



# Diocese of Southern Ohio

Episcopal Community Ministries

## 2026 ECM Grant Guidelines and Application Instructions

### Purpose

*The mission of the Episcopal Community Ministries is to inspire and support each other in the living out of our Baptismal Covenant through active, generous, and committed congregations and their outward looking ministries.*

We follow Jesus' way of loving our neighbors, striving for justice and peace, and respecting the dignity of every human being. As Christians, Jesus calls us to help the needy through healing and redemptive work. What can we do when the needs are so great, and our resources seem so limited by comparison? We join hands with our neighbors to do what we can, and God will join hands with us to make miracles happen.

### When are applications accepted?

Applications will be accepted and reviewed twice each year. **Applications will be open February 1<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup> and will close 30 days later.**

*Congregations may submit more than one application and **each ministry must have its own application***

The typical average grant awarded is \$2,500, and the largest \$5,000.

### Eligibility

#### Who may apply for an ECM grant?

- congregations who are in good standing in the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio (DSO)
- parish/mission outreach ministries addressing a community need within the DSO
- outreach ministries that have *the active involvement of the congregation in* one of these 3 ways:
  - congregation led and administrated
  - collaborative partnership with another denomination/congregation
  - partner with another community nonprofit ministry/organization

#### What types of ministries does ECM fund?

- *Food and Food Security* – food pantries; community meals and feeding programs; blessing boxes, community gardens with a particular emphasis on projects that address systemic issues.
- *Housing* – emergency shelters; utility, rent or mortgage assistance; and assistance in applying for government programs, such as Section 8 housing and the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) • *Educational and Life Skills* – job readiness skills, GED classes, help applying for government assistance programs and job placement programs; literacy and enrichment programs (example homework help programs for study skills or summer reading); tutoring (especially for children/youth at risk); health and nutrition education
- *Youth at Risk rehabilitation and education* (see education and life skills)
- *Emergency Assistance* – meeting the immediate needs of individuals and families; clothing assistance programs; transportation assistance; and disaster relief; medical assistance
- *Social Justice - affirm the dignity of every person*

## ECM does NOT provide funding for:

- Capital Campaigns
- Construction/Remodeling
- Salaries
- Building Expenses
- Projects appropriately addressed by other Diocesan funding sources such as COCL or COM
- Pass-through funding to 3rd party non-profits. **Members of the congregation must be actively engaged in the work of the ministry.** An example of a pass-through funding is when a church donates the ECM grant funds to the 501(c)3 organization they endorse without further volunteer involvement by members of the congregation or without participating in the financial decisions of the ministry.

## Criteria

All applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the ECM Committee in March and July. The review may include a site visit or an interview by a member of the committee.

### Primary Criteria

1. There is a congregational commitment – the requesting congregation must demonstrate committed and impactful support of the ministry both financially and through the active and significant participation of its parishioners.
2. The congregation is in good standing as determined by diocesan canons This includes being current in mission share contributions and having up-to-date submissions of the Parochial Report, DSO Annual Report, and the parish audit.
3. The ministry addresses a vital need in the community.

### Additional Criteria

The ECM Review Committee will also take into consideration:

1. The impact of the ministry on congregational vitality, ministry participants, and those served by the ministry— especially how the ministry incorporates “love of neighbor as we are loved” through compassion, grace, mercy, and justice respecting the dignity of every person. How does the ministry listen to the needs of those served and those who serve?
2. Resources available to the congregation and the ministry from congregational resources, other diocesan funding sources, outside community support, and partnerships with other churches/denominations. How does the ministry demonstrate openness to collaboration opportunities and the use of outside resources and expertise?
3. If the grant request is for support of a ministry that is a separate 501(c)(3), what are the resources available to that organization, as well as the percent of the ECM donation in relation to overall funding of the 501(c)(3)?
4. Effective use of ministry resources demonstrating good stewardship of the congregation’s available resources.

**All requests for funding must be on the ECM application form. Forms will go live on the ECM webpage on February 1<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup>.** If you are having difficulty with the online form, contact The Rev. Derrick Fetz at [dfetz@diosohio.org](mailto:dfetz@diosohio.org) or (513) 229-4618 or Canon Julie Murray at [jmurray@diosohio.org](mailto:jmurray@diosohio.org) or (513) 632-6011.