

# 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 during the weekend of November 21-22, 2020. Proceeds from this collection will fund projects and services that alleviate or address poverty as approved by the Bishop of the Diocese.

### **Eligibility**

Programs and projects that reduce poverty and/or address underlying causes of poverty within Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Schuylkill counties may apply for Local Poverty Relief Fund grants. To be eligible, applicants must demonstrate a commitment to the moral and social values of the Catholic Church and not participate in or promote activities which contradict Church teachings. Additionally, grant recipients must demonstrate the administrative capacity to effectively manage and use funds. Requests from individuals will not be considered. Projects and organizations, including St. Vincent de Paul Societies, which involve active participation from parishes, schools, and other ministries, are strongly encouraged to apply. Application deadline is Friday, November 20.

### **Funding Amounts**

The amount of funds collected will determine the number and amount of grants awarded. Maximum grant award will generally not exceed \$10,000.

### **Project Guidelines**

- 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 funds will directly relieve poverty in the local community.
- The proposal should explain how the funds would impact the local community.
- Please describe organizational structure, leadership, and fiscal policies/procedures for the project.
- 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.
- Projects that describe new initiatives or collaborations that result in institutional/ community change that address the root causes of poverty will receive priority consideration.
- The maximum amount that an organization/ parish can request is \$10,000.
- A parish or organization may only submit one grant application.
- Funding of a project through the Local Poverty Fund in the previous grant year does not guarantee funding for the current grant year.

- Projects are encouraged to seek additional sources of income for support. 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 2020, but their potential award will be capped at 50% of the February 2020 awarded amount. The organization/ parish will be ineligible to apply in Fall 2021 but can reapply in Fall 2022.
- A pastor's approval is required for parish organizations that submit an application; if awarded, the pastor's approval is required on the interim and final grant reports.
- Projects that provide material or cash assistance for individuals are encouraged to follow the Best Practice Recommendations listed below.
- A site visit may be requested with a member of the Grant Committee for additional information.
- 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.
- All grant funds must be expended by January 31, 2022.

### **Application Information/Deadline**

- **Completed applications must be submitted by: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20.**
- Applications are available at [www.allentowndiocese.org/poverty-relief](http://www.allentowndiocese.org/poverty-relief).
- Applications may be submitted online or mailed to:

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

For additional information, contact Paul Acampora at 610-871-5200 ext. 2210.

### **Best Practice Recommendations for Poverty Relief Grant Funds**

- The project should pay bills directly to the landlord, utility, or individual who is owed.
- Whenever possible, encourage recipients to also seek assistance from Catholic Charities and other local agencies.
- 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 (e.g. car, mortgage), determine that one-time assistance will be the difference that stops a foreclosure on the house, or repossession of the car.