

Frequently Asked Questions Masonic Family Outreach Services (MFOS)

What is the MFOS Program? • Masonic Family Outreach Services (MFOS) is a program of the Masonic Homes of California created to address the needs of the fraternal membership who are under the age of 60. MFOS provides access to services and resources that members may need to resolve life issues and improve their quality of life.

What services does MFOS offer? • **Information and referral services:** MFOS can recommend helpful services and resources right in the client's community, including legal aid, employment support, programs for special needs children, CalFresh and other public assistance, and support for economic issues, such as foreclosure.

• **Care management:** For families who require additional support, MFOS care managers can provide ongoing care management for as long as needed. Care managers work with the client to develop a care plan that is flexible and specific to their situation, including home visits and hands-on help connecting to local resources.

• **Financial assistance:** In certain situations, MFOS can provide one-time financial support for eligible Masons and their wife or widow. This support is offered as a bridge to self-sufficiency, and as part of a larger care plan.

What is the best way to refer someone to MFOS? • Call Masonic Assistance at **888-466-3642** or email intake@mhcuc.org.

• When calling to make a referral for someone other than oneself, it is important to have that person's permission to make the referral. Whenever possible, the person seeking assistance should call on their own or be present during the call so they can be part of the process from the start.

• In-depth intake calls can take anywhere from 30-60 minutes. Masonic Assistance will inquire about finances, health, current housing and living conditions, benefits, and other information that will help to determine eligibility and appropriateness to receive services through MFOS.

What are the criteria to apply for MFOS financial assistance? • An MFOS financial assistance applicant must be a California Master Mason (or the spouse/widow of a qualifying California Mason) who:

- Has been in good standing for the last five or more consecutive years.
- Demonstrates immediate financial need, has exhausted all personal resources, and is willing to apply for all eligible public benefits, such as CalFresh and General Assistance.
- Has lodge recommendation and support.
- Agree to a care management plan which may include recommendations on budgeting (increasing income and/or decreasing expenses) and applying for benefits.
- Sign an Agreement to Repay, which states intent to repay all, or a portion, of the amount expended when they have the financial means to do so. (No eligible applicant will be turned away due to an inability to repay the program.).

• **All MFOS clients receive non-financial care management before applying for one-time financial assistance.**

Does MFOS provide emergency financial assistance?

- MFOS does not provide emergency financial assistance.
- When emergency financial assistance is required, MFOS will refer the caller to request assistance from their lodge(s).
- MFOS can also recommend helpful services and resources within the family's community.
- Families who require additional support may receive care management services.

How does MFOS determine how much assistance is provided?

- MFOS creates a budget that includes the client's income and MFOS approved expenses. The amount of assistance received is determined by taking the client's approved expenses and subtracting the total from the client's income. The more financial resources the client can contribute to the budget, the less MFOS support they need.

Will the client need to repay any financial assistance they receive?

- MFOS clients **who receive financial assistance** are required to sign an Agreement to Repay, which states that the client agrees to repay the MFOS Program when they can do so.

What if the client needs financial assistance but lives with family or friends?

- MFOS financial support will only be extended to cover the client's and/or their immediate family's (spouse and dependent minor children) share of household costs and expenses.
- All household members are expected to contribute to shared household expenses and the MFOS client's share can be determined by dividing household expenses by the number of occupants.

How long does the MFOS application process take?

- The length of time varies according to the applicant's circumstances, the time it takes to determine an approved care plan toward self-sufficiency, as well as the timely submission of all requested documents.
- Applicants are actively engaged throughout the application process and regularly communicate with Masonic Assistance and MOS.