**Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey**

**GRANT GUIDELINES**

*2024 Cycle*

Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey (ECS-NJ) supports congregations as they proactively address human needs and relentlessly work against both social and racial injustice. ECS-NJ invites us to walk with Christ together and make a positive impact on our communities, serving as a constant reminder of our interdependence and of our shared commitments to Discipleship and the Baptismal Covenant.

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1. **PURPOSE OF THE GRANT**

ECS-NJ grants are designed to support the work of the ministries of our congregations throughout the Diocese of New Jersey. Our grants will fund a new initiative or the expansion of existing outreach. If the grant is for an existing ministry, it is expected that grant funds will be used to expand the ministry in a significant way. The project should addressat least two of the following objectives:

* To meet human need in underserved and marginalized communities, especially communities of color
* To encourage advocacy for issues relating to social justice, including spearheading new advocacy efforts, particularly those affecting underserved or marginalized communities
* To engage, collaborate and partner with other organizations, including faith-based, secular, community, governmental, etc.

1. **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

* The ministry must involve the underserved and/or marginalized people in our Diocese wherever they are located.
* Funding is available only to congregations within the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey and not to individuals or outside organizations.
* Congregations that have received a previous grant from ECS-NJ are not eligible to apply until after the previous grant is closed and a final report has been accepted by ECS-NJ. In addition, congregations are not eligible to receive more than two ECS-NJ grants in a five year period.
  + If a church has received and closed two previous ECS-NJ grants, it is eligible to apply five years after the closure of the first grant.
* Programs must represent an effort by a local congregation, or group of congregations, or a congregation in collaboration with community partners to respond to an identified need affecting members of an underserved and/or marginalized community.
* Eligibility for services offered by the program cannot be determined by church membership, faith, or participation in church activities.

1. **APPLICATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

* A Letter of Intent to apply is required and must be submitted (by email to [grants@ecs-nj.org](mailto:grants@ecs-nj.org)) between April 1 and April 30, 2024. The Letter of Intent should include a brief program description, contact information for the program team, and describe how the program addresses at least 2 of the three objectives. Please make sure you also tell us 1) how members of your congregation will be involved throughout the project, 2) how this project will deepen your community connections, and 3) that you read the guidelines for ECS-NJ grants.
* Volunteers from ECS-NJ and other ministries in the Diocese will consult with prospective applicants on their program and proposal between May 1, 2024 and August 15, 2024.
* Applications for this cycle will be due on Friday, September 6, 2024 by 11:59 pm. All applications must be submitted online using Formstack.
* Grant proposals may be submitted in English, Spanish, or Haitian Creole. Applications received in languages other than English will be translated into English for review. These translations will be evaluated for accuracy and completeness before being sent to the grant committee.
* Grant applications will be reviewed by a grant committee. Reviewers are looking for completeness and specificity in the answers to each question in the application and will look to balance the following considerations:
  + Discipleship and building up the body of Christ, especially in the congregation of the applicant
  + Growth of outreach capacity either through creation of a new ministry or expansion of a current ministry
* Advocacy actions *(the definition of advocacy for the ECS-NJ grants can be found at the end of this document)*
* Community impact, including partnership and collaborations
* Quality and feasibility of the plan
* Engagement of the beneficiary population with the design and implementation of the project
* Project sustainability
* Applicants will be notified of the Advisory Council’s decision in October of 2024.
* Grant applications will be reviewed by a grant committee. To be considered, the applicant must submit the Letter of Intent by April 30, 2024 and then submit the completed Application along with a Project Budget, an Activity Timeline and a Signature on formstack by the deadline of September 6, 2024.
* Requests for funding for capital expenses must be closely tied to program goals and implementation to be considered.
* Requests to cover staff compensation must also be closely tied to program goals and implementation. If a project budget includes this line item, the application should describe how hiring of professional staff is necessary for success of the project as well as the qualifications of the staff. Staff compensation is not expected to make up the majority of a typical budget. When it does, any special circumstances should be described.

1. **EXPECTATIONS OF GRANTEE**

All grantees are expected to:

* Sign a Memorandum of Understanding.
* Send a project representative to the ECS-NJ Virtual Summit during which we will announce grant recipients.
* Submit written reports no later than June 15 and December 15 of each calendar year and speak with ECS-NJ representatives in March and September, either in person or on Zoom. The goal of this quarterly reporting is to make sure the grantees have the resources they need and to collect useful information.
* Compile success stories and share these stories (with photos/videos) as part of the reporting process.
* Participate in check-in calls and in-person visits.

*\* Please ensure that permission is obtained for all photos, videos, personal stories and quotes shared as they will potentially be used in promotion/marketing materials.*

1. **GRANT AMOUNT AND PERIOD**

*Grant Period: 12-24 months*

Grants are awarded for a period of one or two years. The time frame is intended to give new ministries a longer on-ramp to achieve their project goals. The project period typically begins at least two months after you submit your proposal. If you would like to discuss the possibility of a shorter or longer grant duration, please contact us by email at [grants@ecs-nj.org](mailto:grants@ecs-nj.org).

*Grant Amount for Year 1: $7,000-$15,000*

*Grant Amount for Year 2: $5,000-$10,000*

Grants are to be disbursed in multiple payments each year. Disbursement of funds is contingent upon receipt and approval of written progress reports showing demonstrated progress towards project goals and need for continued funding.

If this is a one-year grant funds will be disbursed as follows: 50% at receipt of the signed MOU, 25% upon approval of the June 15 report, and 25% upon approval of the final report.

If this is a two-year grant funds will be disbursed as follows:

* In Year 1, 50% at receipt of the signed MOU and 50% upon approval of the June 15 report.
* In Year 2 it is expected that outside and congregational donations are supporting more of the costs. 50% of the Year 2 grant will be disbursed upon approval of the December 15 report, 25% after the June 15 report and then 25% upon receipt and approval of a final report.

1. **GRANT APPLICATION**

The 2024 Grant Application is available here: <https://dioceseofnj.formstack.com/forms/ecs_grant_application_spring_2024>

Applications are due by Friday, September 6, 2024, at 11:59 pm Eastern time.

Applications not submitted in Formstack by this time will not be considered for funding for this cycle.

Information about the 2025 cycle will be made available in winter 2024/2025.

**Definition and Examples of “Advocacy” for Purposes of ECS-NJ Grant**

ECS-NJ bases our definition of “Advocacy” on the Anglican Communion/ Episcopal Church’s Mark of Mission #4: *“To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.”*

Advocacy is any action that supports someone to make their voice heard and works to change systems and promote social causes using legislative advocacy to change laws. Advocacy includes direct contact with those being served and problem solving designed to protect the personal and legal rights of individuals. For example:

**Listen** to those who are served through your grant program to discern underlying causes of the need, paying particular attention to systemic racism and unjust systems.

**Research and Document** the issues you have identified to reflect the real story of the community you are serving.

**Educate and Train Volunteers** to do this work by teaching successful strategies and skills leading to direct action and organizing on issues related to those who are served in your grant program.

**Educate the Community** about the identified issues and the legislative process to address them.

**Lobby** decision-makers for legislative and systemic change. Speak in favor of, recommend, argue for a cause, support or defend, or plead on behalf of others.