PROVIDING IN THE LORD’S WAY

Wilt thou be made whole? . . . Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.
John 5:6, 8
Cover painting: *Christ Healing the Sick at Bethesda*, by Carl Heinrich Bloch
   Courtesy of Brigham Young University Museum of Art

Painting on page ii: *Christ and the Rich Young Ruler*, by Heinrich Hofmann

Painting on page iv: *All the City Was Gathered Together*, by James Tissot

Painting on page 2: *Jesus Healing the Blind*, by Carl Heinrich Bloch
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Painting on page 6: *The Widow's Mite*, by Alexandre Bida


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The real long term objective of the Welfare Plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them, and bringing to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this Church.

Elder Albert E. Bowen
The Church Welfare Plan
Gospel Doctrine course of study, 1946, page 44

[We are] to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted, whether in this church, or in any other, or in no church at all, wherever [we find] them.

The Prophet Joseph Smith
Times and Seasons
Mar. 15, 1842, page 732
And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

Luke 18:18–22
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For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Matthew 25:35–36, 40
PROVIDING IN THE LORD’S WAY

PREFACE

Providing in the Lord’s Way: A Leader’s Guide to Welfare combines the welfare information from the various sections of the Church Handbook of Instructions into one source. It also includes the updates that have been issued since that handbook was published. Having all of this information in one source will make it easier for leaders to access.

Church leaders should teach the principles of spiritual and temporal welfare to the leaders and members under their jurisdiction. Leaders should encourage members to apply these principles in their lives. Leaders should also encourage parents to teach welfare principles to their families.

INTRODUCTION

This booklet focuses on two fundamental welfare responsibilities: becoming self-reliant and caring for the poor and needy. These responsibilities have been part of the gospel since the beginning of time.

Each of us should strive to become self-reliant by wisely using the resources the Lord has given us (see pages 3–5). Becoming self-reliant enables us to provide for ourselves and our families. It also helps us become more able to care for others.

As disciples of Christ, we should give of ourselves—our time, talents, and resources—to care for those in need (see pages 7–9). When Jesus Christ came to earth, He spent much of His ministry caring for the poor and needy. He commanded His disciples to do the same. He explained that when we care for others, we are serving Him:

“For I was an hunged, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: “Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . .

“. . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:35–36, 40).

In our day the gospel has been restored in its fulness through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Lord has once again commanded His people to care for the poor and needy. He said:

“And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple” (D&C 52:40; see also D&C 44:6).

In 1834 the Lord taught the manner in which this commandment should be carried out in His Church:

“It is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

“But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low” (D&C 104:15–16).

One purpose of the Church is to help us fulfill our responsibilities to become more self-reliant and to provide for the poor and needy in the Lord’s way. The Lord’s way embraces welfare, which is spiritual and temporal well-being. As we apply these principles in our lives, we become more like Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and we prepare ourselves to live with Them eternally.

Isn’t the plan beautiful? Don’t you thrill to this part of the gospel that causes Zion to put on her beautiful garments? When viewed in this light, we can see that [welfare] is not a program, but the essence of the gospel. It is the gospel in action. It is the crowning principle of a Christian life.

Spencer W. Kimball, Ensign, Nov. 1977, page 77
And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 
And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, 
or his parents, that he was born blind? 
Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: 
but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 
I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: 
the night cometh, when no man can work. 
As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 
When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, 
and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 
And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. . . . 
He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

John 9:1–7
PART 2

BECOMING SELF-RELIANT

The Lord has commanded the Church and its members to be self-reliant and independent (see D&C 78:13–14). Heavenly Father has given us everything we have—our talents, abilities, and material goods—and has made us stewards over these blessings (see D&C 104:11–13). To fulfill this stewardship honorably, we should strive to become self-reliant, using these blessings to take care of ourselves and our families.

Latter-day prophets have explained the responsibility each of us has to be self-reliant:

“The responsibility for each person’s social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church...” (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 124; or Ensign, Nov. 1977, 77–78).

As we become self-reliant, we are better prepared to endure adversities such as loss of employment, physical disabilities, and natural disasters without becoming dependent on others. When we are self-reliant, we are also better able to care for others in need.

In outlining the purposes of welfare, the First Presidency in 1936 made this statement about the importance of work in helping Church members become self-reliant:

“Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be reenthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 3).

As we work toward self-reliance, we should prepare ourselves in the following six areas: education and literacy; physical health; employment; home storage; resource management; and spiritual, emotional, and social strength. Suggestions for doing this are outlined in the following sections.

EDUCATION AND LITERACY

The Lord has commanded us to gain knowledge and wisdom (see D&C 88:77–80, 118; 93:53; 130:18–19; 131:6). As we do so, we are better able to discern truth from error and make good choices. We are also better able to understand God and others, and we have a deeper love for them.
Keep our homes and surroundings clean and sanitary.

Provide for adequate medical and dental care, including appropriate insurance where possible.

EMPLOYMENT

The Lord has commanded us to work and to provide for the needs of ourselves and our families (see Genesis 3:17–19; 1 Timothy 5:8; D&C 42:42; 56:17). Suitable employment also gives us opportunities to improve our talents and develop the divine attributes within us. We are happier if our employment suits our interests and abilities and meets our needs.

To become self-reliant in employment, whether working for ourselves or for others, we should:

- Prepare for and carefully select a suitable occupation.
- Become skilled at our work through education, training, and experience.
- Be diligent, hardworking, and trustworthy.
- Give honest work for the pay and benefits we receive.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

One reason we came to earth was to obtain bodies, a necessary step in becoming like our Father in Heaven. The Lord has commanded us to keep our bodies and minds healthy (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; D&C 88:124; 89). By doing this, we are better able to take care of our own needs and serve others.

To become self-reliant in physical health, we should:

- Obey the Word of Wisdom.
- Eat nutritious food, exercise regularly, and get adequate sleep.
- Shun substances or practices that abuse our bodies or minds.

HOME STORAGE

To be self-reliant, we need sufficient food, clothing, and shelter. We also need to know how to provide for ourselves in times of adversity (see D&C 38:30). Prophets have therefore counseled us to store, use, and know how to produce and prepare essential items.

Church leaders suggest that we begin by storing the basic foods that would be required to keep us alive if we did not have anything else to eat. Depending on where we live, those basics might include water, wheat or other grains (such as corn or rice), legumes (dried beans, peas, lentils), salt, honey or sugar, powdered milk,
and cooking oil. When we have stored enough of these essentials to meet the basic needs of our families for one year, we may decide to add other items that we are accustomed to using day by day.

To keep our food storage from spoiling, we should use it regularly in preparing meals, then replace it with new food.

Through careful planning, most Church members can, over time, store a year’s supply of the basic items needed to sustain life. However, some members do not have the money or space for such storage, and some are prohibited by law from storing a year’s supply of food. These members should store as much as their circumstances allow. Church members who do not have the resources to acquire a year’s supply can begin their storage by obtaining supplies to last for a few months.

Members should be prudent and not panic or go to extremes in home storage efforts.

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

We should be wise stewards by exercising good judgment in managing and replenishing the resources with which the Lord has blessed us (see Matthew 25:14–30; 2 Nephi 9:51; D&C 59:16–21; 104:11–18, 78–79; 119).

To become self-reliant in resource management, we should:

- Pay tithes and offerings.
- Avoid unnecessary debt.
- Save for the future, establishing a financial reserve.
- Satisfy all of our promised obligations.
- Use our resources frugally and avoid wasting them.
- Budget our time and money wisely.
- Serve those in need by sharing our time, talents, and resources with them.

**SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SOCIAL STRENGTH**

To become spiritually and emotionally self-reliant, we should:

- Have faith in Jesus Christ and exercise faith unto repentance.
- Receive the saving ordinances of the gospel, including temple ordinances, and partake of the sacrament weekly to renew our baptismal covenants.
- Pray daily.
- Study the gospel of Jesus Christ in the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets.
- Obey God’s commandments and follow the counsel of Church leaders.
- Love God and love and serve others with “the pure love of Christ” (Moroni 7:47).
- Shun anything that is morally and spiritually degrading.
- Strengthen the family by praying together, studying the scriptures together, holding weekly family home evening, and loving and caring for one another.
- Attend Church meetings and serve in Church callings and assignments.
- Do the best we can to adjust to change and recover from misfortune.
- Share the gospel with friends and relatives.
- Identify and submit deceased ancestors’ names for temple ordinances and do temple work as often as circumstances allow.

To become socially self-reliant, we should:

- Develop good relationships with family members and with others (see Matthew 7:1–2, 12; Luke 10:27; D&C 64:9–10).
- Love and serve others.
- Communicate effectively with others.
And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

Mark 12:41–44
CARING FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY

**The Lord's Way**

As we become self-reliant in the six areas outlined in the previous section, we also become more able to care for others. As disciples of Christ, we should honor our covenants to consecrate our time, talents, and resources to build up the kingdom of God and to care for those in need.

Through the Church, the Lord has established a way to care for the poor and needy and help them regain their self-reliance. Providing for the poor and needy in the Lord’s way means that we help those who are less fortunate by giving according to what we have received from God. We should give freely and with a true spirit of love, recognizing that Heavenly Father is the source of all our blessings and that we are responsible to use those blessings to serve others.

Nearly all of us can give something to others, no matter how little we have. When Jesus saw rich people contribute large amounts of money to the temple treasury and a poor widow contribute a very small amount, He said to His disciples:

“Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

“For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mark 12:41–44).

There are many reasons why Church members may not have the resources to meet their basic needs. Members may be elderly or disabled. They may have made unwise choices, either deliberately or because they lacked the education needed to apply the principles of work and self-reliance to prepare for times of adversity. They may have been deprived of necessary resources because of natural disasters or because of economic and political problems in their nations.

When Church members are doing all they can to provide for themselves but still cannot meet their basic needs, they should first turn to their families for help. When this is not sufficient, the Church stands ready to help. The Lord has declared that He will hear the cries of the needy and will not forsake them (see Isaiah 41:17). Church members who need such assistance should call on their bishops.

When we receive help, we should accept it with gratitude and humility, thanking the Lord for His goodness and the goodness of others (see D&C 56:18; 78:19). We should use the assistance to release ourselves from the bondage and limitations of our need, becoming more self-reliant. We should then reach out to help others.

Providing in the Lord’s way humbles the giver, exalts the receiver, and sanctifies both (see D&C 104:15–18). Both are blessed as they keep the Lord’s commandments (see D&C 130:20–21). Both become more able to give as Christ gives.

When we strive to give and serve as Christ did, we are abundantly blessed. We overcome selfishness and greed, and we temper our appetites and passions. We develop the desire to give all we have to help build the Lord’s kingdom (see D&C 42:31). We retain a remission of our sins (see Mosiah 4:26). Our confidence grows strong in the presence of God (see D&C 121:45–46). And we are filled with joy (see D&C 11:12–13).
Fasting, accompanied by prayer, is a form of true worship. The Lord has commanded us to fast in order to help us draw close to Him, overcome worldliness, gain spiritual strength, increase our compassion, and prepare ourselves for service. Fasting is fundamental to our spiritual well-being and temporal welfare.

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord described the true nature of the fast, as well as the blessings that come to those who fast:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isaiah 58:6–11).

When we fast, we should follow the pattern set by the Savior. We set aside food, drink, and worldly concerns. We commune with our Father in Heaven and turn our hearts to Him and to the welfare of others.

The Church designates one Sunday each month as a fast day. On this day

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**The Lord’s Storehouse**

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Savior explained that the Saints should give their offerings for the poor to the bishop. The bishop keeps these offerings “in [the Lord’s] storehouse” and uses them as needed “to administer to the poor and the needy” (D&C 42:34; see also 42:29–36; 78:3–7, 13–14; 82:14–19).

The Lord’s storehouse receives, holds in trust, and dispenses the consecrated offerings of the Saints. In form and operation the storehouse may be as simple or sophisticated as circumstances require. It may be a list of available services, money in an account, food in a pantry, or commodities in a building. A storehouse is established the moment faithful members consecrate to the bishop their time, talents, skills, compassion, materials, and financial means in caring for the poor and building the kingdom of God on the earth.

The Lord’s storehouse, therefore, exists in each ward. The bishop is the agent of the Lord’s storehouse. Guided by inspiration from the Lord, he uses the Saints’ offerings to care for the poor and needy. He is assisted by the priesthood quorums and Relief Society. He is instructed and supported in his responsibilities by stake and area leaders.

As the bishop uses the resources of the Lord’s storehouse to help the poor and needy, he should ensure that organized Church welfare assistance does not replace personal, compassionate caring of individuals for one another.

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**Ways to Care for the Poor and Needy**

**Fasting and Contributing Fast Offerings**

One of the most important ways the Lord has established for Church members to care for the poor and needy is by fasting and contributing fast offerings.

We hope that through the payment of liberal fast offerings there will be more than enough to provide for the needs of the less fortunate. If every member of this Church observed the fast and contributed generously, the poor and the needy not only of the Church, but many others as well, would be blessed and provided for.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Special Budget Fireside, Feb. 18, 1990
we go without food and drink for two consecutive meals if we are physically able. We attend fast and testimony meeting and give to the Church a fast offering at least equal to the value of the food we would have eaten. If possible, we should be very generous and give much more than the value of two meals.

The bishop uses our fast offerings to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, and relieve the afflicted. Fast offerings are one of the most important ways we care for those in need. For more information, see pages 19–20 and 21–22.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHURCH’S HUMANITARIAN AID FUND

Members may contribute to the Church’s humanitarian aid fund by using the Tithing and Other Offerings form. Members should contribute without designating how the funds should be used.

OTHER WAYS TO CARE FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY

We can show compassion for the poor and needy in many other ways. We can minister personally to those in need, giving time, talents, and spiritual and emotional support. We can also pray for them. The Book of Mormon explains some of our responsibilities to the poor:

“Ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain. . . .

“. . . I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants” (Mosiah 4:16, 26).

When we have love in our hearts and hearken to the Holy Ghost, we do not need to be told all the ways in which we should care for the poor and needy. Some opportunities for such service will come through Church callings and assignments. Other opportunities are present in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities. There are no limits to what we may freely offer. Examples include service to the homeless, the disabled, the emotionally and spiritually distressed, the widows and fatherless, and other poor and needy people.

As we begin to reach out to those who are less fortunate, we will become more conscious of their needs. We will become more compassionate and eager to relieve the suffering of others. We will be guided by the Holy Ghost to know whom to serve and how to help meet their needs.

The Lord taught, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). One measure of our love for the Lord is the love we show to others by serving and blessing them in their times of need.

THE SCOPE OF CHURCH WELFARE ASSISTANCE

Church leaders should do what they can to help meet the basic needs of members who are poor or needy and to help them become self-reliant. But in their work as Church leaders, they should not concentrate on solving economic and political problems in their communities or nations. Rather, ward and stake leaders should concentrate on helping people overcome those causes of welfare need that the individual or family can remedy.

Individual Church members, as citizens, may work toward solving economic and political problems by participating in worthy projects in their communities.

O God, our Eternal Father, . . . Thou hast laid upon us the injunction to serve the hungry and destitute, those who are victims of disaster, and all who stand in need.

The Savior said, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep” (John 10:14). Church leaders should follow the example of the Good Shepherd in caring for the sheep of their flock. Like Him, they should know and love each member of their flock. They should give freely of themselves in caring for each one personally. They should protect and nourish their flock, giving constant attention to their spiritual and temporal needs. They should reach out to those in distress and seek to find those who are lost. And they should show the way by living the principles they teach.
AREA WELFARE LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENCY OF THE SEVENTY OR AREA PRESIDENCY

Members of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency have the following responsibilities for spiritual and temporal welfare in the area:

- Receive direction from governing welfare committees regarding welfare strategy, welfare priorities, and establishing or closing welfare operations.
- Teach members the principles of spiritual and temporal welfare.
- Teach leaders their welfare duties and counsel leaders to search the scriptures to further understand welfare principles and duties.
- Implement welfare priorities and clarify welfare policies in the area.
- Oversee Church welfare operations, including Church employment resource centers, Deseret Industries stores, bishops’ storehouses, canneries, home storage centers, grain storage facilities, and commodity production projects.
- Seek approval for Church payment of a needy member’s medical expenses that are expected to exceed $25,000 when leaders feel that such payment may be justified. Consultation is available through Welfare Health Services (telephone 1-801-240-3635 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3635).
- Organize regional welfare committees (see page 12).
- Approve emergency response of up to $25,000 for members’ relief as a result of disasters.
- Approve local humanitarian projects as authorized by the Welfare Executive Committee.
- Organize and direct the area Perpetual Education Fund committee in areas where this initiative is approved.

DIRECTOR FOR TEMPORAL AFFAIRS

Directors for temporal affairs are assigned to geographical areas of the Church. They are full-time employees of the Church. Under the direction of the Presiding Bishopric, they assist members of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency and local priesthood leaders in the Church’s temporal matters. These include the following responsibilities:

- Meet with members of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency regularly to discuss welfare matters.
- Help make plans for meeting welfare needs in the area.
- Instruct local leaders as requested by members of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency.
- Give advice on technical issues such as government regulations, safety matters, and financial procedures.
- Help the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency oversee Church welfare operations.
- Together with members of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency, approve local humanitarian projects as authorized by the Welfare Executive Committee.
- Serve on the area Perpetual Education Fund committee in areas where this initiative is approved.

AREA WELFARE MANAGER

Area welfare managers serve under the direction of the director for temporal affairs. These managers assist the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency and local priesthood leaders.

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Bless us to walk in faith and faithfulness, doing that which needs to be done when it needs to be done to alleviate pain, banish hunger, give hope and encouragement to those who are downtrodden and oppressed, and to those who come seeking help, that they shall not be turned away with empty hands, but that their needs may be met and that they may have cause to rejoice.

in the Church’s welfare matters. As directed by the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency, area welfare managers provide instruction and support to coordinating councils, regional welfare committees, and agent stake operating committees. In international areas of the Church, these managers also supervise welfare operations.

**Area Welfare Specialist**

Area welfare specialists may be called to assist area welfare managers. They are called by the First Presidency if they are serving as full-time missionaries. They are called by the stake presidency, under the direction of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency, if they are serving as Church-service (part-time) missionaries. Their duties are primarily to help ecclesiastical leaders with welfare matters.

**Area Council Meeting**

Members of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency may hold area council meetings periodically to instruct Area Authority Seventies and others as invited. These meetings are also used to correlate, plan, and resolve matters affecting an area. Agenda items include discussions on missionary work, spiritual and temporal welfare, and temple and family history work.

**Coordinating Council Meeting**

Assigned Area Authority Seventies conduct two coordinating council meetings each year, once after each general conference. The purpose of these meetings is to instruct stake presidents, mission presidents, and others as invited. Instruction in welfare matters may be included in these meetings as needed.

**Regional Welfare Leadership**

**Regional Welfare Committee**

In the United States and Canada, members of the Presidency of the Seventy create welfare regions and organize regional welfare committees for stakes served by welfare operations within their areas. Outside the United States and Canada, Area Presidencies may create welfare regions and organize regional welfare committees for stakes served by welfare operations within their areas. Area Presidencies may create welfare regions and organize welfare committees for other stakes in their areas as well.

Committee members include all stake presidents (or assigned counselors), all chairmen of the stake bishops’ welfare councils, and all stake Relief Society presidents in the welfare region. A member of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency appoints a stake president to be chairman of the committee. He also calls a regional welfare specialist to be the executive secretary of the committee (see the following heading for more information about this calling).

This committee meets twice each year. During these meetings, committee members receive instruction in welfare matters and plan how to implement instructions from the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency. Committee members also coordinate welfare activities, such as balancing donated labor assignments among stakes and planning responses to emergencies. Other matters to discuss may include fostering self-reliance, caring for the needy, and encouraging fast-offering donations. Committee members also review the services of Church welfare operations where they exist.

Where travel is difficult or long, the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency may ask fewer stake bishops’ welfare council chairmen and stake Relief Society presidents to attend this meeting.

**Regional Welfare Specialist**

A member of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency calls a regional welfare specialist for each regional welfare committee. This specialist should be a Melchizedek Priesthood holder who has welfare experience. He reports to the committee chairman.
and serves as the executive secretary of the committee.

Under the direction of the regional welfare committee chairman, the specialist may help coordinate welfare assignments among stakes in the region, serve as a resource to stake and ward leaders, and provide training to new leaders on the effective use of welfare operations.

**STAKE WELFARE LEADERSHIP**

**STAKE PRESIDENCY**

The stake president, assisted by his counselors, oversees the spiritual and temporal welfare of stake members. These responsibilities are outlined in this section.

Each member of the stake presidency should set an example in spiritual welfare by praying, serving, keeping covenants, and striving for virtue and holiness in his own life (see D&C 38:24; Moroni 10:32–33). The stake presidency sets the spiritual tone in the stake. One of the stake presidency’s most important responsibilities is helping members build spiritual strength.

Members of the stake presidency also set an example in temporal welfare by striving to become self-reliant and by caring for the poor and needy. They encourage members in these efforts.

Members of the stake presidency teach stake, ward, and quorum leaders their welfare responsibilities. The stake president takes special care to instruct bishops in the principles and policies of administering welfare assistance. As part of his monthly interview with each bishop, the stake president inquires about the welfare of individual ward members and discusses the use of fast offerings and the welfare assistance given to members.

Members of the stake presidency ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to welfare are taught regularly in stake and ward meetings. For information about welfare doctrines and principles, see pages 1–9.

The stake president also directs the Church’s welfare program and operations in the stake. This includes the following responsibilities.

**Approve Welfare Assistance in Special Circumstances**

Welfare assistance is administered by bishops. However, in the following circumstances a bishop must receive approval from the stake president before welfare assistance may be given.

**Medical Expenses That Exceed $5,000.** If a needy member’s medical expenses that will be paid by the Church are expected to exceed $5,000, the stake president’s approval is required before the bishop may commit to pay health care providers. The stake president may authorize the bishop to pay up to a total of $10,000. In the United States and Canada, if a needy member’s medical expenses to be paid by the Church are expected to exceed $10,000, the stake president submits a request through Welfare Health Services (1-801-240-3635 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3635) for consideration by the Presiding Bishopric. Outside the United States and Canada, the stake president contacts the Area Presidency for instructions.

Outside the United States and Canada, Area Presidencies may decrease the $5,000 and $10,000 limits as circumstances warrant.
For more information about using fast offerings to pay medical expenses, see pages 20–21.

**Welfare Assistance for Bishops and Stake Presidents.** When a bishop or members of his immediate family need welfare assistance, he reviews the needs and the proposed assistance with the stake president. The stake president’s written approval is required before the bishop may provide the assistance. If fast-offering funds are used, the stake president reviews the bills that the fast offerings will pay. A similar procedure is followed when obtaining help for the bishop or his immediate family through Church welfare operations. A bishop should not sign a bishop’s order for Church welfare assistance or expend fast-offering funds for himself or for immediate family members without the approval and signature of the stake president.

When a stake president or members of his immediate family need welfare assistance, he contacts the bishop of the ward in which he resides. The bishop follows the principles and guidelines governing welfare assistance as he would for any other Church member.

**Assist Bishops If Fast-Offering Expenditures Exceed Contributions**

See page 22.

**Be the Agent Stake President for Welfare Operations**

The Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency appoints an agent stake to each bishops’ storehouse, cannery, home storage center, employment resource center, production project, Deseret Industries, and other welfare operations or projects in the area. An agent stake president is accountable to his Area Presidency. This assignment usually changes every three to five years.

All stakes served by the welfare operation, not just the agent stake, may be called on to provide volunteer labor to Church welfare operations. These efforts are coordinated in regional welfare committee meetings or coordinating council meetings (see page 12).

**Organize an Agent Stake Operating Committee**

When a stake is assigned to oversee a Church welfare operation, the president of the agent stake organizes an agent stake operating committee. This committee is composed of the stake president, the stake bishops’ welfare council chairman, the stake Relief Society president, the manager of the operation, and other specialists as needed. This committee meets regularly to provide priesthood guidance and support to the operation manager, to ensure that the operation serves needy members appropriately, and to coordinate volunteer labor.

**Prepare for and Respond to Emergencies**

The stake president directs the stake welfare committee in preparing a stake emergency response plan. This plan should be coordinated with similar plans in the welfare region and the community. The Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency provides guidelines for preparing the plan.

During an emergency, the stake presidency receives reports from the bishops on the condition of Church members and Church property. The
stake presidency then reports to the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency.

During an emergency, Church leaders should make the services of the Church available to civil authorities. Church leaders should also take independent action in behalf of Church members as needed.

**Assign a Bishop to Assist Transients**

Where there are two or more wards in the vicinity, the stake president may appoint one bishop to handle all requests from transients. This helps avoid duplication and confusion.

Where large numbers of transients are seeking assistance, the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency may request approval from the Presiding Bishopric to call a Church-service worker to handle such requests. When possible, the brother who is called should have served as a bishop, be experienced in helping the needy, be familiar with the use of Church welfare resources, and serve under the direction of the bishops’ storehouse manager. Exceptions to these guidelines must be approved by the Presiding Bishopric.

**Provide Support to Members in Prisons, Hospitals, and Other Institutions**

Stake presidents are encouraged to provide support to members in prisons, hospitals, and other institutions within their boundaries. They should do so within priesthood channels and according to the guidelines established by the Church and the institutions.

The stake president determines the support that is to be provided at each institution. He also supervises the support, assisted by other local priesthood leaders. If the stake needs help providing service to institutions within its boundaries, the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency may assign one or more nearby stakes to assist.

The stake president or an assigned bishop may call a priesthood holder to oversee the support that is given to members at these institutions. In prisons, men should be called to work with male inmates, and at least two men, two women, or a husband and wife should be called to work with female inmates.

Worship services for members in prisons, hospitals, and other institutions may be simplified as necessary to meet the needs of those involved. Services usually follow the same format as sacrament meeting except that the sacrament is not administered to inmates in prisons. As an exception to Church policy, when services are held in prisons, inmates may participate by offering prayers or giving talks regardless of their religious affiliation or standing in the Church.

Other support that may be given to members in these institutions includes counseling, home teaching, visiting teaching, Sunday School classes, family home evening, seminary or institute classes, and other special programs.

In collaboration with the Priesthood Department at Church headquarters, LDS Family Services is responsible for materials and professional resources to assist those in correctional institutions and their families. For assistance from LDS Family Services, call 1-801-240-3646 or contact a member of the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency.

**Keep Needs and Assistance Confidential**

The stake president should keep confidential the needs of members and the help that is provided.

**Stake Welfare Committee**

The stake president is chairman of the stake welfare committee. This committee is composed of the stake presidency, high council, stake Relief Society presidency, and chairman of the stake bishops’ welfare council. The stake executive secretary and stake clerk attend the committee’s meetings. The stake presidency may...
invite others, such as stake welfare specialists, to attend as needed.
This committee meets at least quarterly. The agenda may include the following items:

- Receive instruction from the stake presidency on welfare principles and responsibilities.
- Plan welfare instruction for stake and ward leaders.
- Identify and seek solutions to welfare needs within the stake.
- Ensure that welfare resources within the stake are made available to the wards as needed.
- Determine how to encourage members to be self-reliant.
- Receive reports on welfare matters from the chairman of the stake bishops’ welfare council.
- Ensure that resources within the stake are available to assist the bishop who handles requests for assistance to transients, if a bishop has been appointed.
- Develop and maintain a simple written plan for the stake to respond to emergencies. This plan should be coordinated with similar plans in the welfare region and the community.
- Plan welfare projects.

**Stake Bishops’ Welfare Council**

The stake bishops’ welfare council is composed of all bishops in the stake. The stake president appoints one bishop to be chairman of the council. In consultation with the stake president, the chairman arranges meetings, prepares agendas, leads discussions, and arranges for instruction. The stake president attends council meetings occasionally to give instruction. A stake clerk also attends and takes minutes. If needed, the regional welfare specialist (see pages 12–13) may be invited to attend.

The council meets at least quarterly. During these meetings, council members receive instruction in welfare matters. They also exchange ideas and experiences relating to their welfare responsibilities. Other agenda items could include the following:

- Review trends in fast-offering contributions, welfare needs and resources, and welfare assistance.
- Identify work opportunities for members who receive welfare assistance.
- Identify ways for priesthood quorums and the Relief Society to help meet welfare needs in the stake.
- Identify agencies and services in the community that could be used to assist members.
- Review instructions received at regional welfare committee meetings.
- Evaluate the services and management of Church welfare operations in areas where they exist.
- Discuss how to coordinate assistance to transients if the stake president has assigned one bishop to oversee this assistance.

The stake bishops’ welfare council does not make policy. Rather, it refers policy matters to the stake president.

**Stake Relief Society Presidency**

See page 25.

**Stake Welfare Specialists**

The stake presidency or an assigned high councilor may call welfare specialists to assist the stake welfare committee as needed. These specialists should be stake members who can assist other members in such things as finding employment (see the following section), improving nutrition and sanitation, storing food, obtaining health care, improving literacy, managing finances, and meeting other welfare needs.

**Stake Employment Specialist**

The stake presidency calls a stake employment specialist or assigns a high councilor to be the employment specialist. This person should have or be able to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to find job openings and
help members find suitable employment. He or she serves under the direction of the stake presidency and has the following responsibilities:

- Be a resource to the stake welfare committee.
- Instruct ward employment specialists, priesthood leaders, and Relief Society leaders.
- Help members prepare for and find suitable employment.
- Coordinate information about job needs and openings with ward employment specialists.

WARD WELFARE LEADERSHIP

BISHOPRIC

The bishop, assisted by his counselors, oversees the spiritual and temporal welfare of ward members. The office of bishop carries with it a special mandate to care for the poor and needy (see D&C 84:112; 107:68). The welfare responsibilities of the bishop and his counselors are outlined in this section.

Each member of the bishopric should set an example in spiritual welfare by praying, serving, keeping covenants, and striving for virtue and holiness in his own life (see D&C 38:24; Moroni 10:32–33). The bishopric sets the spiritual tone in the ward. One of the bishopric’s most important responsibilities is helping members build spiritual strength.

Members of the bishopric also set an example in temporal welfare by striving to become self-reliant and by caring for the poor and needy. They encourage members in these efforts.

Members of the bishopric teach priesthood and auxiliary leaders their welfare responsibilities. They also ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to welfare are taught regularly in ward meetings. For information about welfare doctrines and principles, see pages 1–9.

The bishop also administers the Church’s welfare program in the ward. He is assisted by his counselors; Melchizedek Priesthood, Aaronic Priesthood, and Relief Society leaders; and home teachers and visiting teachers. This includes the following responsibilities.

Seek Out the Needy

The bishop should know the temporal circumstances of ward members and ensure that needy members receive proper care. It is not enough to respond only when asked for help. To serve effectively, the bishop should seek out the poor, the needy, the single parent, the aged, the disabled, the fatherless, the widowed, and others who have special needs.

There are many ways for the bishop to identify needy ward members. One way is through the promptings of the Spirit. The bishop should listen for the Spirit to prompt him to inquire about members’ well-being and to reveal undisclosed needs.

The bishop may also identify welfare needs during meetings of the ward priesthood executive committee, ward council, and ward welfare committee. Interviews with the elders quorum president, high priests group leader, and Relief Society president also help him identify welfare needs.
Home teachers and visiting teachers can also help identify welfare needs. They should inquire about the well-being of those whom they visit. When possible, they help meet these members’ needs. They also report these needs to their priesthood or Relief Society leader, who reports them to the bishop.

The New Testament teaches that “pure religion . . . is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27). Seeking out the poor and needy will often require bishops and those who assist them to visit ward members in their homes.

Determine What Assistance to Render

Through the Church, the Lord has established a way to care for the poor and needy and help them regain their self-reliance. When Church members are doing all they can to provide for themselves but still cannot meet their basic needs, they should first turn to their families for help. When this is not sufficient, the Church stands ready to help.

To determine what welfare assistance to render, the bishop considers the causes of members’ needs. He also evaluates what members have done and may do to provide for themselves and their families. If he feels that assistance is justified, he completes a Needs and Resources Analysis form (32290). If the circumstances are complicated and additional information is needed, the bishop completes the Needs and Resources Analysis Supplement form (32291).

After completing one or both of these forms, the bishop determines how much assistance to provide as Church welfare and when and how to provide it. Individual circumstances vary, so the bishop should seek guidance from the Lord for each situation. The bishop should also be guided by established welfare policy.

When appropriate and without breaking confidences, the bishop may include the Relief Society president in determining what assistance to provide.

He may assign her to visit members to assess their needs and suggest how to respond to them. This may include preparing an itemized list of basic food and clothing needs. It also may include preparing a Bishop’s Order for Commodities form (33585 or 31422) for the bishop to review. The bishop’s signature on this form authorizes service at a bishops’ storehouse or purchases from a local vendor. The Relief Society president’s role in making family needs visits is explained more fully on pages 27–28.

Generally, individuals who are not members of the Church are referred to local community resources if they need welfare assistance.

As a bishop, I have learned that ward members receive temporal and spiritual blessings when they give and serve freely. Recently, members of our ward built a ramp for an elderly sister now confined to a wheelchair. As we were finishing, one of the priests said to me, “Thanks, Bishop. I hope I don’t ever forget how good it feels to really help somebody.”

Render Assistance

The bishop is entrusted with the sacred responsibility of using Church funds and commodities to care for the poor and needy members of the ward. He provides welfare assistance to accomplish the following objectives:

- Help members become self-reliant and stand independent of all welfare assistance, regardless of its source.
- Help members become stronger spiritually and learn to provide for others.
- Build integrity, self-respect, dignity, and soundness of character in each person who receives help.
The following guidelines will help the bishop provide appropriate welfare assistance.

*Draw upon the Lord’s Storehouse.* The Lord’s storehouse includes the time, talents, skills, compassion, consecrated materials, and financial resources of faithful Church members (see pages 8–9). The bishop is the Lord’s agent in using these resources to assist the poor and needy (see D&C 42:34). As he uses these resources to care for the needy in the Lord’s way, both givers and receivers are blessed (see D&C 104:16; Acts 20:35).

- **Fast offerings.** Fast offerings are a primary resource of the Lord’s storehouse. The bishop uses fast offerings to provide necessities to needy members. With these funds the bishop may provide food, clothing, shelter, medical assistance, or other life-sustaining aid. Following are some guidelines for how bishops should administer fast-offering assistance:
  
  All payments of fast-offering funds are to be approved by the bishop. The bishop should complete a Needs and Resources Analysis form (32290) before giving fast-offering assistance. It is preferred that the bishop provide members commodities rather than give them money or pay their bills. If necessary, he may buy the commodities with fast offerings. Members then can use their own money to pay their obligations. If members do not have money to pay all of their immediate and essential obligations, the bishop normally makes payments directly to the provider of the goods or services, not to the person being assisted.

  The bishop may not loan fast offerings to members, and members are not required to repay welfare assistance that they receive from the Church. When members are again in a position to do so, they should be encouraged to contribute generously to the fast-offering fund. The bishop may not use fast offerings to pay off members’ consumer debt or obligations incurred in business failures or speculative ventures.

  For information about using fast-offering funds to pay a needy member’s medical expenses, see pages 20–21.

  Any fast-offering assistance to the bishop or his immediate family members must first be approved in writing by the stake president (see page 14).

  Two authorized signers should always sign checks that are written out for fast-offering assistance. The authorized signature card should be up-to-date and should be submitted to Church headquarters. The payee of a check or the person being assisted should not be related to either of the persons who signs the check. Nor should the payee of the check or the person being assisted be one of the persons who signs the check.

  For information about the law of the fast, see pages 8–9 and 21–22. For information about gathering and accounting for fast offerings, see pages 21–22.

- **Other ward resources.** In caring for the needy, the bishop also directs the use of ward resources other than fast offerings, including the time, talents, skills, compassion, and consecrated materials of ward members. He does this by directing the efforts of the ward welfare committee; by counseling, as appropriate, with quorum and Relief Society leaders; by asking families, home teachers, and visiting teachers to serve the needy in specific ways; and by using resources made available by the stake welfare committee.

How much should we pay in fast offerings? My brothers and sisters, the measure of our offering to bless the poor is a measure of our gratitude to our Heavenly Father. Will we, who have been blessed so abundantly, turn our backs on those who need our help? Paying a generous fast offering is a measure of our willingness to consecrate ourselves to relieve the suffering of others.

The assistance given by the bishop is temporary and partial. Remember, Church assistance is designed to help people help themselves. . . . We are attempting to develop independence, not dependence. The bishop seeks to build integrity, self-respect, dignity, and soundness of character in each person assisted, leading to complete self-sufficiency.

Thomas S. Monson, Ensign, Sept. 1986, page 5

Other Church welfare resources. In some parts of the world, the Church has established welfare operations. These include Church employment resource centers, Deseret Industries stores, bishops’ storehouses, canneries, home storage centers, grain storage facilities, and a variety of commodity production projects. The Church also contracts with LDS Family Services to provide counseling, foster care, assistance to unwed parents, and adoption services to members.

Where these welfare operations and contracted services exist, they provide resources that bishops can use to help the poor and needy. If a bishop needs information about such resources in his area, he should contact the chairman of the stake bishops’ welfare council or his stake president.

Give Temporary Help. Church assistance is normally given to meet temporary needs as members strive to become self-reliant. It is intended to help people help themselves and develop independence, not dependence. Even the disabled, aged, and others who may require long-term assistance should be given opportunities to do all they can to help themselves.

Assist with Necessities. The Church helps needy members by providing the goods and services they need to sustain life. The Church does not provide the means to maintain an affluent standard of living. Members who are temporarily unable to provide for themselves may need to alter their standard of living until they are self-reliant. They should not rely on Church welfare to insure them against temporary hardship or to allow them to continue their present standard of living without interruption.

Use Appropriate Non-Church Resources. Members may use appropriate services in the community to meet their basic needs. These services may include hospitals, physicians, and other sources of medical care; job training and placement services; services for disabled persons; professional counselors or social workers; domestic violence centers; and alcohol or drug treatment services. The bishop and the ward welfare committee should become familiar with the resources that are available in the community. Members should be reminded to maintain gospel standards while using such services.

In some instances, members may decide to seek welfare assistance from the government. The bishop should advise members to comply with any laws that regulate the receipt of non-Church assistance, especially while receiving Church welfare assistance. Bishops should be careful not to duplicate welfare assistance.

Regardless of the source of assistance, members should avoid becoming dependent on these sources and strive to become self-reliant. Where possible, they should work in return for the assistance they receive.

Help Needy Members Obtain Health Care. The bishop may arrange and pay for health care for needy ward members. In deciding whether the Church should pay for health care, he determines whether the care is necessary based on sound medical advice. He also determines whether family members are able and willing to assist.

In addition, he determines whether the member is fully using insurance, government, or other available benefits.

If the bishop feels that the Church should assist the needy member, he asks the health care providers if they will reduce their fees. He ensures that the Church promptly pays the medical expenses it has agreed to pay. The bishop may not pay more than $5,000 of a needy member’s medical expenses unless authorized by the stake president as outlined on page 13. (Note: Outside the United States and Canada, Area Presidencies may decrease the $5,000 limit as circumstances warrant.)
Fast-offering funds may not be used to pay for unproven medical care unless priesthood leaders have received approval from the First Presidency in each case. Nor may fast-offering funds be used to pay for health care that is received outside the member’s country of residence unless priesthood leaders have received approval in advance from the Presiding Bishopric in each case. Submit requests through Welfare Health Services (1-801-240-3635 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-3635) for consideration by the Presiding Bishopric.

**Encourage Members to Live the Law of the Fast.** The bishopric encourages ward members to fast each fast Sunday for two consecutive meals and to contribute a fast offering at least equal to the value of the food they would have eaten. If possible, members are encouraged to be generous and give much more than the value of two meals.

The bishopric teaches members that fasting and contributing fast offerings will bless their lives and the lives of the needy. These principles should be taught in priesthood quorums, Relief Society and other auxiliary meetings, home visits, and sacrament meetings. The bishop also teaches these principles in temple recommend interviews and tithing settlement interviews.

**Oversee the Gathering and Accounting of Fast Offerings.** Under the direction of the bishop, Aaronic Priesthood holders, especially deacons, contact every member household in the ward each month to give opportunities to contribute fast offerings. If distances or other circumstances make it necessary, Melchizedek Priesthood holders may assist. Even if members do not contribute, priesthood holders should continue to give them the opportunity to do so each month.

Priesthood holders should go in pairs when collecting fast offerings. They promptly deliver fast offerings to a member of the bishopric. Members should not give other contributions to those who collect fast offerings.

**Give Work Assignments to Members Who Receive Assistance**

Work is a spiritual and temporal necessity. When members receive Church welfare assistance, the bishop gives them opportunities to work to the extent of their ability for the assistance they receive. When they work for assistance, they remain industrious, maintain self-respect, and increase their ability to be self-reliant.

The bishop strives to give work assignments that are meaningful. Ideally, needy members are given assignments that allow them to serve others. The bishop ensures that members are given the instruction they need to fulfill their assignments.

When giving a work assignment, the bishop asks the members to commit themselves to fulfilling it. If they are reluctant or refuse to work, he should help them understand that work assignments are given to bless them.

There are many creative ways to provide work opportunities in the ward and the community. Bishops may include the ward welfare committee in compiling a list of such opportunities. Where local Church welfare operations exist, they may provide work opportunities and training for people who need Church assistance.

**Administer Fast Offerings**

In authorizing assistance, the bishop, as common judge, has the further responsibility to determine the work or services to be performed by the recipients. This provides them the privilege of maintaining their dignity and self-respect, while sharing in the process of generating the resources they and others will use. Bishops must be ever watchful on this point of work by recipients for what they receive. We must never let the Lord’s program of self-help become a dole, for “the idler shall not have place in the church, except he repent and mend his ways” (D&C 75:29).

Marion G. Romney, Ensign, Nov. 1979, page 96
Think . . . of what would happen if the principles of fast day and the fast offering were observed throughout the world. The hungry would be fed, the naked clothed, the homeless sheltered. . . . The giver would not suffer but would be blessed by his small abstinence. A new measure of concern and unselfishness would grow in the hearts of people everywhere.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Ensign, May 1991, pages 52–53

Some members may choose to contribute fast offerings by using the envelopes for tithing and other offerings and giving them to the bishopric rather than by donating through visiting Aaronic Priesthood holders.

Members should contribute fast offerings without designating how the funds should be used. Bishops may not enter into arrangements or make commitments to give a member’s fast-offering contribution to an individual or family or to use it for a special purpose that the donor designates.


Consult with the Stake President in Special Circumstances

Fast-Offering Expenditures That Exceed Contributions. When fast-offering expenditures will exceed contributions in a ward, the stake president counsels with the bishop to ensure that he and ward members correctly understand and apply the principles of self-reliance and providing for the poor and needy. Procedures for obtaining additional fast offerings from the Church are outlined in instructions sent to stake and ward financial clerks.

Surplus Fast Offerings. Procedures for remitting surplus fast offerings to the Church are outlined in instructions sent to stake and ward financial clerks.

Medical Expenses That Exceed $5,000. See page 13.

Welfare Assistance for Bishops and Stake Presidents or Members of Their Immediate Families. See page 14.

Serve on the Stake Welfare Committee

The stake president assigns the bishop who is chairman of the stake bishops’ welfare council to serve on the stake welfare committee. A suggested agenda for this committee’s meetings is provided on page 16.

Prepare for and Respond to Emergencies

The bishopric directs the ward welfare committee in preparing a ward emergency response plan. This plan should be coordinated with similar plans in the stake and community.

When emergencies arise, home teachers contact the families and individuals assigned to them, assessing their condition and needs. Home teachers report to the elders quorum presidency and high priests group leadership, who report to the bishop. The bishop then reports to the stake presidency the condition of members and Church property. This system may also be used to communicate messages from the stake presidency or bishopric.

During an emergency, Church leaders should make the services of the Church available to civil authorities. Church leaders also should take independent action in behalf of Church members as needed.

Assist Transients

The bishop may assist members and others who are transients, but he should be discerning about the type and amount of assistance he gives. When possible, he contacts the bishop of the person’s home ward before providing assistance. Where there are two or more wards in the vicinity, the stake president may appoint one bishop to handle all requests from transients. This helps avoid duplication and confusion.

Individuals who are not of our faith are usually referred to local community resources if they need welfare assistance.

Protect against Welfare Fraud and Abuse

Bishops should protect against welfare fraud and abuse. In the United States and Canada, bishops who have concerns about welfare fraud or abuse may call the bishops’ help line (1-801-240-7887 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-7887). Bishops may also call the help line to verify a person’s membership in the Church before giving welfare assistance. Outside the United States and Canada, bishops should contact the administration office.
**Receive Humanitarian Aid Funds**

The bishop receives members’ contributions to the Church’s humanitarian aid fund. Members make these contributions using the Tithing and Other Offerings form. Members should contribute without designating how the funds should be used.

**Keep Needs and Assistance Confidential**

The bishop should keep confidential the needs of members and the help that is provided. He should be careful not to embarrass members who need assistance. If he asks the Relief Society president or others to help, he shares only the information they need to fulfill their welfare duties. He also instructs them to maintain confidentiality. This helps safeguard the privacy and dignity of members who are being assisted.

**WARD WELFARE COMMITTEE**

The bishop is chairman of the ward welfare committee. This committee consists of the bishopric, high priests group leader, elders quorum president, ward mission leader, ward Young Men president, and ward Relief Society presidency. The ward executive secretary and ward clerk attend the committee’s meetings. The bishopric may invite others, such as ward welfare specialists, to attend as needed.

This committee usually meets at least monthly. The agenda may include the following items:

- Receive instruction from the bishopric on welfare principles and responsibilities.
- Plan how to help prevent welfare needs by teaching members the principles relating to self-reliance (see pages 3–5; see also the *Basic Self-Reliance* manual [32293]).
- Report on spiritual and temporal welfare needs in the ward. Draw information from personal visits and from home teaching and visiting teaching reports.
- Coordinate efforts to help specific ward members meet their spiritual and temporal needs, including long-term needs. Determine how to help members who have disabilities or other special needs. Ensure that members who receive Church assistance are given work or service opportunities.
- Compile a current list of people in the ward whose skills might be useful in responding to immediate, long-term, or disaster-caused needs.
- Develop and maintain a simple written plan for the ward to respond to emergencies. This plan should be coordinated with similar plans in the stake and community.

**WARD RELIEF SOCIETY PRESIDENCY**


**WARD WELFARE SPECIALISTS**

The bishopric may call welfare specialists to assist the ward welfare committee as needed. These specialists should be ward members who can assist other members with such things as finding employment (see the following section), improving nutrition and sanitation, storing food, obtaining health care, improving literacy, managing finances, and meeting other welfare needs.
Our ward has many poor people. The bishop alone cannot help everyone. Through the priesthood quorums and the Relief Society, we help those who are less fortunate, and we are blessed for our efforts. We no longer view welfare as help from outside but as an opportunity to share help among ourselves.

WARD EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST

A member of the bishopric calls a ward employment specialist, or the bishop may assign one of his counselors or a member of the high priests group leadership, elders quorum presidency, or Relief Society presidency to be the employment specialist. This person should have or be able to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to find job openings and help members find suitable employment. He or she serves under the direction of the bishopric and has the following responsibilities:

- Be a resource to the ward welfare committee.
- Help members prepare for and find suitable employment.
- Coordinate information about job needs and openings with the stake employment specialist.

Ward employment specialists should use the Employment Needs and Resources Analysis form (31485) to help members analyze their employment needs.

ELDERS QUORUM AND HIGH PRIESTS GROUP WELFARE LEADERSHIP

ELDERS QUORUM AND HIGH PRIESTS GROUP LEADERS

The elders quorum presidency and high priests group leadership help the bishop oversee members’ spiritual and temporal welfare. These leaders set an example in spiritual welfare by praying, serving, keeping covenants, and striving for virtue and holiness in their own lives (see D&C 38:24; Moroni 10:32–33). One of the most important responsibilities of quorum and group leaders is helping members build spiritual strength.

Quorum and group leaders also set an example in temporal welfare by striving to become self-reliant and by caring for the poor and needy. They encourage members in these efforts.

Quorum and group leaders ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to welfare are taught regularly in priesthood meetings and home teaching visits.

Under the direction of the bishop, quorum and group leaders help resolve temporary and long-term welfare needs, including those related to education and literacy, health, employment, home storage, resource management, and spiritual, emotional, and social strength.

Quorum and group leaders oversee home teaching in the quorum or group and inspire brethren to complete their assignments (see pages 168–70 in the “Melchizedek Priesthood” section of the Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2).

Quorum and group leaders teach brethren how to perform priesthood ordinances and blessings (see pages 171–74 in Book 2).

Quorum and group leaders encourage participation in the Church by giving members opportunities to serve, helping prospective elders prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood (see page 168 in Book 2), and strengthening less-active members (see pages 307–10 in Book 2).

The elders quorum president and high priests group leader serve on the ward priesthood executive committee, ward council, and ward welfare committee (see page 23 for information about the ward welfare committee).

Quorum and group leaders may organize committees to help with spiritual and temporal welfare. With the bishop’s approval, they call and set apart brethren to serve as committee chairmen. They also assign quorum and group members to be committee members. Quorum and group leaders oversee these committees.

HOME TEACHERS

Home teachers make at least monthly visits to the homes of assigned members to:
• “[Exhort] them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties” (D&C 20:51).
• “Watch over . . . and be with and strengthen them” (D&C 20:53).
• “Warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59).

Home teachers represent the Lord, the bishop, and quorum or group leaders. They support and serve all members of the families they visit. They nurture the friendship and respect of these members, showing genuine concern and love for them. They become acquainted with each member’s interests and needs and recognize special events in their lives.

Home teachers are the Church’s first source of help to members. They consult with the head of the household about the family’s needs and the ways to be most helpful. They offer help when members are unemployed, ill, lonely, moving, or have other needs. They also help members who have spiritual, emotional, or physical challenges.

Each month, home teachers report to quorum or group leaders on the spiritual and temporal welfare of the members they visit. They give more detailed reports in regular interviews with quorum or group leaders. If a member’s needs are urgent, home teachers report them immediately. The elders quorum president or high priests group leader informs the bishop.

For information about organizing home teaching, see pages 168–70 in the “Melchizedek Priesthood” section of the Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2.

RELIEF SOCIETY WELFARE LEADERSHIP

STAKE RELIEF SOCIETY PRESIDENCY

Under the direction of the stake presidency, the stake Relief Society president supervises stake Relief Society welfare efforts. She instructs ward Relief Society presidencies in their visiting teaching, welfare, and compassionate service responsibilities. She also coordinates stake Relief Society efforts during emergencies.

The stake Relief Society president serves on the regional welfare committee (see page 12). She and her counselors also serve on the stake welfare committee (see pages 15–16).

Under the direction of the stake Relief Society president, the education counselor coordinates literacy efforts in the stake (for more information about literacy, see page 204 in the “Relief Society” section of the Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2).

WARD RELIEF SOCIETY PRESIDENCY

Under the direction of the bishop, Relief Society sisters help resolve temporary and long-term welfare needs, including those related to education and literacy, health, employment, home storage, resource management, and social, emotional, and spiritual strength.

All Members of the Presidency

Members of the ward Relief Society presidency have the following welfare responsibilities:

• Minister to sisters in the ward by loving, serving, instructing, and watching over them. Seek out and assist sisters who are in need. Befriend and minister to new members and less-active members.

• Ensure that Relief Society helps meet the needs and interests of all sisters. Give sisters appropriate assignments and opportunities to serve. Include sisters in lessons, activities, visiting teaching, and compassionate service.

• Encourage spirituality, self-reliance, and generous giving among sisters and their families. Work closely with priesthood leaders in helping resolve long-term welfare needs.

• Serve on the ward welfare committee (see page 23).
we are women of covenant! every time we watch over one another, godlike qualities of love, patience, kindness, generosity, and spiritual commitment fill the souls of those we visit and enlarge our souls as well.

We carry the Spirit into homes, to bless families with the pure love of Christ, to inspire, encourage, lift, and fortify. Every home is in need of additional support. It is a sacred trust we have been given.

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society General President, Jan. 18, 2003

- Under the direction of the ward Relief Society president, the education counselor coordinates literacy efforts in the ward (for more information about literacy, see page 204 in the “Relief Society” section of the Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2).

Relief Society President

The ward Relief Society president has the following additional welfare responsibilities:
- Without breaking confidences, the bishop involves her in seeking out and caring for the poor and needy. He meets with her regularly to review welfare matters in the ward. As assigned by him, she visits the homes of members who need welfare assistance. She evaluates members’ needs and suggests how to respond to them (see pages 27–28 for instructions).
- Supervise the compassionate service leader in responding to the needs of sisters and their families.
- Offer compassionate service when there is a death in the ward, as directed by the bishop and as outlined on pages 207–8 in the “Relief Society” section of the Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2.
- Coordinate ward Relief Society efforts during emergencies.

Home, Family, and Personal Enrichment Leader

This leader works with the Relief Society presidency to plan home, family, and personal enrichment meetings.

The lessons and activities in these meetings can include instruction in many welfare matters, paying particular attention to the words of the prophet. Topics may include:
- Principles of the gospel.
- Principles and skills for strengthening marriages, parenting, homemaking, and nurturing.

- Principles of spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental well-being.
- Principles and skills of provident living, self-reliance, and personal, family, and emergency preparedness.
- Principles and skills to use in temple and family history work, family home evenings, and education and literacy.

Compassionate Service Leader

The compassionate service leader serves under the direction of the ward Relief Society president and, where appropriate, is assisted by visiting teachers. She has the following responsibilities:
- Identify the skills and circumstances of sisters who could offer compassionate service. All sisters should be given the opportunity to serve through compassionate service assignments.
- Identify sisters who have special needs and coordinate the efforts of the Relief Society to help these sisters through compassionate service. For example, she may coordinate assistance for sisters who are elderly, alone, homebound, or in nursing homes. She may also coordinate assistance for sisters who have illnesses or disabilities. In addition, she may arrange for members to correspond with sisters from the ward who are away from home, such as those who are serving missions.
- Coordinate the efforts of sisters to friendship and support women who are not members of the Church. This includes attending the baptismal services of new convert sisters.
- Arrange for endowed sisters to accompany sisters who will be alone when receiving the temple endowment.

Visiting Teachers

Visiting teachers visit and make other contacts with assigned sisters. Where feasible, a monthly visit in
The work of the Relief Society in assisting the bishop to seek out and care for the poor and needy is largely carried out through visiting teaching. This selfless service within a loving sisterhood can bring both temporal and spiritual blessings that can contribute to perfecting the Saints.

In visiting teaching, both the giver and the receiver are blessed and strengthened in their Church activity by their caring concern for one another.

Church News, June 17, 1995, page 2

Guidelines for Family Needs Visits

The bishop may assign the Relief Society president to visit members who need welfare assistance. She evaluates members’ needs and suggests how to respond to them. These visits are of great importance in administering welfare assistance in the Church.

As instructed by the bishop, the Relief Society president may prepare an itemized list of the family’s basic food and clothing needs. She may also prepare a Bishop’s Order for Commodities form (33585 or 31422) for the bishop to review.

The Relief Society president keeps strictly confidential any information she obtains during the visit or from the bishop. She reports to the bishop on the general condition of the family, on social or emotional problems, and on her assessment of work capabilities and opportunities of family members. The bishop then directs her in fulfilling her responsibilities.

Preparing for the Visit

To prepare for family needs visits, the Relief Society president should seek guidance from the Lord. The surest guide in giving help is the Spirit of the Lord.

She makes an appointment with the woman in the home so the visit can be done privately, if possible. If there is no woman in the home, she plans to go with one of her counselors, the secretary, or the compassionate service leader.

She carefully studies the information the bishop provides about the family. Some Church members would rather endure hardships than accept help from the Church. Others may have the attitude that they are entitled to receive welfare assistance and may seek more than they need.

She learns the principles of good nutrition so she can counsel the family in planning well-balanced meals that promote good health.

Making the Visit

The Relief Society president makes these visits in a spirit of sisterly concern. She should be understanding and let the individual or family know that she has a sincere desire to help. These visits are to be assessments of needs; they are not to be investigations.

The Relief Society president can be most helpful if the sister feels that she can trust her. As the president asks questions during the visit, she listens with her heart, permitting the sister to express her feelings as well as her
emotional problems are provided on page 209 in the “Relief Society” section of the Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2.

Welfare Operations Leadership and Staffing

Where possible, missionaries and volunteers are used in Church welfare operations instead of paid personnel. Ecclesiastical leaders, the director for temporal affairs, and Welfare Services coordinate efforts to ensure that able, qualified, and worthy individuals are available to staff welfare operations.

Members may be called to serve full-time or Church-service missions at welfare operations. Full-time missionaries are called by the First Presidency. Church-service missionaries serve part time (4 to 32 hours a week), live at home, and are called by their stake president.

Missionaries who serve in welfare operations are normally older couples and single sisters. In addition, ecclesiastical leaders can consider Church-service missions for young people of missionary age who cannot serve proselyting missions due to physical, mental, or emotional challenges. All missionaries must be worthy to hold a temple recommend. For additional instructions about calling full-time or Church-service missionaries with welfare assignments, see the Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1, pages 88–89.

Volunteer work opportunities are available at Church welfare operations for members (including those who do not hold a current temple recommend) and for nonmembers. Local welfare operations can be contacted to determine what opportunities are available.

Welfare operations also provide opportunities for those who receive welfare assistance to work in exchange for what they receive.