utilities, basic telephone expenses directly related to employment or medical needs, and medical care.

“Non-necessities” or “non-essential expenditures” are also known as “wasted resources.”

Applicants claiming disability must apply for appropriate disability pensions with Social Security, Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation, Worker’s Compensation, or some other government operated or supervised program which conditions benefits on disability.

Example from Section IV – H. Acceptable Expenditures for Basic Necessities. If a bill is unpaid for three months and further non-payment may result in loss of service, the applicant must document household income and expenditures for the three months in order for the Trustee to determine that the applicant had made an effort to provide the service and exhausted all other remedies during the period in question.

Section V – Income Guidelines

“Countable household income” for determining eligibility includes that gross income which is available to the household from any source. This includes wages, self-employment, other financial aid programs, child support payments, spousal support, sale of blood or property, gifts from friends, institutions and family. Applicants who are self-employed will be required to provide the township with credible financial records establishing their income and expenses.

Court-ordered expenditures such as those listed in Section V will not be deducted from gross income amounts in order to establish eligibility for Township Assistance purposes.

Addendum II – MAXIMUM INCOME ELIBILITY STANDARDS

An applicant’s gross monthly household income must be less than 100% of the federally established poverty level. The Federal Maximum Income Eligibility Standards are revised annually.

100% Federal Poverty Guidelines

Persons in Household	Total Monthly Gross Income	Total Annual Gross Income
1	\$972.50	\$11,670.00
2	\$1,310.83	\$15,730.00
3	\$1,649.17	\$19,790.00
4	\$1,987.50	\$23,850.00
5	\$2,325.83	\$27,910.00
6	\$2,664.17	\$31,970.00
7	\$3,002.50	\$36,030.00
8	\$3,340.83	\$40,090.00
Each Additional Person	\$338.33	\$ 4,060.00

Addendum III – ALLOWABLE MEDICAL EXPENSES

The following are the specific guidelines for allowable medical expenses as reference in Section VII. E. of these Standards and Guidelines and as establish in IC 12-20-16-2 (c).

The Township Trustee shall pay only for the following medical services:

1. Prescription drugs as prescribed by an attending practitioner (as defined in IC 16-42-19-5) other than a veterinarian. Prescriptions are not to exceed a 30 day supply. The Trustee will pay only for a generic when available. Narcotic prescriptions will not be provided if a non-opiate drug is available.
2. Office calls to a physician licensed under IC 25-22.5-1-1.1
3. Dental care needed to relieve pain or infection or to repair cavities in the most economical manner.
4. Repair or replacement of dentures. The initial cost of dentures will be considered only when the medical necessity has been documented.
5. Emergency room treatment that is of an emergency nature.
6. Pre-operation testing prescribed by an attending physician licensed under IC 25-22.5-1-1.1.
7. Over-the-counter drugs prescribed by a practitioner (as defined in IC 16-42-19-5) other than a veterinarian.
8. X-rays and laboratory testing as prescribed by an attending physician licensed under IC 25-22.5-1-1.1.
9. Visits to a medical specialist when referred by an attending physician licensed under IC 25-22.5-1-1.1.
10. Physical therapy prescribed by an attending physician licensed under IC 25-22.5-1-1.1.

11. Eyeglasses, eye exams, eyeglass repair or replacement. The township will not pay for contact lenses, unless medically necessary.
12. Repair or replacement, not initial cost, of a prosthesis not provided for by other tax supported State or Federal programs.
13. Insulin and items needed to administer insulin in accordance with IC 12-20-16-2 (c) not to exceed a 30 day supply.

Addendum IV – BENTON TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE CHART

Food Purchase Order Guidelines

Addendum IV – BENTON TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE CHART

Food Purchase Order Guidelines

Current Federal Food Stamp Weekly Allotment

Persons in Household	Weekly Food Order	Household Items
1	\$46.50	\$24.00
2	\$85.50	\$32.00
3	\$123.00	\$34.00
4	\$159.00	\$38.00
5	\$185.00	\$41.00
6	\$222.00	\$45.00
7	\$245.50	\$50.00
8	\$280.50	\$55.00
Each additional person	\$35.00	\$5.00

Rent Guidelines And/Or Utilities Maximum

Number of Persons in Household	Monthly Amount
1	\$450.00
2	\$550.00
3 or more	\$650.00

Funeral Expenses

The maximum amount for funeral expenses is not to exceed \$1,600 for burial expenses and \$1,100 for cremation, if not eligible for Medicaid or VA burial benefits.

WORKFARE RATE IS \$7.25 PER HOUR

Addendum V– BENTON TOWNSHIP BUDGET FORM

Gross Income From _____ to _____ Last 30 Days

			Date	Amount	Verified
Employment					
Employment					
Unemployment					
Social Security /VA Benefits					
TANF/Food Stamps					
Utility Subsidy					
Child Support					
Pay Day Loans					
Financial Aid					
Tax Refund					
Other					

Total Income

Expenses Paid from _____ To _____ Last 30 days

			Date	Amount	Verified
Rent/Mortgage					
Electric					
Heating					
Water/Sewer					
Phone					
Cable					
Court Costs/Judgments					
Child Support					
Child Care					
Car Payment					
Car Insurance					
Gasoline					
Rent To Own					
Pay Day Loans					
Bank Fees/Credit Cards					
Paper Products/Soap/Laundry					
Laundry					
Medical					
Food (not including F/S					
Other					

Total Expenses

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Case #/ Caseworker: _____

Number in Household: _____

Income Guideline: _____

Addendum VI - Application For Burial Assistance

Date: _____ Benton Township, Monroe County Case # _____

All information requested on this form is for the deceased person unless otherwise noted. All blanks must be filled in by the person applying for the expenses (the Applicant) on behalf of the deceased person. Insert "no" or "N/A" if appropriate.

Name of Deceased: _____
 Social Security Number of Deceased : _____
 Permanent Address: _____
 How Long? _____

Date of Birth: _____
 Date of Death: _____
 Location of Death: _____

Name of Applicant: _____
 Address of Applicant: _____
 Phone Number of Applicant: _____
 Social Security Number of Applicant: _____
 Relationship to the Deceased: _____

Permission for Cremation and Interment _____yes _____no

Family Members of the Deceased:

Last	First	Relationship	Address	Phone

Benefit/Property Information

Are you aware of the deceased person having any of the following benefits and/or personal or real property? If so, circle yes and fill in appropriate information.

Social Security	no	yes	CD's/Stocks	no	yes
Pension/Retirement	no	yes	Bonds	no	yes
Veterans Benefits	no	yes	Real Estate	no	yes
Cash on hand	no	yes	Real Estate	no	yes
Burial Trust	no	yes	Alimony	no	yes
Nursing Home Account	no	yes	Support	no	yes
Medicaid	no	yes	Tax Refunds	no	yes
Bank Account	no	yes	Vehicles	no	yes
Life Insurance	no	yes	Burial Plot	no	yes

Signature: _____

Date: _____

