



OTTAWA MASONIC BOARD OF RELIEF

The Objective of the Ottawa Masonic Board of Relief (OMBoR) is to extend aid and financial assistance to brethren in good Masonic standing, their wives, widows, orphans, and all worthy cases of genuine Masonic origin not otherwise provided for.

The OMBoR was first established in 1876 by authority of the Grand Master to represent constituent Lodges in the City of Ottawa. The OMBoR manages a financial account which is replenished annually or as necessary by way of *per capita* levies on member Lodges. Each member Lodge in Ottawa Districts 1 and 2 is entitled and expected to annually elect up to two representatives to this Board.

Currently 23 of the 28 lodges in District 1 and District 2 are members of the OMBoR meeting regularly throughout the year (the Board's by-laws state "up to four times per annum") and has a duty to report annually to member Lodges through its Lodge representatives.

This Board has established guidelines for the provision of short-term financial assistance of limited amounts and views Grand Lodge as being responsible for those cases requiring larger grants of benevolence or longer-term assistance. Although not explicit in the Board's by-laws, it is expected that any Lodge requesting relief will provide immediate assistance to its members prior to submitting a request to the OMBoR as a sign of well-intentioned and well-placed assistance to a worthy recipient.

The Constitution and by-laws of the OMBoR state that Masonic Relief (Benevolence) should be dispensed by way of the applicant lodge; that it is the responsibility of the Board to make enquiry into every applicant for relief from member lodges and whenever deserving and to grant such aid as the members of the Board may deem necessary. While the Executive Committee may handle situations of a temporary nature requiring expenditures of no more than \$500.00, it is the responsibility of the lodge representatives that make up the Board, by a two-thirds decision, to grant relief of a more substantial nature.



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Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the representatives from the member lodges to assure that the Board has sufficient resources with which to carry out their decisions, levying such fees upon the member lodges as the representatives may deem necessary, based upon a simple majority vote at the annual May meeting.

During the last Masonic year (2016-17) the Board distributed \$7,300 to 5 separate brethren of 5 member lodges.

A related committee, the *Ottawa Masonic Burial Plot Committee*, falls under the auspices of the OMBoR. In this capacity, the OMBoR owns and oversees (in perpetuity) burial plots situated at Beechwood Cemetery. Every Mason, in good standing, of a member Lodge is eligible for interment (or inurnment) in a burial plot, having first been deemed “indigent” (i.e. poor).

Taken together, the OMBoR is responsible for short-term assistance of limited amounts while Grand Lodge is responsible for those cases requiring larger grants of benevolence or longer-term assistance with the Lodge itself adding relief as required.