

Congregational Development Grant Application

Congregational Development, in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, is about creating new places for new people through new faith expressions and renewing and revitalizing existing faith communities. By being relevant and vital, our goal is to touch more lives and draw more people to Christ. Our primary purpose is not to help churches grow, but rather we seek to help them reach more people with the good news of the Gospel, to grow more people as gifted and called disciples of Jesus, and to send more people into the world to love and serve God and their neighbors in all they do.

The grants are designed to help leaders and congregations more effectively make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Through the Unified Funding Task Force, grants for Strategic Growth Initiatives and Micro-Grants to Reach New People are provided on a limited basis. Grants can be awarded by the taskforce only when your process has been planned and approved as stated in the guidelines.

Applications for the fall grant cycle are due **April 1 by 11:59 PM**. There are two different applications your congregation or community may apply for. Please read and review carefully the guidelines, as stated by the conference website found [here](#).

Spring application funding will start in July and Fall application funding will start in January. To qualify for funding, the applicant must be a United Methodist local church, a district, or region, conference committee or other affiliated organization of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Congregational Development grants are not available for the purchase of land or building or the remodeling of existing buildings.

Please note, you may only submit one application per grant cycle.

Name *

First Name Last Name

Email of applicant *

example@example.com

Select your district *

Church Name *

Church ID Number *

Project Coordinator Information. This information is for the person most knowledgeable about this application and is considered the project coordinator or primary contact.

First and Last Name

Email Address

Primary Phone Number

Role Within Faith Community/Group

Include the name, email, phone number, and role of each person on your team

	Name	Email	Phone Number	Role
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Which grant are you applying for? *

Strategic Growth Initiative Grant

Has your church previously received funding from this grant? *

- Yes
- No

Date(s) of previous award(s) in MM/DD/YYYY format

Total Amount Previously Awarded

Project/Program information

Briefly describe your project, including your vision and mission: *

Date the project/program began or is expected to begin: *

Month Day Year

Alignment with the Strategic Growth Initiatives Grant

The Strategic Growth Initiatives grant is for existing churches/faitth communities who want to accomplish one or more of the following:

- Create a ministry that reaches new people.
- Create a ministry that develops new and existing leaders.
- Create a ministry that identifies, nurtures and trains the next generation of leaders.
- Create a ministry that multiplies the congregation's impact beyond the walls of the Church.
- Create a ministry that includes strategic partnerships with other Congregations (i.e.. Cooperative Parishes, Clusters, etc.).

SGL Grants are typically awarded for 3-5 years with a reduced amount each year.

Describe how this project/ministry aligns with the purpose of the Strategic Growth Initiatives Grant as described above: *

Congregational Vitality

A vital congregation:

- Sees and respects all people – builds relationships with neighbors to understand their changing social and cultural context;
- deepens discipleship – supports people growing in faith by cultivating Christian practices;
- lives and loves like Jesus – sacrificially lives out clear gospel values and mission; and
- multiplies and grows their impact – through building leadership capacity, partnering with people and organizations in the community and in what matters.

How does this project increase congregational vitality? *

Impact

Describe the characteristics and numbers of persons who will benefit from the project or ministry you have described

Who in your mission field are you trying to reach? *

How many individuals within the target group described above are you seeking to engage with this project? *

How will this project help you reach them? *

Who from this audience is working with you? *

Who else is involved in the conversation within the local community? *

Your ministry/project plan

Why is this project/ministry needed (current conditions): *

What are the program's activities and how will funds be used to accomplish the identified goals? *

Provide an explanation of how this project/ministry differs from anything you've tried before. *

Leadership matters! Explain why you and your team are the right leaders for this project. *

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Identify three to five S.M.A.R.T. goals and action steps for this project/ministry and the expected date (timeline) by which you hope to achieve each goal.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals: *

Who will partner with you in this work? *

How will you evaluate the program/ministry? *

Budget Information

Grant Amount Requested *

How many years do you anticipate needing this grant? *

SGL grants are typically awarded for 3-5 years with a reduced amount each year.

Explain why you believe this funding will make a difference in your results. *

After grant funds have been exhausted, how will this project/ministry be funded and self-sustained? *

Did your congregation pay 100% Mission Shares last year? *

Yes

No

If you don't receive the requested amount, will you still move forward with the project/ministry? *

Yes

No

Renewal Process Requirements:

If you are granted an SGI, then you may be eligible to request renewal. Most SGI grants are renewed for 3-5 years. In order to apply for a renewal, your team must:

- Submit a formal letter requesting renewal
- Provide an update on the previous years' goals
- Provide goals and benchmarks for the coming year
- Provide a copy of the budget for the coming year
- Submit a letter of support from your District Superintendent
- Submit a letter of support from your leadership team

Additionally, teams will be expected to join quarterly check-in meetings with the Director of Congregational Vitality. For the spring application cycle, you will be expected to schedule these meetings during:

- the week of September 14 2026
- the week of December 7 2026
- the week of March 8 2027
- the week of June 7 2027

Failure to meet these requirements will indicate that the grant is no longer needed nor desired.

Benchmarks & Outcomes

So that we might understand the steps you intend to take and the outcomes you envision, we ask that you provide some additional clarity. **A part of each check-in meeting will refer back to the information you provide in this section.** During the check-in meetings, learnings, pivots and any needed additional steps and adjustments to the timeline will be discussed and modified as necessary.

View a sample detailed plan and timeline [here](#).
Create your own using this document.

Based on the plan and timeline, please provide benchmarks and milestones (minimum of 3 and

maximum of 10).

*

Some examples of benchmarks and milestones:

- Prayer team is in place and receiving regular requests and project updates.
- The vision is articulated in writing and shared regularly with the core group.
- Discipling process is established and implemented with the launch team.
- Identification of community partners by [specific date].
- Contacting 25+ people outside the launch team each week.
- Conducting community interviews and prayer walks [specify frequency and target dates].
- Developing a system of generating contacts from sponsoring church(es).
- Hosting focus group listening sessions [specify frequency].
- Expanding core group, committed group, and participant group by [specific numbers] by [date].

Request a Letter of Support from Your DS

Please request a letter of support from your DS by sending them **this link**. In your message to the DS, be sure to include:

1. Why you feel this project / ministry should be funded
2. How this project / ministry will affect the church, campus, community, etc (benefits / concerns)
3. Any additional comments

DS's cannot guarantee turnaround within 48 hours of the application deadline* so please be sure you are providing them ample time to receive and complete your request.

Once you have sent the request to your DS, click "Mark As Complete" for this task. You should then review and submit your application (which includes all completed tasks).

You do not need to wait for the DS to upload their letter of support to submit your application.

*The deadline for all submissions (including the recommendation submitted by your DS) is April 1 at 11:59 pm.

Check this box to indicate you have accessed and understand the expectations regarding the letter from your DS. *

I understand

Microgrant

Microgrant to Reach New People Criteria

The Baltimore Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church is committed to reaching New People in New Places through new faith expressions. These new people already live around our local churches and in our communities and we seek to reach them where they are, either in physical or digital places. To this end we are offering a non-renewable grant for up to \$2,500 for you to launch your new faith expression.

The Baltimore Washington Conference defines a New Faith Expression as an innovative and contextual faith community that is in-tune with our changing culture and is developed with those who are not yet a part of a church in mind.

A New Faith Expression must meet the following criteria:

1. **They gather NEW people:** This is not about bringing already churchd people together in a new way. They should be designed to give unchurched and de-churched people a fresh experience of Christian community.
2. **They meet regularly.** It should be at least monthly, but preferably weekly. These are not one time outreach events. The purpose is to foster relationships and create community, which requires people to be together on a regular basis.
3. **They relate to a United Methodist entity, a campus ministry, a local church, a District or the Conference.** Most New Faith Expressions will break the mold of typical forms of church, but they are still a part of the Body of Christ. With that in mind, we want to create a supportive connection so that the institution can feed the NFE and not to funnel new members to the local church and feed the institution.
4. **They form disciples using a variety of methods that are appropriate for the context.** Disciple making is at the core of our mission and will be at the core of what we start.

You will now have the opportunity to highlight how your New Faith Expression will meet each of these criteria. Please complete each section carefully.

At the end of the application, you will be asked to upload a letter of support from the pastor or director of the United Methodist Church or entity to which this New Faith Expression will relate.

Has your church previously received funding from this grant? *

Yes

No

Date(s) of previous award(s) in MM/DD/YYYY format

Total Amount Previously Awarded

Name of Project/Ministry for which funds are being requested: *

Gathers New People

Please respond to the following prompts as they relates to gathering new people

What new people are you seeking to gather? Who are you trying to reach, what demographic group are you trying to connect with, and/or what needs are you trying to meet? *

What leads you to believe these persons might be receptive? *

What research, discernment and due diligence informs your answers to the above questions? *

What is your vision for the space in which these faces will gather? Be specific. Include numbers, location(s) etc. (We realize these numbers are goals, so be bold and stretch!) *

Meets Regularly

Please respond to the following prompts as they relate to meeting regularly.

When and where will people gather in this new space? *

How is the location strategic for reaching the identified new faces? *

Provide a time frame with dates on the calendar, frequency of meetings, and the dedicated space(s) that will be used. (This is your starting point; remember that this may take some experimentation.) *

Relates to a UMC Entity

Please respond to the following prompts as they relate to a UMC entity.

Name of Local Church or UM Entity that is connected to this proposed new space. *

Senior/Lead Pastor or Director First and Last Name *

Senior/Lead Pastor or Director Email *

Senior/Lead Pastor or Director Primary Telephone Number *

Forms Disciples

Please respond to the following prompts as they relate to forming disciples.

How will this new space make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world? *

What is the discipleship pathway for this new space? *

What (if any) specific model is being used for inspiration and/or direction? *

Leaders and Partnerships

Provide the following information for each leader already recruited to plant this new space: First and Last Name, Phone Number, Email Address, and a one sentence description of the gifts of each leader. *

What core group of people from the community or a UM church/entity are partnering with you to create this new space? *

Who is praying for this new space and how? *

Financial Information and Plan

The vast majority of projects will not require conference funds. However, some initiatives that are already bearing fruit may be strengthened through a financial partnership with the BWC. This is a non-renewable grant for up to \$2,500. Please respond to the following prompts to show how funds will be used.

What is the financial plan for this project? *

What funds, if any, have been dedicated for the creation and/or sustainability of this project? *

How will financial discipleship be taught and lived out in this New Faith Expression? *

What are the anticipated offerings in this project and how will they be used? *

How will conference funds strengthen this New Faith Expression? *

How will these funds be matched with local funds? *

Additional Information

If you have any additional details that you would like us to know about your proposal for a New Faith Expression please include them below.