

ILLINOIS CONFERENCE of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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GUIDELINES FOR THE GRANTING PROCESS
LOCAL EVANGELISM, ENVISIONING, AND PLANTING
Illinois Conference LEEAP Religious Grant Program

BACKGROUND DATA: LEEAP is charged with engaging in the evangelistic mission of the Illinois Conference and inviting all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ through new church development and existing church revitalization. LEEAP is authorized by Conference Council to help administer the Church Extension Fund; the Equipping Leaders Fund; the Strengthen the Church Offering Fund, as designated for new and renewed church development and youth ministry; funds from "Into the Future" Capital Campaign, designated for new and renewed church development; and to coordinate other potential funding and support from the National Setting.

The Illinois Conference Church Extension Fund is made possible by the Illinois Conference Council authorizing the sale of certain property given by churches that have disbanded. Sale proceeds are put into the LEEAP Fund for use in new church development and the revitalization of existing churches.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 1st of the year prior to distribution of funds. This is a "Hard Deadline."

CRITERIA: Typically, we fund (3) types of projects: New Church Starts, Revitalization of Existing Churches/Congregations and New Ministries.

New Church Starts:

- Critical mass (staffing & targeted community) to start a new church
- A worship component in the ministry is required for grant consideration
- Ministry team who will provide leadership for the new church
- Evangelism strategy that will appeal to the community
- Provide for continuity of ministry and service in the community
- Mission Focus: Demonstrate clearly identified goals & objectives
- Funding requires endorsement of the Associate Conference Minister serving the area of the new church start.
- Annual report of progress is required prior to subsequent-year granting

Revitalization of Existing Churches:

- Program must address the needs of a particular population
- Program should have an evangelism component
- Churches must support Our Church's Wider Mission
- Programs must have the potential to become self-sustaining
- Mission Focus: Demonstrate clearly identified goals & objectives
- Churches must demonstrate some measure of vitality and energy
- Funding doesn't pay existing staff, but only new staff to support the project
- Funding doesn't provide for physical or facility improvements to property
- Funding requires endorsement of the Associate Conference Minister serving the revitalization project's area
- Annual report of progress is required prior to subsequent-year funding
- After receiving funding for three (3) years, applicants aren't eligible to apply again until a period of two (2) years has elapsed without LEEAP funding.

New Ministries:

- Projects should demonstrate Christian Service for and with a targeted community.
- Not intended for “one-off” projects, but instead for sustainable project concepts.
- Worship must be an element of any supportable ministry.
- Applications are considered independently on a case-by-case basis.
- Ministries in general should support spiritual formation.
- For example, “Open Table” offers support and acceptance to LGBTQ youth in Ottawa.
- For example, “Off The Pews” offers a variety of growth activities for Chicago youth.

FUNDING LIMITATIONS:

New Church Starts - up to \$40,000 for the first year, with eligibility for funding over five years with the submittal of new applications for each additional year.

Revitalization Projects - up to \$15,000 for the first year, with the potential for funding up to two additional years with the submittal of a new application for each additional year.

New Ministries - up to \$7,500 for the first year, with the potential for funding up to two additional years with the submittal of a new application for each additional year.

GRANT CONSIDERATION PROCESS:

1. Application are received ON TIME by October 1st and they are initially reviewed by LEEAP.
 - A. Does the application appear to meet the Criteria for the type of consideration sought?
 - B. A signed A.C.M. prior approval is required. Is this signed Assessment Form attached?
 - C. Are necessary supporting exhibits attached to back-up the Applicant’s request for support?
 - D. Has a follow-up report been received for any prior-year grant?
2. As to (1) above, if there is no written ACM approval included in the application submittal, then staff promptly transmits a copy of the application to the affected ACM. Notice is given to the Applicant to work with ACM concerning the project until the ACM’s written approval is obtained. If other necessary supporting exhibits or attachments are missing from the application, or if they are done poorly enough as to be non-usable, the applicant is notified. When (1) above is properly satisfied, then Ms. Carmen Torres at Illinois Conference office will place the “live” application into the LEEAP Committee Drop-Box to make it available for further committee work.
3. LEEAP Committee meets and starts the investigative process for further qualification of projects. Individual LEEAP Committee members are assigned to shepherd each qualified grant application.
4. Meetings, phone calls, and site visits are made by LEEAP members to determine viability of each project. Funding recommendations are made by LEEAP to the Illinois Conference Council in January.
5. Upon approval by Illinois Conference Council, grant installments of 25% of the approved amount each grant are paid out after the 1st quarter in the funding year and every quarter thereafter, with 100% of the approved annual grant amount completely paid by December 31st of each funding year.

General Disclaimer: The LEEAP Committee reserves the right to interpret the Committee’s criteria as to processing individual grant applications, and without obligation to binding precedents.