

APPLICATION FORM: STRATEGIC WELCOME GRANTS

INFORMATION, INSTRUCTIONS, AND APPLICATION FORM

(Small Congregation Grants)

Background:

In his Bishop's Address at Annual Council in February 2019, Bishop Doyle announced his intent to offer grants to our smaller congregations to help in improving their curb appeal and overall guest experience. These grants would provide an incentive to these congregations to invest in the attractiveness of their exterior to make them more inviting to guests and visitors and to assist congregations in being more invitational.

Criteria for Consideration:

To be considered for participation in this program, congregations must have for the most recent year reported an ASA of no more than 100 or average annual operating revenue over the past three years of not more than \$150,000.

Grant requests will be limited to a maximum of \$8,000.00. The congregation will have up to one year to use the funds awarded for a Strategic Welcome Grant. If not used by that time, any remaining earmarked funds for that grant will revert to GCF and no longer be available.

Additionally, the congregation cannot receive more than one Strategic Welcome Grant within a 12-month period. Exceptions to this provision, when due to extraordinary events, may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Strategic Mission Grant Committee.

Qualifying Projects & Uses:

These grants are intended to focus on the physical appearance and attractiveness to guests and visitors or invitational evangelism (branding and advertising, for example).

Attractiveness of Facility

“Curb Appeal” (exterior appearance) is certainly one area for consideration. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Signage
- Parking lot surface, striping, lighting, handicapped and guest parking stalls and signage
- Sidewalks, accessibility ramps, and making exterior doors accessible
- Guttering or drainage needs around the main entrance

Continuing the positive guest experience requires a review of the interior space as well. Some of these areas include:

- Signage (wayfinding around the building or campus)
- Accessibility for restrooms
- Nursery/caregiving space
- Life Safety compliance: exit signs, emergency lighting, and emergency exit hardware on exterior doors

- Refurbishing/updating restrooms to make them more attractive and pleasant
 - o Improved lighting and ventilation
 - o Accessible doors, stalls, and sinks
 - o Baby changing tables
- Updating and renovating narthex or reception area
 - o Windows, lighting, flooring, paint, signage

Excluded Items:

- ***Major maintenance such as new roof, HVAC replacement or repairs, or other aspects of facility maintenance such as kitchen and office equipment that while important to the life of the congregation, do not represent an improvement in the appearance and guest experience.***
- ***New Initiatives that ignore current maintenance needs***

Invitation & Awareness

Proposals are also welcomed for projects or ideas that equip the congregation to invite people to church. Branding, advertising, and social media may raise awareness and favorably position a congregation with those in the community looking for a church. Increased efforts at invitation and welcome are important complements to the increased awareness.

Branding, advertising, and quality web/social media presence generally require an initial investment to design and produce. They also have their greatest impact when they are sustained over time.

Expectations of Congregations:

- Congregations may apply at the point they have an identified need, an estimate of the cost, and have made plans to raise any additional funds (if required).
- For property improvements, work will be performed by a licensed contractor and comply with all building codes.
- For an invitational project, work should be performed by a qualified vendor with multiple bids where practical.
- Work will not be performed by a member of the congregation (consistent with our guidance of not employing members of the congregation).