

Emergency Assistance Programs of the Salvation Army in the Philadelphia Area

The Salvation Army has historically provided a wide range of emergency assistance services to people in crisis in the greater Philadelphia area. Those services have traditionally been provided through the Salvation Army Corps (church) Community Center in a given community. In Philadelphia there are five such Corps Community Centers where a Salvation Army Case Worker responds on a daily basis to people living in the cluster of zip codes surrounding the Center who come for assistance. The five Case Workers cover the entire city of Philadelphia, with Centers in the surrounding counties covering the geographic areas around those Centers.

Each Case Worker has a monthly budget allocation with which he/she can respond to the needs presented. The primary requests to which the Case Workers respond are food, clothing, utility and rental assistance (very limited by virtue of the monthly allocation), and a range of non-traditional requests within the limitations of their budgets. There are no exclusive eligibility requirements to receive assistance, but it is safe to say that most of the assistance provided is given to low and very low income people. The assistance is usually short term in nature. The Case Workers attempt to leverage the dollars at their disposal by collaborating with other agencies to maximize the effect of the assistance provided. Appropriate referrals are often made to other social service agencies that may be able to assist the client beyond the level of assistance provided by The Salvation Army. One of the important roles played by our Case Workers is that of prioritizing needs and coordinating services among a variety of agencies, while assisting the client to determine which needs are most critical and what plan can be developed to avoid future crises. Since the city is broken up by zip code and the list of zip codes is tediously long, the best way to identify which specific office will serve a particular client is to call Ginny at (215) 787-2821 or Joan at (215) 787-2812.

The Salvation Army operates the Universal Telephone Assistance Program (UTAP) which provides grants to low income Verizon telephone customers to allow the customers to retain or reconnect to their basic telephone service. This program is available to any Verizon customer who is Lifeline certified by the company, and can be accessed via a toll free number anywhere in the State of Pennsylvania. The calls are serviced by a team of Salvation Army Customer Service Representatives located in Philadelphia, and grants can be made during a relatively short phone interview if a customer is eligible. The toll free UTAP number is 800 771-3312. Verizon's Lifeline number is 800 640-4155.

Additionally, The Salvation Army operates two emergency shelters in Philadelphia for homeless women and families, a drop in center and shelter for homeless people in Chester, and shelters for homeless women and families in Norristown and West Chester.

Admission criteria for each program are established by the funding agencies, which are in most cases municipal. Calling The Salvation Army's general number – (215) 787-2800 – and specifying the community in which a homeless person or family is currently located is the most efficient way to secure the correct number of the appropriate Salvation Army facility.

The Salvation Army provides some other types of emergency assistance in the Philadelphia area, but the above captures the primary programs available.

-Provided by Salvation Army