

**Diocese of Southwest Florida**  
**Episcopal Charities Fund Grant Program**

**“Beloved children, our love can't be an abstract theory we only talk about, but a way of life demonstrated through our loving deeds.” 1 John 3:18**

This is one of the guiding ideas behind the purpose of the Episcopal Charities Fund (ECF) Grant Program. The ECF is designed to allow congregations to come together as a church community and demonstrate God's love directly through loving deeds and direct action within the greater community. The goal is to find human needs that are not being met within the more vulnerable communities that our churches serve. Then, to plan how best to meet those needs in a sustainable way with the hope that the most vulnerable in our communities can progress from surviving to thriving. When applying for an ECF grant, the guiding question is **“What kind of project will most directly bring the people in our communities the services that are the most needed?”**

**What kinds of programs have received funding in the past?**

Projects that address the following community needs:

- Food insecurity
- Eldercare and respite
- After school programs
- Adult education and literacy
- Healthcare screenings
- Needs of the unhoused and transitional housing

**What kinds of programs do not qualify for funding?**

Projects that directly address church needs outside those of the community such as:

- Capital improvement projects for church and surrounding structures (church repairs, refurbishments)
- Church debt reductions
- Deferred church maintenance
- Regular church operational budget costs outside the grant funded program
- Employee payroll and expenses

**Who may apply for an ECF grant?**

Grants may be awarded to congregations, deaneries, and Episcopal schools in the Diocese of Southwest Florida, alone or in partnership with other churches and community organizations, provided that:

- The applicant is current with its filing of the Annual Parochial Report, Annual Audit, and Annual Apportionment.

- The proposed ministry meets an unmet community need, with an emphasis on serving the most vulnerable in our communities.
- The program is non-profit.
- The program is sustainable after the one year grant ends. (unless the need of the program has been satisfied)
- The congregation is invested in the program, i.e., funding, oversight, volunteers, etc.

### **Grant Funding Sources**

The grants are funded from several sources:

- A percentage of interest income from the endowment
- A tithe from the annual Bishop's Appeal
- Donations to the Episcopal Charities Fund for specific ministries and designated projects
- Parish partnerships with other community organizations and granting entities.

### **What is the duration of the grant and when are they awarded?**

Each grant is a one-year, onetime award, with the possibility of renewal or multi-phased grants considered on a case-by-case basis. FOR THE 2024 GRANT CYCLE, THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS AUGUST 16, AND AWARDS WILL BE MADE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING APPROVAL BY DIOCESAN COUNCIL. (NOTE: Grants not disbursed in the 12 months following the date of award are considered null and void. Applicants may reapply.)

### **What is the process of applying for a grant?**

**The steps are:**

1. The Diocese publishes the call for proposals
2. Applications must be received by the due date, August 16, 2024
3. A preliminary review will be made by the Council on Deacons
4. The Council on Deacons will make funding recommendations to the Diocesan Council 5. The Diocesan Council will approve/decline the recommendations
6. The Diocese will notify the applicants and advise them on their reporting obligations
7. At the end of the grant term, applicants will provide a report on how the grant funds were used. Any unused funds must be returned to the Episcopal Charities Fund of the Diocese of Southwest Florida.

### **Application Format**

Application packets should be submitted on standard 8 ½ x 11 paper, in not less than 12-point font and should include the following:

1. **Cover Page.** This single page should include:
  - a. The name of the project for which funding is requested;
  - b. Identification of the sponsoring congregation/organization and any partners;
  - c. Names and contact information for key personnel—Rector or Priest in Charge, Senior Warden, Program/Ministry Leader (please include title, email address, day and evening phone numbers)
  - d. The amount of funding requested;
  - e. The current status of the project for which the grant is applied (new start-up or existing)

program/ministry)

f. Project summary in one or two paragraphs

g. Signatures of the clergy and lay leader(s) with dates.

2. **Project Overview**—a 1-2 page narrative description of the project that addresses:

a. The long-term and short-term goals of the project

b. The relationship of the project goals to the purpose of the Episcopal Charities Grant Program

c. The specific ways the project will address the identified unmet need(s)

d. The specific activities involved in the project, including who will implement them and where they will take place

e. The ways in which the congregation will participate in the project (funding, oversight, volunteers, space, etc)

f. The duration of the project

g. Plans to continue the project/ministry beyond the life of the grant, if any.

h. Other grants, gifts, or contributions to be applied

i. Any additional information that may be of interest to the reviewers.

### **Contact Information**

With questions please contact **Michelle Mercurio** at **941-556-0315 x977** or email **mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org**.

Applications may be submitted via email to **mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org**, or you may mail or deliver your application to:

**Episcopal Charities Fund Grant Program**

**c/o Michelle Mercurio**

**The Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida**

**8005 25th Street**

**East Parrish, FL 34219-9405**