



**Financial Relief Grant Guidelines  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana**

**Purpose**

The Christian Church in Indiana, in partnership with Lilly Endowment Inc., is intentionally focused on strengthening clergy in Indiana. It is our desire to use designated funds to resource and support the pastoral leaders of our congregations as they develop congregations as mission centers which affirm the local and global character of the church. The purpose of the Financial Relief Grant is to form a partnership between clergy and the regional church through direct financial assistance of up to \$10,000 to help clergy alleviate financial burdens. Applicants must be ordained or commissioned Disciples ministers whose standing is held by the Indiana Region with priority given to those who are serving in congregational settings.

Our goal is to empower clergy to flourish by continuing to offer bold, confident leadership in the area of finance and stewardship, while being involved in mission and ministry to their community and the world. Financial literacy requirements, peer groups, and personal financial consultation will assist the clergy person in building the capacity to sustain and build on their own financial progress and provide stewardship leadership for the congregation.

Assistance of up to \$10,000 (with an additional \$2,000 offset for taxes) will be distributed after the grantee has met all criteria outlined in the guidelines and the required matching funds have been raised by the Indiana Region. Funding may be used for one or more of the following:

- Debt reduction
- Retirement planning
- Healthcare costs

Note: Any necessary travel, lodging, and program costs for the Financial Literacy Academy and subsequent financial coaching will be included as part of grant funding. The pastor's spouse is required to attend the personal financial literacy portion of the academy occurring on the first day each spring. Two lay leaders (as designated by the congregation) are required to attend the congregational financial literacy portions of the academy occurring on day two in both May and October.

**Limitations on Funding**

The primary purpose of the Financial Relief Grant is to provide assistance to clergy with standing who are facing financial difficulties that may prevent them from offering bold, confident leadership to their congregations. The following standards apply:

1. Support will be limited to one occurrence.
2. Support is limited to clergy with standing within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana Region.
3. **Application deadline is February 25, 2021. Send completed application and family budget worksheet to Sarah Riester, [sarah@indianadisciples.org](mailto:sarah@indianadisciples.org) or mail to 1100 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> St, Suite 150, Indianapolis, IN 46208.**

**RECIPIENT CONGREGATIONS OR THEIR CLERGY MAY NOT APPLY FOR ANY OTHER GRANT UNDER THE CLERGY ECONOMIC INITIATIVE SUPPORTED BY LILLY ENDOWMENT INC.**

## **Criteria for Financial Relief Support**

Support is contingent upon:

1. Submission of completed application and family budget worksheet and selection by grant committee. (Applicants' identifying information is redacted before committee review.)
2. Grantee attending four sessions (over two years) of the region sponsored Financial Literacy Academy.
3. Spouse and two congregational leaders attending financial literacy sessions as outlined in the grant guidelines.
4. Grantee meeting twice annually (for two years) with a peer learning group.
5. Clergy receiving at least one consultation with a financial advisor for guidance and accountability.
6. Matching funds being raised by the Indiana Region to support the financial relief.
7. Clergy person will submit final report of how the funds were used and an updated budget worksheet.

## **Financial Literacy Academy Sessions**

Grantee is required to attend four two-day sessions of the academy over two years (spring and fall each year).

### **Clergy**

May 7-8, 2021  
October 8-9, 2021  
May 2022  
October 2022

### **Clergy Spouse**

May 7, 2021  
  
Friday Session

### **Lay Leaders**

May 8, 2021  
October 9, 2021  
Saturday Session  
Saturday Session

All grant related requirements will be virtual while it is recommended by public health officials.

## **Annual Course Outline**

### **Clergy Personal Financial Literacy (Spring day 1)**

Living debt free, saving for retirement, understanding the Pension Fund, budgeting, insurance and investment counsel, understanding clergy taxes, reporting and tax benefits. This is to be attended by the pastor and spouse (where applicable).

### **Congregational Best Practices (Spring day 2)**

Clergy compensation and benefits, creating and adhering to a balanced budget, handling money, accountability and transparency, financial examinations. This is designed for the board chair and treasurer (or two church appointed designees) and the pastor receiving the grant.

### **Clergy Preaching and Teaching Stewardship (Fall day 1)**

Creating compelling sermons on tithing and giving, stewardship as a holistic approach to managing God's resources, pastoral ethics and integrity in stewardship, outreach and missional giving, and leaving a legacy for future generations. This is designed for clergy only and required of pastors receiving a grant.

### **Congregational Fundraising (Fall day 2)**

Finding alternate sources of congregational income, creating a culture of generosity, effective use of building resources as a stream of income, creating green by going green, programs that pay, and cultivating and managing estate gifts. This is designed for the board chair and treasurer (or two church appointed designees) and the pastor receiving the grant.

NOTE: Not all topics will be covered in each session. Consequently, it is imperative that the participants attend each required session over a two-year period.

Questions regarding the application process may be directed to Sarah Riester, FLOURISH! Program Administrator, at [sarah@indianadisciples.org](mailto:sarah@indianadisciples.org) or 317-926-6051.