

Home Visitation – Frequently Asked Questions?

We are overwhelmed by the number of calls we are receiving, and we are only 7 members – any advice on how to manage? Can we just mail out the gift cards?

Home Visitation provides the opportunity for the Conference members to connect with their Neighbours in Need. While you sort out timing and availability of members, offer other resources, letting your Neighbour know that you might not be able to get to them for a while. Mailing out gift cards is not a Vincentian response. It satisfied a need during the toughest days of the pandemic, but wherever possible, we must return to our pre-pandemic service. Mailing a gift card because someone asks for one is not aligned with the Society's outreach, does not permit relationship building, and provides a false expectation to the Neighbour who is calling. The Vincentian mission is **relational** not transactional.

We have quite a bit of funds, do you think its okay if we help out by paying rent, or other large expenses, times are tough out there?

We never say never, but this would be a highly unusual response from a Conference. Paying rent and other large expenses does not typically require an emergency response. Speak with your other Conference members, and speak to the Particular Council, following the directives in the Society's [Financial Policy for Conferences and Councils, Policy 22](#). The funds belong to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, not to the conference or a few members, please use them carefully, and above all, share with other Conferences. Seek guidance on tougher asks, be sure we don't set up false expectations with our Neighbours in Need that the Society cannot follow through on.

Is there a place for members who do not wish to Visit? How long should a new member wait prior to going on a visit?

Vincentians are in a privileged position, being able to visit Neighbours in their home is a gift. Please get your new members out visiting as soon as practical, we need their assistance, perspective and they need the mentoring. While our traditional work is person to person service, there is room for members who cannot do home visits – there is lots to do! Have a frank conversation about what skills and experiences the member can share, and be prepared to be creative and provide a meaningful experience.

We want to pray with our Neighbours, should we just do so?

You may pray with your Neighbours if they ask you too, otherwise, pray with your Vincentian partner before you visit. At times, spirituality will enter into discussions, however we do not impose our faith and traditions on others; they will see your faith in action. Once you get to know your Neighbour, you will find a common ground.

If we don't go into a Neighbours home, where should the visit take place?

Somewhere private, not a scheduled appointment in a long list of appointments at the church hall. Preserve your Neighbours dignity and confidentiality. Meet outside, or in a quiet coffee shop. If at all possible, meet in your Neighbours home.

We have a strict 3-month policy for assisting – we helped you, and won't again for three months – is this okay?

It is not about how often we visit. It is about the need and the personal relationship you have with the Neighbour requesting help. We are our own worst enemy when we set up expectations of how often we will respond to a Neighbours call for help. It doesn't matter whether we say we visit every month, every 2 months, every 3 months or twice a year because as soon as we state those parameters we have set up expectations and we will get calls on the basis our terms of reference. Those arbitrary terms of reference are set up by us for our reasons and are no longer the basis of the Neighbours actual needs, our knowledge of their situation or how we can help them move forward to better outcomes.

Vincentian's cannot support everyone, and should not create a dependency. Hard conversations need to take place; we need to follow the principles of stewardship and properly fulfil our Vincentian vocation.

Other Home Visitation Questions raised:

Camps: Is there any limit to the number of campers we register? Can we just leave the cards with the schools? There is no limit on the number of children a Conference can register for camp, if you meet eligible children, please register them. Cards should not be dropped at the schools. The school staff can make referrals to the Conferences, but the registration process belongs to Vincentians. Please help the Toronto Central Council staff, be sure that the child's health card is not expired, a copy of which is to be submitted with the application.

Insurance: Did you know Vincentians are limited to traditional Vincentian outreach activities under our insurance policy? If you are doing anything outside of typical Home Visitation, please contact the head office for guidance before you undertake a new way of serving.

The Visitation Prayer

O God, someone in this house needs me. I don't know how I will be received, but I go as your ambassador, however unworthy and weak I am myself. Give me Your power to help in the best way possible, offering what is needed, giving the proper advice, saying the right thing.

I am Your servant and the servant of anyone who needs me.

I am weak - You can make me strong.

I am tongue-tied - You can supply my words.

I lack courage - You can reinforce me.

I am perplexed - You can give the answer.

I am useless - You can make me useful.

Above all, let me recognize you in these people, and seeing You, let me love them as I love you. They need Your love. They need my love. Let's love them together. I'll do my best. Be with me in what is Your work and mine. Kind, gentle, understanding Saint Vincent de Paul, inspire me in all my dealings with the needy whom you knew, understood and loved so much.