

## PTA Guidance for Handling Requests for Relief Assistance

PTAs are often asked to provide assistance with the coordination of relief activities when a disaster strikes or personal tragedy occurs in a community. While PTA may appear to be a logical association to provide this coordination, PTAs are prohibited from making personal gifts to a specified family or individual. **A PTA may not collect and disburse funds for the benefit of specific families or individuals – this includes collecting and distributing gift cards.** A PTA's EIN may not be used for the establishment or maintenance of any financial account designated for the benefit of specified families or individuals. The IRS may impose penalties if these rules are not observed.

Unit, council and district PTAs may participate in community relief efforts by making a monetary donation to a relief organization recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. The IRS is very clear that **a 501(c)3 public charity (which all PTAs are) may donate funds to another 501(c)3 public charity with a similar mission.** That means that a PTA can donate money only to nonprofits who have similar purposes. For example, you could not donate to the Red Cross, but you could donate to a non-profit children's library, provided it had 501(c)3 status.

For PTA funds to be donated, PTA financial procedures must be followed. The membership is the only body authorized to approve, or ratify, the donation to another 501(c)(3) organization. The approval of the donation must appear in the minutes of a meeting of the association.

Additionally, PTAs may participate in disaster relief efforts by:

- Encouraging members to make personal donations to a relief organization of individual choice;
- Encouraging members to volunteer to assist at a location providing services to disaster victims;
- Providing information on local blood-drive locations;
- Providing information about other relief efforts in the community.

PTAs may participate in personal tragedy relief efforts by:

- Working to locate another agency or organization that may handle donated funds to benefit the affected family or individual;
- Offering to meet with other community leaders to arrange with a local bank for the establishment of a special account to handle donated funds (cannot use PTA EIN);
- Providing information about benefit or relief efforts in the community.