



Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts 2025 Congregational Development Grant Application Guidelines

Overview

The Congregational Development Grant (CDG) Program is one way our diocesan budget supports worshipping communities in strengthening community vitality and deepening relationships with God. The program challenges congregations to try new programs and prayerfully reflect on current and proposed programs that nurture and reimagine congregational life.

Ministries and programs supported through CDGs focus on:

- Inviting the world around us into the life of our congregations
 - Examples: new outdoor church signs; improvements to building accessibility to support better stewardship of space
- Providing learning opportunities for various age and interest groups in congregations
 - Examples: Godly Play training for children’s Sunday School teachers; antiracism training; support for adult Bible study or Vacation Bible School
- Identifying members’ qualifications, gifts, and callings and connecting members with one another in ministry
 - Examples: parish retreats to strengthen fellowship and shared vision; new ministry programs, such as a Stephen Ministry pastoral care program or a Senior Ministry; webconferencing technology to build relationships across a deanery
- Reimagining worship and strengthening liturgy and communal life
 - Examples: new services designed for specific demographics; the creation or purchase of specialized worship resources; technological upgrades, such as hearing-assistive devices

Successful grant applications will be program-specific. The grants committee will consider applications submitted jointly by multiple congregations as may be appropriate. For the purposes of this grant program, a “congregation” is any worshipping community of the diocese, including campus ministries, chaplaincies, deaneries, and parish partnerships, as well as individual parishes and missions.

Funding Types

The grants committee will award three types of funding:

- **New Program:** for the launch of a new ministry of the congregation
- **Program Expansion:** for a significant new component of an existing ministry, beyond an increase in the number of participants (ex: a short-term consultant for major improvements to a congregation's website; materials to incorporate the surrounding neighborhood into a parish festival)
- **Bridge Funding:** The committee may award *one-time* grants for ministries transitioning between funding sources. Those applying for bridge funding must explain how they intend to fund the program in the future.

The maximum grant available under this program is \$10,000.

The Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts through its operating budget is the grantor of the program. In addition to reviewing applications and awarding funds, it is the practice of the Congregational Development Grant Committee to offer guidance and support to congregations that submit a letter of intent and to ask clarifying questions about applications as needed. In this way, the committee strives to make informed decisions when determining an equitable distribution of funds.

Application Format and Procedures

Letters of intent are due on or before March 15, 2025

The letter of intent form asks for basic contact information and a brief overview of the ministry for which funding will be sought. The clergy leader or warden should complete the Letter of Intent form found [here](#). A copy - or proof of submittal - of the 2024 Parochial Report (due by March 1, 2025) is required at the time of the letter of intent submission. The grant committee will provide feedback on each letter in March and offer guidance as needed to ensure a strong application. Completed full applications are due on or before **May 3, 2025**.

The full application form is available [here](#). It consists of the following components:

- A. Cover Page
- B. Two-Page Program Overview
- C. Program Budget
- D. Checklists A and B
- E. Supporting Documents:
 - a. Income and expense reports for 2023 and 2024, including operating and non-operating accounts.
 - b. The congregation's balance sheet for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024.
 - c. The congregation's 2025 budget.
 - d. The congregation's most recent annual report (likely the report presented at the congregation's 2025 annual meeting).
 - e. A copy of the congregation's 2024 Parochial Report.

Frequently Asked Questions

I. What types of programs may and may not be funded with a Congregational Development Grant?

- CDGs can be used to fund programs for congregations' development, formation, and growth.
- CDGs are intended for use as **seed grants** to support new ministries or new components of existing ministries. In exceptional circumstances, one-time grants may also be awarded for programs transitioning between funding sources.
- Grant funds are not intended for the hiring of ongoing personnel or for supplementing a parish's operating budget.
- Funding for physical alterations to parish property may be considered insofar as they are in support of the worshipping community's growth and vitality.
- Grant applicants with programs for outreach, community service, and similar purposes are encouraged to consider the Sending Serving Grant Program. Contact your Deanery Co-Conveners for more information.

II. May two or more congregations apply jointly for a CDG?

Yes. The committee encourages congregations to work together toward their goals. Congregations may submit a joint application to fund shared programs. Deaneries may also apply. CDGs can be used to fund consulting services for multiple congregations if those services are part of a program that supports development, formation, and growth.

III. May a congregation apply for multiple CDGs in the same year?

No. Congregations may apply for a grant for multiple ministries as long as the total request does not exceed \$10,000. Congregations may also be included in joint applications with others even if they are applying for their own individual grants.

IV. What are the conditions for funding/diocesan compliance?

Grant recipients will receive funds only after the following conditions are satisfied:

- A. Parochial Report filed (2024 report due March 1, 2025)
- B. Annual Audit in process (2024 audit due Sept. 1, 2025; if award is prior to Sept. 1, the 2023 audit suffices)
- C. Annual Leadership Report (2025 report due March 1, 2025)
- D. Clergy Compensation form updated as changes are made and submitted to Church Pension Fund
- E. Current on payments (<90 days in arrears) annual assessment, diocesan loans, clergy pension, health premiums
- F. Diocesan grants that have a matching component may not include funds from other diocesan grants or the value of in-kind donations as part of their match. Matching grants must be matched by actual cash.
- G. Some grants have a reporting component required to qualify for future awards.

V. Why does the Congregational Development Grant Program require conditions for funding?

CDGs support programs for healthy congregations that are prepared to undertake projects directed toward their development, formation, and growth. Timely reporting and fiscal responsibility are indicators of congregational health and good leadership. A congregation unable to meet the reporting requirements may also be unprepared to undertake demands presented by additional, ambitious programs.

VI. When are CDG applications due? Where should they be sent?

A letter of intent [here](#) is due on **March 15, 2025**; for congregations that submit a letter of intent, the completed full application is due on May 3, 2025. The online form for the full grant application is found [here](#).

VII. Whom should I contact with comments or other questions?

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact Margaret Lias, Coordinator for Governance and Grants (mlias@diomass.org or 617-482-4826 x229).