

Community Blessing Grants Initiative

Grant Funds Available as of May 1, 2009: \$150,000

OBJECTIVES of this initiative:

1. To engage, equip, and encourage innovative attempts to develop and expand hands-on ministries that serve the people of our local communities in Christ-like ways.
2. To encourage congregations to grow more indispensable to the health and wholeness (shalom) of their communities.
3. To embrace new immigrants, people on the margins of white, middle class life and others at our doorsteps.
4. To foster risk-taking innovation in new church development in order to push the boundaries, ideas and expectations about how God sends new missional communities/congregations into ministry

We believe God is unceasingly active in the lives of people in our local communities. Consistent with our “go into the world” theology and “transform the world” mission, we believe that we are called to be unceasingly present in our communities to identify, advocate for, celebrate, and partner with what God is already doing all around us. We also believe that doing this will breathe new vigor into our ministries. By belonging in word and deed more deeply to our communities we believe our communities will be more and more blessed.

DESCRIPTION of this initiative: Using money resulting from the sale of the Mill Creek property, Presbytery will establish a permanent invested corpus the earnings from which will be given as grants to congregations, presbytery entities or related mission agencies (grant requestors) who propose to initiate or significantly alter or expand outreach ministries in their local communities. Grants can also be requested that will help support congregants to shift toward a more external focus. This fund will be replenished using earnings from the invested corpus and any gifts designated for this purpose from organizations or individuals.

Sample community blessing initiatives (we don’t wish to limit what the imagination of NPS Presbyterians listening to God’s voice will be inspired to do):

1. Adopting a local public school, its kids and teachers and administrators, to help meet unmet needs. Starting a pre-school or daycare.
2. Start up support for live-in Christian couples in low income housing complexes. (Sought after for their demonstrated positive influence that reduces trouble in the complex)
3. Supporting “Third place” ministry presence in existing establishments, e.g. coffee houses, bookstores, etc.
4. Starting a new missional community/congregation (New Church Development).
5. Beginning a low-income, and/or transitional housing ministry.
7. Developing a Business as Mission (BAM) small business to benefit the community.

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Grant Requests

At any time during the year, grant requestors may submit proposals for evaluation by a the Presbytery Council or one of its subcommittees, taking into account the grant request/proposal and amount of funds available, a level of support is determined and funds are disbursed to the requestor as soon as the fund is able to provide them. At appropriate times, the project is evaluated and the evaluation is used to adjust the grant making and acceptance criteria.

An application that addresses the following questions should be submitted to the Presbytery Council c/o Rev. Dean Strong, Stated Clerk (dean@npspresbyterians.net or 425.355.0922).

Questions to address in the grant application:

1. Date of request.
2. Name of the requestor.
3. Amount requested.
4. Paint a vision for the community blessing project being planned, and its duration - new or expanded?
5. Describe what you hope/intend will be accomplished. What goals or objectives do you hope to meet with this project and by when?
6. Explain why you believe this project will be a blessing to your community and why you believe your efforts will be fruitful.
7. Describe the requestor's contributions to the project other than the grant: (money, time, talents, etc.). As part of this step please provide a proposed current and out-year income and expense budget for the project.
8. Who (individual(s) or team(s)) will be championing this project? Why do you believe they are called and equipped to champion this project?
9. Describe the discernment process that went into undertaking this initiative. Why do you believe God is wants your partnership in this endeavor?
10. When will you evaluate the development and effectiveness of this project? By what measures will the project be evaluated?

Grant funds are awarded at any time during the year as requests graduate from the evaluation process and funds are still available.

How the Council or subcommittee will evaluate the grant request:

These are some questions the council or a subcommittee will ask themselves about the grant request when evaluating whether or not to fund it and support the request.

1. The grant proposal starts something completely new and untried or alters the trajectory or significantly expands a current activity.
2. The vision is clear and overall rationale is compelling. (The need is well described and outreach deftly targeted)

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3. Goals and objectives for this project are well-articulated
4. The \$ amount requested is well rationalized.
5. Proposal demonstrates multiple sources of financial support and a desire/plan to develop the project toward self-sustainability (if project has life beyond one instance)—no longer dependent on the community blessing grant for its life and impact.
6. Proposal has approval and support of the session, board or appropriate governing entity.
7. Congregation or entity exhibits readiness and ability to accomplish its intentions.
8. The individual(s) or team(s) who will be championing this project demonstrate whole-hearted ownership for the project.
9. The development of this project shows evidence of God's leading and guiding the proposers through discernment.
10. The proposal contains evaluation measures that are well aligned with hoped for outcomes. In other words, the project will be looking at criteria in its evaluation that actually measure what the project sets out to do.

Criteria for Evaluating Project Results:

The following questions will be asked of project leaders to help the council evaluate whether community blessing projects that have been funded are effective in their mission?

1. Were the project's proposed markers of effectiveness realized? If so, please evaluate whether those markers were adequate to indicate effectiveness and suggest what you might change to the markers of effectiveness. If not, please offer an explanation why the markers weren't achieved and what adjustments you have made or propose to make in the future.
2. What seemed to work very well? Why?
3. What seemed to fail? Why? NOTE: Failure is often more informative than success - please be candid!
4. Were mid-course adjustments made? If so describe them and the result.
5. Was congregation especially supportive of this effort? (If not, why?)
6. What was the overall community reaction to the effort? (How was the reaction expressed and measured?)
7. What lessons were learned that can increase the probability of future success?