

Strategic Mission Grants

Guidelines & Application



Funded by
The Bishop Quin Foundation &
The Episcopal Foundation of Texas

The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

Strategic Mission Grants Guidelines

Overview & History

Strategic Mission Grants are funds made available from the Bishop Quin Foundation and the Episcopal Foundation of Texas to directly support congregations in the Diocese of Texas with specific ministries aimed toward church growth. The Strategic Mission Grant program started in 2005 and since that time over \$1.5 million in grants have been awarded to congregations throughout the Diocese of Texas. The Strategic Mission Grant Committee, made up of trustees from both the Bishop Quin Foundation and the Episcopal Foundation of Texas, reviews applications and makes the final decision to award grants.

Definitions

- **Strategic** means that the grants should be part of an overall plan for growth and new member assimilation
- **Mission** means that the grant is given as part of an evangelism effort to grow a congregation or the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas.
- **Grant** means that dollars are given to fund promising initiatives in which ongoing monitoring, sharing of knowledge, and accountability are an essential part of the process.

These are not outreach grants oriented at serving the poor or those in need of justice. An existing arm of the diocese called the Episcopal Community Outreach Grants does a large part of that work. Resources are also applied to those areas through St. Luke's Episcopal Health Charities. Strategic Mission Grants are not grants to help support capital projects or operating budgets. These grants are designed to support church growth and evangelism.

Targeted Areas for Funding

The Strategic Mission Grant Committee will be specifically looking to fund grant proposals that fall into one of the following areas:

Newcomer Ministries (Front Door Evangelism)

These are efforts where a congregation, as part of a strategic plan, learns how to integrate newcomers. The Diocese of Texas has trained coaches to assist congregations in assessment and consultation to establish new processes. Commitment to new practices of invitation, welcome and connection will take time

and resources. A Strategic Mission Grant can help fund this initiative as well as assist congregations in:

- Assessing their current community and practice
- Planning a program of assimilation and integration
- Launching and activating a strategic plan of evangelizing new members, bringing them into the body of the Episcopal Church and helping them move from visitor to disciple and missionary.

***Creative Evangelism Endeavors
(Taking the Church Out into the Community)***

These are efforts where a congregation, as part of a strategic plan, trains individuals and organizes outside of the congregation. This might entail holding services offsite. This may occur with community based research, door-to-door ministry, or participation in civic groups. It can include communication materials, training, and program underwriting. However, it should be focused on off-campus events which take the church out into the world and to the people. This effort must be part of a congregation's overall strategy for growth.

***Greenfield Evangelism
(Creative "Planting" & Fresh Expressions of Church)***

These are efforts where a congregation or multiple congregations, as part of a strategic plan, investigate a new start either in the form of a second site or satellite. Examples of these expansion endeavors have been funded in the past with Strategic Mission Grants. The idea is that a grant could fund a three-year cycle that will help a congregation or multiple congregations launch a new mission. The goal will be for the new mission to become fully a part of the original congregation(s). However, if the mission is to become a separate organization, these first years of support could lead to an advanced round of funding from the Bishop Quin Foundation. The term "Fresh Expressions" is borrowed from churches in the United Kingdom, where creative plantings are taking place in unconventional locations: pubs, art galleries, cafes, etc. In some cases, congregations may want to work collaboratively on a grant proposal if a unique opportunity exists.

For additional information on the three target areas please refer to Exhibit A (Idea Starters) that provides helpful information as well as contact names of those in the Diocese actively involved in each respective area.

Grant Size & Seed Capital

In the past the maximum amount awarded was \$50,000 paid over a three year period. The Strategic Mission Grant Committee will now consider grants paid over a one to three-year period. Awards will fall in the \$5,000 to \$50,000 range. Awarding an amount greater than \$50,000 may be considered by the Committee in special circumstances.

Strategic Mission Grants are an important component of the overall vision and strategic mission of the diocese as they will directly invest in concepts in the "start-

up” phase. These grants will provide the seed capital required to launch a concept. It is anticipated that grant proposals will have entrepreneurial characteristics, with some proposals having smaller, one-time funding requirements for research and development-type work while other more advanced concepts may need multi-year funding in larger amounts. Grant requests can also come from multiple congregations seeking funding for a single collaborative project.

Eligibility

Starting in 2011, congregations of any size may apply. Since its inception, only congregations with annual budgets of less than \$750,000 were eligible for Strategic Mission Grants. This threshold has now been removed. A congregation’s history of making assessment and missionary asking payments will be considered in the selection process.

Application Deadline

Strategic Mission Grant applications must be submitted by August 31, 2011. Applications should be sent to Mrs. Nancy Lennard, Financial Assistant for Foundations, The Episcopal Diocese of Texas, 1225 Texas Avenue, Houston, Texas 77002 or electronically to nlennard@epicenter.org

Selection Process

Applications received will be reviewed by the Strategic Mission Grant Committee and passed through an initial screening process, mostly to make sure that the proposed concepts are consistent with the guidelines set forth by the committee. The Strategic Mission Grant Committee will assign a liaison (one its own members) to each congregation that submitted an application which passed the initial screening.

The liaison from the Strategic Mission Grant Committee will meet with representatives of the congregation on a site visit and will prepare an assessment for the Strategic Mission Grant Committee for final consideration. This will take place in the fall of 2011. The Strategic Mission Grant Committee will award grants and notify all applicants in November of 2011.

Ongoing Monitoring & Support

Congregations receiving grants will be required to provide periodic updates to the Strategic Mission Grant Committee via their liaison. This ongoing evaluation will help in assessing the viability of the project to determine if future funding is required or if the project should be terminated.

Questions - If you have any questions concerning Strategic Mission Grants, please contact David Fisher, Director of Foundations, The Episcopal Diocese of Texas, 1225 Texas Avenue, Houston, Texas 77002, 713-520-6444, dfisher@epicenter.org

STRATEGIC MISSION GRANTS – IDEA STARTERS

Following are some ideas to stimulate your thinking about projects that are creative, strategic, and mission-minded. The focus areas below correspond to the three eligible Strategic Mission Grant categories. The Committee encourages you—individual or collaborating congregations—to contact the leaders named below and discuss their experiences and your ideas.

Newcomer Ministry – Invitation, Welcome & Connection

In response to the vision and mission of the Diocese of Texas, a newcomer ministry project was initiated in the spring of 2010. Assessment tools for systematic, intentional structures of invitation, welcome, and connection were researched, designed, and implemented in four pilot congregations. In addition, ongoing consultation with these churches has provided accountability for progress and data collection to measure the results of this new work. The outcome has been remarkable with significant growth being demonstrated where congregations have incorporated these structures and processes for newcomer ministry.

Cultivating new practices of invitation, welcome, and connection that are rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ changes congregations and helps shape authentic cultures of effective newcomer ministry. Congregations which are intentionally engaged in comprehensive, systematic newcomer ministry with front and back door components have significant potential for vitality and growth. Work of this nature requires a variety of resources such as a designated staff person who oversees newcomer ministry, software that tracks membership involvement, updated websites and other social media designed to attract and inform newcomers and specific tools for invitation that are created for use by the members of congregations. The Diocese of Texas has coaches trained to assist congregations in assessment and consultation to establish new processes. Commitment to new practices of invitation, welcome and connection will take time and resources, but has the powerful potential for bringing new life to congregations.

For more information, please contact Mary Parmer (maryparmer@gmail.com).

Creative Evangelism Endeavors – Taking the Church Out

Episcopal churches have historically had a difficult time with evangelism. Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ outside the walls of our churches can be a daunting challenge. However, when a congregation creates and plans well for corporate evangelism endeavors, the results can be very engaging and impactful. This category is meant to support churches that are intentional about 'taking the church out' with a motivation for sharing the Gospel. Two recent examples in the Diocese of Texas are St. Andrew's, Pearland, and St. Christopher's, League City. St. Andrew's sponsored an event on a weekend when worship and fellowship were taken out to 11 venues in different residential neighborhoods with the key objective of inviting non-members to participate. The result was that almost 100 participants were visitors, many experiencing Episcopal worship and fellowship for the first time. The fruit is still being born out of this event, especially the relational connections that were made. Another example is St. Christopher's, which teamed with a small Assembly of God congregation to provide a sunrise service on Easter. Over 500 persons, most non-members of either church, attended this standing room only creative worship experience. This special occasion has resulted in visitors to both congregations.

The opportunities to take the church outside its walls are only limited by the imagination of a congregation. Sometimes these events will be one-time opportunities. Other times they may be ongoing. Often they may require some financial support in order to be done well. The possibilities are endless.

For more information, please contact Mary MacGregor (mary@epicenter.org).

Greenfield Evangelism – Creative “Planting” & Fresh Expressions of Church

The Diocese of Texas has been and always will be one church made up of many satellite congregations. In recognition of this historic model, the “diocese” will no longer be the only planter of churches; congregations themselves will define and plant new expressions of the Episcopal tradition. Also, the historic definition of a parish as an area or neighborhood will be recovered.

Congregations (and groups of congregations) are encouraged to identify good soil in which a variety of plantings may grow. Where there is potential, take a risk. Congregations and collaborative mission efforts are given permission to try and fail and die so that some seeds may take root and grow. We must experiment with various expressions of church without the need for pre-defined outcomes.

Episcopal plants and expressions must grow out of the rich soil of an Anglican ethos of scripture, tradition, history, liturgy, reason, and the respect for the diversity and dignity of every human being; as well as an Anglican understanding of salvation as both corporate and personal. Liturgy is our connection point, making the message of Jesus Christ accessible and relevant. The saving message of Jesus in these expressions must precede the need for buildings or money; many fresh expressions can be started with no need for money or property.

In the United Kingdom, the term “Fresh Expressions” is used for these creative plantings of church (see freshexpressions.org.uk for ideas). In the Diocese of Texas, a rich variety of these plantings and expressions is taking root: St. Mark’s-between-the-Bayous is an offshoot of St. Mark’s in Houston, worshiping on Sunday evenings; Grace in Georgetown has a satellite campus, one church with two altars; St. Alban’s in Waco offers a weekday evening Bible Study in a pub downtown; several congregations have added worship services, some in different locations away from the main church building. Congregations are encouraged to collaborate to identify unique opportunities to pursue. The greenfield of the harvest will be reaped when we have planted new Episcopal expressions that are accessible to all, in every corner of the Kingdom.

For more information, please contact The Rev. Jeff Fisher (jeff@stalbanwaco.org).

The Episcopal Diocese of Texas Strategic Mission Grant Application

Funding By
The Episcopal Foundation of Texas & The Bishop Quin Foundation

If multiple congregations are collaborating on a single project, each congregation should complete Sections I and IV with one lead congregation applicant completing the other sections. Data inputted in this form can be saved.

I. Contact Information

- A. Date of Proposal: _____
- B. Name of Congregation: _____
- C. Street Address: _____
- D. City: _____
- E. Zip Code: _____
- F. Main Phone Number: _____
- G. Fax Number: _____
- H. Email Address: _____
- I. Website Address: _____
- J. Name of Rector: _____
- K. Contact Person if other than Rector _____
Phone & E-mail Address: _____
- L. Annual Operating Budget: _____
- M. Average Sunday Attendance: _____

II. Description of Request: Please attach answers to the following questions using 200 words or fewer for each query.

- A. Statement of Growth Plan: Describe your congregation's plan for growth and the needs that you are seeking to address by requesting this grant.
- B. Proposed Solution: What is expected to change because of this initiative? How will this impact growth? Has this plan been discussed with the Bishop or with a member of the Congregational Development staff of the Diocese?
- C. Components of Initiative: Specific growth or evangelism opportunity for which you will use funds, how much, when, etc.
- D. Goals of Initiative: How will success be measured? Be specific. Use numbers, percentages, expected outcomes, target dates, etc. *(Note: If your proposal is funded, ongoing reporting will be required and used to determine if future funding will take place)*

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III. Grant Request

- A. Total Amount requested: _____
1. Year 1 amount: _____
2. Year 2 amount: _____
3. Year 3 amount: _____
- B. Total Program Cost: _____
- C. Amount Contributed by
 Congregation(s) if any: _____
- D. List other sources of support for the program: _____

IV. Congregational Information: Please attach answers to application.

- A. Brief History
- B. Description of Staff: (Organizational structure)
- C. Current Programs or Initiatives
- D. Prior Years' Financials (past 2 years – income statement & balance sheet)
- E. Current year's budget
- F. Year-to-date Budget to Actual
- G. Diocesan Participation:
- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Assessment – prior year | _____ |
| Assessment – actual paid | _____ |
| Asking – prior year | _____ |
| Asking – actual paid | _____ |

H. Past History with the Bishop Quin Foundation or other Diocesan entities, listing funding received, date received, and status of repayment, if applicable.

Submitted by:

Rector

Senior Warden

Application deadline: August 31, 2011. Please send to the attention of Nancy Lennard at nlennard@epicenter.org or the Diocesan Center address, 1225 Texas Avenue, Houston, Texas, 77002.



The Episcopal Diocese of Texas
1225 Texas Ave. | Houston, TX 77002
www.epicenter.org | 713.520.6444