

Diocese of Allentown

Local Poverty Relief Fund

Guidelines and Application Process

Description of Use and Distribution of Funds: A collection for the Local Poverty Relief Fund will be held throughout the Diocese of Allentown on November 17-18, 2018. The proceeds from this collection will be used to fund projects and services that alleviate or address poverty as approved by the Bishop of the Diocese.

Eligibility: Priority consideration of eligibility will be given to new projects identified by a local organization that reduce poverty and projects that address the underlying causes of poverty. Organizations within the Diocese of Allentown, including St. Vincent de Paul Societies are encouraged to apply. Requests from individuals will not be considered. Projects must demonstrate appropriate use of funds, oversight and fidelity to Church teachings. Organizations that receive these funds must not participate in or promote activities that contradict the moral and social teachings of the church. The active participation of Catholic pastors, parishes and other institutions are encouraged.

Funding Amounts: The amount of funds collected will determine the number and amount of grants awarded.

Project Guidelines:

1. Project proposals must demonstrate an understanding of the local community's issues and needs. Input should be sought from a number of sources including individuals who are very low income. Proposals must show how the funds will directly relieve poverty in the local community.
2. The proposal should explain how the funds would impact the local community.
3. The organizational structure, leadership and fiscal policies and procedures for the project must be described.
4. The project's goals must be defined. Goals should be written in measurable terms. If selected, these goals will become the basis for evaluation of the project.
5. Projects that describe new initiatives or collaborations that result in institutional/ community change that address the root causes of poverty will receive priority consideration.
6. The maximum amount that an organization/ parish can request is \$10,000.
7. A parish or organization may only submit one grant application.
8. Funding of a project through the Local Poverty Fund in the previous grant year does not guarantee funding for the current grant year.
9. Projects are encouraged to look for additional sources of income to support their project. No organization/ parish can receive Local Poverty Relief funds for more than six consecutive years. An organization/ parish that has received grant funds for five consecutive years may apply for a grant in Fall 2018, but their potential award will be capped at 50% of the February 2018 awarded amount. The organization/ parish will be ineligible to apply in Fall 2019 but can reapply in Fall 2020.
10. The pastor's signature is required for parish organizations that submit an application, and if awarded, the pastor's signature is required on the interim and final grant reports.

11. Projects that provide material or cash assistance are encouraged to follow the enclosed Best Practices Recommendations.
12. A site visit may be requested with a member of the Grant Committee for any questions about the proposal.
13. If awarded, the project will complete a report at 6-month and 1-year intervals. The names of recipients should not be included in these reports.
14. All grant funds must be expended by January 31, 2020.

Application Information:

An application must be completed and returned by: **November 16, 2018** in order to receive a response by March 1, 2019. It should be submitted to:

Rev. Msgr. David L. James, Vicar General
Poverty Relief Allocations Committee
Diocese of Allentown
P.O. Box F
Allentown, PA 18105

Questions concerning this fund should be directed to: Mr. Bob Olney at 610-289-8900/Ext. 2024. An electronic version of the application is available.

Best Practice Recommendations for Poverty Relief Grant Funds

- Whenever possible, encourage the recipients to also seek assistance from Catholic Charities and other local agencies.
- The project should pay bills directly to the landlord, utility or individual who is owed.
- Do not use credit cards for hotel/motel payments (damages will be charged!)
- Collect receipts and records (lease, bills, etc.) noting the recipient's name. Follow the procedures for record-keeping for the organization and parish.
- Treat gift cards like cash. Develop a process of tracking all gift cards. Follow up with the recipient to determine what they spent the gift card on.
- If someone is months behind on a utility bill, a partial payment may suffice to avoid shut-off.
- Consider paying medical insurance premiums as well as some medical bills.
- If the grant is being used to make a debt payment (eg: car, mortgage), determine that one-time assistance will be the difference that stops a foreclosure on the house, or repossession of the car.