

Innovation Grants Initiative

OBJECTIVES of this initiative:

1. To engage, equip, and encourage innovative attempts to develop and expand congregational ministries for the 21st century.
2. To encourage congregations to implement adaptive change.
3. To foster risk-taking innovation in new church development in order to push the boundaries, ideas and expectations about how God sends new missional communities/congregations into ministry.

We believe God is doing new things in the lives of people in our local communities. Our presbytery has a deep tradition of entering into the mission that God has called us into and we are seeking to continue that tradition in this new chapter of our Presbyter. In order to do this, it will require us to shift our focus from our historical successes to our present opportunities.

DESCRIPTION of this initiative: The Property and Finance committee has designated over \$4,000 to be used for the initial grants.

Sample innovation initiatives (we don't wish to limit what the imagination of those listening to God's voice will be inspired to do):

1. Creating events that will attract those outside a congregation.
2. Start service opportunities for congregants to serve those in their community.
3. Supporting "Third place" ministry presence in existing establishments, e.g. coffee houses, bookstores, etc.
4. Beginning a low-income, and/or transitional housing ministry.
5. Developing a Business as Mission (BAM) small business to benefit the community.

Grant Requests

At any time during the year, grant requestors may submit proposals for evaluation by the Stewardship Committee, taking into account the grant request/proposal and amount of funds available, a level of support is determined and funds are disbursed to the requestor as soon as the fund is able to provide them. At appropriate times, the project is evaluated and the evaluation is used to adjust the grant making and acceptance criteria. Grant proposals for mission projects with direct ties to PC(USA) will be given priority.

An application that addresses the following questions should be submitted to the Stewardship Committee c/o Simon Biasell, Innovation Coordinator (sbiasell@gmail.com or 559.917.8482).

Questions to address in the grant application: The overall question being answered in this grant application: What is this grant intended to accomplish and how is this project moving the congregation forward in an innovative way?

1. Date of request.
2. Name of the requesting congregation/organization and contact person(s).
3. What are the current challenges facing your congregation/organization?
4. Amount requested.
5. Is this a second year request? Requesting same amount as first year?
6. How will this grant assist in your congregation's/organization's adaptive change?
7. Describe what you hope will be accomplished. How will you determine if you have successfully achieved your goal(s)?

Grant funds are awarded at any time during the year as requests graduate from the evaluation process and funds are still available.

How the Stewardship Committee will evaluate the grant request:

These are some questions the Stewardship Committee will ask themselves about the grant request when evaluating whether or not to fund it and support the request.

1. The grant proposal starts something completely new and untried or alters the trajectory or significantly expands a current activity.

2. The vision is clear and overall rationale is compelling. (The need is well described and outreach deftly targeted)
3. Goals and objectives for this project are well-articulated
4. The \$ amount requested is well rationalized.
5. Proposal demonstrates multiple sources of financial support and a desire/plan to develop the project toward self-sustainability (if project has life beyond one instance)—no longer dependent on the community blessing grant for its life and impact.
6. Proposal has approval and support of the session, board or appropriate governing entity.
7. Congregation or entity exhibits readiness and ability to accomplish its intentions.
8. The individual(s) or team(s) who will be championing this project demonstrate whole-hearted ownership for the project.
9. The development of this project shows evidence of God's leading and guiding the proposers through discernment.
10. The proposal contains evaluation measures that are well aligned with hoped for outcomes. In other words, the project will be looking at criteria in its evaluation that actually measure what the project sets out to do.

Criteria for Evaluating Project Results:

The following questions will be asked of project leaders to help the Stewardship Committee evaluate whether community blessing projects that have been funded are effective in their mission?

1. Were the project's proposed markers of effectiveness realized? If so, please evaluate whether those markers were adequate to indicate effectiveness and suggest what you might change to the markers of effectiveness. If not, please offer an explanation why the markers weren't achieved and what adjustments you have made or propose to make in the future.
2. What seemed to work very well? Why?

3. What seemed to fail? Why? NOTE: Failure is often more informative than success - please be candid!
4. Were mid-course adjustments made? Did the adjustments increase your costs? If so describe them and the result.
5. Was congregation especially supportive of this effort? (If not, why?)
6. What was the overall community reaction to the effort? (How was the reaction expressed and measured?)
7. What lessons were learned that can increase the probability of future success?