



CONGREGATIONS
WITH COMMUNITY

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE

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**CONGREGATIONS
WITH COMMUNITY**

2026/27

Dear: Congregation & Community Partner

Thank you for the opportunity for Congregations with Community (CWC) to engage with you regarding the grant process. The grant application guide is the culmination of listening to you, listening to staff, and incorporating necessary changes to have a grant process that's both accessible and doable. I want to offer you a few thoughts as you delve into the grant application guide.

First, I encourage you to read the entire grant application guide first. No need to rush through it. Then return to it for more specific guidance and direction. Secondly, strive to get a feel for what we're asking and expecting from you as a potential grantee. In short, the feeling is about language, relationships, and connectivity to a share vision and outcome for your congregation and community partner. Finally, approach this process by being open. We offer constructive ideas, edits, and directions to enhance your candidacy.

This journey will unfold a story. One of those stories is that what we can achieve together is far greater than what we can accomplish solely. Our story, our practice is to be with you throughout the process. Feel free to contact us, we are with you. And in the end, your journey to address a social challenge in your respective communities will be the greatest story of all.

Let this grant application guide be your portal in making a difference. Blessings!

Sincerely,

McKenzie Scott Lewis
Senior Director, Congregations with Community



INTRODUCTION

We are excited about your interest in the Congregations with Community Grant. Congregations with Community envisions a surge of partnerships between congregations and communities, strengthening our social fabric through collective action. We grant awards to congregations/communities across the state of Indiana. Over the next three years, we will grant 109 awards to congregations/communities across the state of Indiana.

GRANT APPLICATION & AWARDING

NOW

Attend one of the Grant Information Sessions (see page 4 for dates). Once you have participated in 1) a grant information session and 2) joint meeting with congregation and community partner with a Community Engagement Advisor, you are eligible to receive an invitation to complete a grant application.

MONDAY, JUL 13, 2026

Application available

FRIDAY, SEPT 11, 2026

Application availability closes to new applicants

MONDAY, OCT 12, 2026

Submit final application

FRIDAY, NOV 6, 2026

Application decision notifications

DEC 2026

Direct Deposit transferred

**JAN 2027 –
DEC 2029**

Mandatory Check-in throughout grant cycle

DECEMBER 31, 2029

Grant cycle ends

GRANT END

JANUARY 25, 2030

Final report due

**All dates are subject to change. See next page for Grant Information Session dates.*





INTRODUCTION

GRANT INFORMATION SESSIONS

THURSDAY, MAY 7TH

10:00am – 11:00am EST

THURSDAY, JUNE 11TH

2:00pm – 3:00pm EST

THURSDAY, JULY 9TH

10:00am – 11:00 am EST

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6TH

2:00pm – 3:00pm EST

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20TH

10:00am – 11:00am EST

**All dates are subject to change*



Grant Criteria

Congregations with Community (CWC) is a division of The Center for Congregations, funded by Lilly Endowment for the state of Indiana. CWC's mission is to energize collaboration between congregations and community partners with shared values to address social opportunities as one unified voice. One of the ways we foster collaboration is through our grant. The CWC grant has the following criteria:

Grantees

Grants are awarded to Christian congregations or a Community Development Corporation (CDC) birthed by that congregation in the state of Indiana.

Community Partner

The congregation must collaborate with another community partner. Community partners can include another congregation, non-profit organization, for-profit organization, school, foundation, community development corporation council's task force and more.

One NEW Community Challenge/ Opportunity:

This grant is intended to address ONE community challenge/opportunity. We know that there are a variety of community issues to address but this grant is designed to have greater impact by focusing on one issue. Community issues can include the environment, housing, homelessness, teen pregnancy, employment, and a host of other issues.

Contribution

Your congregation/community partner is expected to contribute financially to your program. This contribution ensures shared responsibility and investment in the success of your program. The required contribution will be 5% of your grant request.

Eligibility

If you currently have a Special Grant Initiative (SGI) from the Center for Congregations, you are **ineligible** for the CWC grant. If you currently have a Resource Grant or Equity Grant from the Center for Congregations, you are eligible.

Grant Cycle

The grant cycle is a proposed three years. Although our goal is that each project continues after the grant cycle, we will track program progress and grant fund expenditures across the 3-year grant cycle.

**Subject to approval.*



Grant Criteria

Program Team

Congregations must develop a team of three to five people to oversee the program. The program team should represent a balance of congregational and community partner leaders. The congregation must provide the 1) program director and 2) someone with financial responsibilities such as the Church Accountant, Business Administrator, Financial Manager, Board Financial Chair, etc.

Participation

Program teams will be **required** to participate in quarterly check-ins and periodic development sessions. Participation in a 1) Grant Information Session and 2) Meeting with a Community Engagement Advisor (including both congregation and community partner) must be completed before receiving grant application.

Please note: If the lead pastor or executive director is not part of the team, her/his support must be demonstrated by being signatories on the grant application.

Nonrenewable

Once a congregation has received this grant, they cannot receive it again.



Grant Application Questions and Tips

CWC has provided you with the application questions and a list of tips. Please download this document for your reference and share it with your program team. If you have additional questions at any time, please reach out to your Community Engagement Advisor (CEA).

The grant application is divided into six sections.

SECTION ONE

Congregation & CDC Information

Grants are awarded to Christian or Jewish congregations, or a Community Development Corporation (CDC) birthed by that congregation in the state of Indiana. This section is intended to capture information about your congregation or CDC. If you are a CDC, you will provide information about the congregation the CDC originated from.

The Congregation's EIN and verification of your congregation's non-profit status are required.

In this section, we will need:

- 1) Congregation Name
- 2) Website URL
- 3) Social Media Addresses
- 4) Address
- 5) Phone Number
- 6) Email Address

To verify the congregation's non-profit status, provide ONE of the following:

1. A copy of the IRS/Department of Treasury letter designating the congregation's 501 (c) 3 status.
2. A copy of your denomination's IRS ruling letter (likely several decades old) and a copy of your denomination's directory, listing your congregation as an active congregation (no more than 3 years old).
3. Completed Confirmation of Nonprofit Status form.
(If you cannot provide #1 or #2, talk to your Community Engagement Advisor (CEA) to receive this form.)

Additional Information:

Please provide information on the number of congregants, average worship attendance, denomination and race/ethnicity. If you are a Community Development Corporation, we will collect 1) the number of staff and 2) the number of clients served monthly (average).



Grant Application Questions and Tips

SECTION TWO

Community Partner Information

The congregation must collaborate with a community partner. Community partners can include another congregation, non-profit organization, for-profit organization school, foundation, community development corporation council's task force and more. This section is intended to capture information about the community partner. Only one organization can be selected as the community partner but individuals from a variety of organizations can serve on the program team.

If you have questions about who can be a community partner, please contact us.

Community partners must be registered as a business or non-profit in the state of Indiana. The community partner's EIN and verification of non-profit status (if applicable) is required. We will collect the community partner's nonprofit status documentation, if applicable.

If your community partner is a nonprofit, provide ONE of the following to verify the community partner's non-profit status:

1. A copy of the IRS/Department of Treasury letter designating the community partner's 501 (c) 3 status.
2. If your partner is a congregation, a copy of their denomination's IRS ruling letter (likely several decades old) and a copy of their denomination's directory, listing your congregation as an active congregation (no more than 3 years old).
3. If your partner is a congregation and they cannot provide #1 or #2, talk to your Community Engagement Advisor (CEA) to receive a Confirmation of Nonprofit Status form.

In this section, we will collect:

- 1) Community Partner's Name
- 2) Website URL
- 3) Social Media Addresses
- 4) Address
- 5) Phone Number
- 6) Email Address



Grant Application Questions and Tips

SECTION THREE

Program Team Information

Congregations must develop a team of three to five people to oversee the program. The program team should represent a balance of congregational and community partner leaders. The congregation must provide the 1) program director and 2) someone with financial responsibilities such as the Church Accountant, Business Administrator, Financial Manager, Board Financial Chair, etc. .

Program teams must be available to participate in quarterly check-ins and periodic development sessions. Place an asterisk (*) by the program leader.

Note: If the lead pastor or executive director are not part of the team, her/his support must be demonstrated by being a signatory on the application.

PROGRAM TEAM CHART EXAMPLE

	Name	Organization	Title/Role	Phone	Email
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					



Grant Application Questions and Tips

SECTION FOUR Program Description

In this section, share your program's focus. This section can take a considerable amount of time preparing as you think through the goals of your program. This section includes the following questions:

What ONE social opportunity will you solve or address?

This grant is intended to address ONE community challenge/opportunity. We know that there are a variety of community issues to address but this grant is designed to make greater impact by focusing on one issue. Community issues could include the environment, social justice, housing, homelessness, teen pregnancy, literacy, employment, and a host of other issues.

Why are you choosing to solve or address this issue? (300 words or less).

Answer the following questions:

- a. When did your church start addressing this issue and why?
- b. How is this issue affecting your community? (include any statistics from Census Bureau and other reputable sources, share personal stories, etc.).
- c. Why did you select this community partner? How long have you been in partnership with this community partner?

How will you solve or address it?

In this section, list the various ways your program will address your social challenge/opportunity. Each method/event/activity should provide the following descriptors:

1. The frequency and duration of the activities.
2. The target population and number of participants.
3. The rationale for why these activities will effectively address the issue.
4. The outcomes you expect that indicate success.

Any activity you offer your constituents should be represented on a Cost Breakdown Worksheet (see Program Budget).

For example,

1. We will provide 10 weeks of career building each year for fifty students, grades 10-12. Throughout the 2 hours session each week, students will discover personal skills and talents, explore necessary skills for various careers, review interview skills and develop soft skills to thrive in professional environments. Exposing students to these skills will help them select career paths that are fulfilling and gain skills to maintain employment.



Grant Application Questions and Tips

SECTION FOUR

Program Description (cont.)

2. We will hold parent sessions quarterly each year (Saturdays for 1 hour) because we realize parents/guardians need guidance on how to counsel their students in their career development. Parents/guardians are the most influential partners.

How will your congregation or CDC participants be involved in the implementation of this program? (300 words or less)

It is important that your congregants participate in the efforts to solve this problem. The grant's goal is that the congregation be a part not just financially but also by engaging in the work of the program. How will your congregation be involved?



Grant Application Questions and Tips

SECTION FIVE Program Budget

This section can take a considerable amount of time preparing as you “plan the event before the event”. Items listed in the budget will align with the goals shared in Section 4 – Program Description. This section includes the following questions:

What is the total cost of your program?

The total cost of your program will be determined by the total cost of the various activities and events that you create to meet your program goals. Again, please ensure that the activities and events listed have been mentioned in Section 4 – Program Description.

To calculate your program total, follow the instructions on the Cost Breakdown Worksheet Guide sheet (see page 15).

Once you have completed the Cost Breakdown Worksheets, put the totals from each sheet in the Program Total Calculator (located on the online grant application) to get the total for your program.

Fundable items for this grant include collaborators, meeting costs, stipends, direct support for congregational capacity building, direct support of those who experience the challenge, microgrants, training, pilgrimages, curricula, technology, evaluation, and other items associated with the program, proposed derived from collaboration.

Grant funds will not cover salaries for congregation or community partner staff.

Most of the grant funds must be spent on program-related activities. Grant funds can be used for up to 30% of capital and/or overhead expenses. Expenses associated with the general operating costs of the congregation/community partner such as utilities, food for food pantries, and renovations to building are considered capital expenses. Depending on the program’s purpose, there may be a limit also on direct support expenses (see page 13 for more examples).

As you are developing your budget, please reach out to your CEA if you have any questions about eligible expenses.

How much are you requesting?

Congregations can request \$100,000 - \$250,000. If selected, grant funds will be distributed in two installments. The first half at the beginning of the grant cycle and the second half at the halfway point (around 18 months) in the grant cycle.



Grant Application Questions and Tips

SECTION FIVE (CONT.)

Where is your financial contribution coming from?

Congregations/community partners will be responsible for contributing to their program. The contribution is 5% of the grant request. Your total program budget must reflect both the grant funds requested plus your contribution.

For example, if you request \$100,000 from CWC, your contribution would be 5% of the \$100,000 request, which is \$5,000. Your total program budget must be \$105,000 because your total program budget must reflect both the grant funds requested plus your contribution.

Share where your portion of the funds will come from i.e. your budget, previously raised funds, a special fundraising activity, savings, other grants, contributions from other community entities, etc.

Reach out to your Community Engagement Advisor (CEA) if you have any questions.

What is your congregation's current and past year's budget?

Please upload the congregation's current and past year's budget. Budget will include both revenue and expense information.

SECTION SIX Confidentiality & Disclosure

Select Agree or Do Not Agree to allow CWC to share information about your program and/or stories of learning about the use of these Grant-funded resources in the Congregation and Community.



Cost Breakdown Worksheet Guide

The Cost Breakdown Worksheet is used to calculate the costs of the various events and activities that you organize to address your program goals. The events and activities planned should align with the activities/events you listed in Section 4- Program Description.

Each Cost Breakdown Worksheet will correspond to one activity/event in your program. Therefore, if you have 5 activities/events, you will submit 5 Cost Breakdown Worksheets. We will not accept budgets that do not use the Cost Breakdown Worksheet as provided.

1 ACTIVITY INFORMATION					
Event Name		Weekly Character and Leadership Development Sessions			
When		10 Sessions in the Spring, 10 Sessions in the Fall (20 sessions in total)			
For whom		We Care Indy program students			
Where		TWC Event Center, 546 Red Cross Way, Ft. Wayne, IN. 46543			
Expected Attendance		30 students per Cohort (60 total)			
	2 Item Description	3 Resource (Business name, address, website, contact person, phone, & email)	4 Quantity	5 Anticipated per unit cost	6 Total
1	Facilitator Contract	Oaks of Righteousness Consulting, LLC, www.rightconsulting.com	20	\$500	\$10,000
2	DisC Assessment	Oaks of Righteous Consulting, LLC, www.rightconsulting.com	60	\$50	\$3,000
3	Event space	TWC Event Center, www.twcevent.com	20	\$400	\$8,000
4	Meals (600 meals for Spring & Summer Sessions)	Various Vendors (Walmart, Panera, etc.)	600	\$10	\$6,000
	Total Event				\$27,000 7

The Cost Breakdown Worksheet includes the following components:

- 1 **Event Information** – What is the name of the activity? When will it happen? Who is it for? Where will it take place? How many people will attend?
- 2 **Item Description** – What will you need? A Book? An Event location? Food?
- 3 **Resource** – What event location will you use? Where will you purchase the food? Please include the Business name, physical address, website, contact person name, phone and email address. We often use this information to share with other congregations and community partners.
- 4 **Quantity** – How many of this resource will you need?
- 5 **Anticipated Cost per unit cost** – What is the anticipated cost of this resource?
- 6 **Total Cost** – The quantity of the resource X the anticipated cost of the resource.
- 7 **Total Event Cost** – The total of each line item will give you the total cost for this event/activity.

*Once you have completed the Cost Breakdown Worksheet for each of your activities, you will add each event (event name) and the total cost for the event to the Total Program Calculator on the online grant application. Upload all completed Cost Breakdown Worksheets to the online grant application for review by your CEA.



Total Program Expense Breakdown

Your total program will be funded by a combination of grant funds and partnership contributions.

Grant Funds

Grant Requests can range from \$100,000 - \$250,000. Grant Funds can cover combination of capital expenses & program expenses. **To avoid any sense of impropriety, grant funds cannot be used to compensate program team members or rental space for congregation/community partners.**

(If selected, grant funds will be distributed in two installments. The first half at the beginning of the grant cycle and the second half at the halfway point (around 18 months) in the grant cycle.)

Programming Expenses:

Cover services that directly affect the target audience.

May cover the following:

- Facilitators for workshops
- Training (provide credentials)
- Kickoff/wrap events
- Curriculum and teaching materials
- Books and Conferences
- Consultants to share knowledge on how to execute areas of training

Capital Expenses:

Covers ongoing services that do not affect the target audience directly. Up to 30% of grant funds can be used for capital expenses.

May cover the following:

- Computers & software for administrative tasks
- Marketing/advertising
- Renovation of venues, building maintenance
- Subscriptions for administrative tasks
- Sporting equipment, furniture, storage, instruments, insurance

Partnership Contribution

The amount that the congregation & community partner contribute to fund the program.

This amount is determined by calculating 5% of the grant request. The partnership contributions can come from anywhere, other grants, fundraisers, etc.

May cover the following:

- Salaries (Grant funds will not cover salaries)
- Capital and other programming expenses not covered by the grant.

*This is not an exhaustive list.
Please contact your CEA to talk through what grant funds will cover.*





CONGREGATIONS
WITH COMMUNITY

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE CONCLUSION

Please reach out to us through our website or your CEA if you have additional questions while reviewing the Grant Application Guide.