

The Episcopal Foundation of the Diocese of East Carolina

Grants Committee SOP

The purpose of this document is to create a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) so that the Grants Committee, as well as the Foundation Board, will have a clear and concise picture of how grant applications are handled from their creation through the completion of funded projects. This SOP is also being written to facilitate any necessary changes to the process going forward. Whenever these changes occur the SOP should be revised accordingly.

The application currently in use has been regularly updated in order to reflect changes made by the Foundation Board. The Foundation offers a form that can be downloaded from the Foundation website and printed. When completed, this application must be either mailed or hand delivered to Diocesan House. There is also an electronic application that can be completed and emailed to Diocesan House. Either application must be received prior to the deadline.

Who may apply

1. Applications submitted by a parish must have the written, signed, and dated approval of the vestry of that parish.
2. Charitable organizations may submit an application with written, signed, and dated approval of the vestry of the sponsoring parish. This sponsoring parish can be the sole sponsor of the charitable organization or the parish can be one of the sponsoring entities of the charity.
3. Applications from Trinity Center, the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry, and other entities of the Diocese of East Carolina must have the written, signed, and dated approval of their governing boards.
4. No applicant can receive funding more than twice in three years going forward.

Accessing the application on the Foundation website

Under the heading "About the Diocese," click "The Foundation of East Carolina." This page gives a brief history of the Foundation and its purpose. Under the heading "Grants Committee," the reader finds the general instructions for making an application, when the application is due at Diocesan House, and when the funds will be available for the successful applicant. Anyone having additional questions or needing assistance is directed to contact the current Grants Committee Chair. The chair will assist the applicant by phone, text, email, or, if necessary, by arranging to visit or by having another member visit the applicant. Under "Documents," the applicant will find both forms of the application, which contains complete instructions on how to go about filling it out.

Schedule of events leading up to the awarding of funds and recognition of grantees at the Foundation Luncheon

At the May meeting of the Foundation Board, requests for changes to be made to the application process are heard. Approval for standard changes to the application process include relevant dates and changes to membership on the Grants Committee. Should the position of chair change hands, that information should be noted on the webpage so that applicants will have the correct contact information. At this time, the chair should request that the communications staff member begin to publish reminders in "News & Notes" with information for the potential applicants.

Prior to the August meeting of the Foundation Board, the Finance Committee meets and prepares a recommendation for funding to the full board. This recommendation will be a percentage of the rolling average of the previous twelve (12) quarters of the Undesignated Funds that are reserved for grants.

The Foundation Board acts on this by either approving or revising this recommendation. The resulting figure is published and becomes the amount that the Grants Committee will work with in making the funding recommendation to the full board for potential applicants.

At the close of the business day on September 1st or the close of the next business day for Diocesan House following, the deadline for applications is closed. Though this is a hard deadline, some allowance may be made in extreme circumstances that are no fault of the applicant. When an application is received at Diocesan House it should be logged as to date and time received.

Applications can be made using the paper option, which must be either mailed or hand delivered to Diocesan House before the deadline. When paper applications are received they are scanned and filed, and a copy is sent to the Grants Committee Chair. Electronic applications are also filed and copied to Grants Committee so that the Chair and at least one other designated committee member can examine each application in order to determine if it has been properly prepared and submitted. It must include the current parochial report and the latest audit, preferably no more than one year old.

If there are issues with an application and time permits prior to the deadline, the applicant can be notified in order to rectify the issue. The corrected application must then be received at Diocesan House prior to the deadline. Once an application is deemed valid the applicant is to be notified by email or phone that their application is being considered for funding. Those applicants whose applications are rejected are also notified and the reason(s) for this action is explained.

Once the chair and the designee(s) have identified the valid applications the members of the Grants Committee are notified. The chair publishes the complete list of the valid applicants to the members via email in order to coordinate the process. Each member has access to electronic submissions and can then decide which applicants they would like to visit. As a general rule, the visits are made by two members, but it isn't unusual for three or more members to make the visit.

As each member makes his or her decision, the chair publishes that information, and the members team up. Each team sets up their own schedule, and that information is again fed back to the chair and published. In this way, all members are kept abreast of progress as the visits are made. If problems arise or if changes have to be made, other members can step up to fill a vacancy. If necessary, the chair can ask a member to visit a specific applicant in order to take advantage of that member's skills and knowledge. This system has evolved over time and has worked very smoothly and with no major problems.

At 10AM on the day of the November meeting (at 2PM) of the Episcopal Foundation Board, the Grants Committee meets at Diocesan House. This time can be adjusted by the chair due to the number of applications or because of the amounts requested. Each team presents their findings to the committee, and the applications are discussed thoroughly. Once the deliberations are agreed upon, the committee prepares a funding recommendation to present to the full board of the Foundation at the 2PM meeting.

After the meeting of the Foundation Board, all of the applicants are notified by phone about the funding of their application or the lack thereof. This is followed by a detailed letter from the chair confirming the funding decision, what is required of the successful applicants who now become grantees, and when to expect the funds. The letter also explains that the Audits Committee will visit their projects during the fall and winter of the coming year. The chair is expected to submit a report on the activities of the Grants Committee to the president at (or prior to) the February meeting of the board.

Grant Audits Committee

Following the November meeting the Grant Audits Committee Chair must access all successful applicants in order to view the contact information for the grantees who received funding in the previous January. The Audits Committee then makes their visits in order to view the completed projects that are to be recognized at the Foundation Luncheon in February of the coming year. This includes gathering information, taking pictures, etc. and feeding this data back to their chair.

The plaques to be presented at the luncheon have to be ordered by the chair. The plaques follow a standard pattern and differ only in the year displayed. To order them, the Administrator needs only the number needed and the year to be inscribed on the plaque.

Keeping everything sorted out can be confusing. This is the sequence that we follow:

Example

The September 1, 2022 applicants that are funded become...

The 2023 grantees (funds are dispersed during the 2nd week of January) and are...

Recognized with a plaque (dated 2023) presented at the Foundation Luncheon in February of 2024.

The Audits Committee Chair introduces each grantee at the luncheon and presents them with their plaque. The Foundation expects the plaque to be prominently displayed by the grantee.

Additional information regarding the process

Applications for funding in recent years has averaged approximately \$2.50 for each dollar available. Therefore, very careful deliberation is required in order to make the best recommendation for funding to the Foundation Board for their consideration.

The process allows the Grants Committee to get a much clearer and more in-depth picture of each project. Because every committee member has access (via Dropbox) to each application, everyone is

given a general knowledge of the applicants being visited by the other members. Some projects are more critical and need to be funded (within funding guidelines) as soon and as fully as possible in order to prevent damage to property or possible injury to people. Examples include handicap facilities, environmental issues, leaking roofs, or deteriorating structures. Small requests for projects or programs can be funded fully or in part without dispersing a great deal of money. Other projects are long term and are planned to span several years until completion. Examples include restoring and protecting stained glass windows in stages, renovating or repurposing buildings or property, and new construction. Often the committee can help the applicant by recommending partial funding, which is intended to encourage others to become involved and contribute to the project. The Foundation has helped with some relatively large projects by providing funding (without a specific promise to do so) spanning a period of several years.

Every entity that is eligible can apply for funds. The Grants Committee realizes that most of our parishes are small, some are even tiny, and many are making heroic efforts to maintain their services, programs, and outreach, while trying to maintain the property of the Church. By visiting these applicants and being able to go over their audits, parochial reports, and diocesan pledge history in detail, committee members gain a valuable insight into each application. The Grants Committee is tasked with carefully evaluating the merits of each application, and this process has allowed the members to make funding recommendations according to need, merit, and frequency of application, thereby bringing the best possible recommendation for funding to the Foundation Board.

The check on this process is whether or not the Foundation Board approves of the Grants Committee's recommendations. Therefore, the recommendation for funding is not made without personal visits, long and detailed discussions, and very careful deliberation.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug M. Chesson
Grants Committee Chair
The Episcopal Foundation of the Diocese of East Carolina

- * *This document was approved by the Board of Directors and became effective on May 9, 2018. It was revised to reflect the introduction of an optional electronic application process on March 12, 2019. It was again revised on November 14, 2019 to reflect the addition of Dropbox and to detail the changes in the process that this has brought about. A final revision was made for clarification purposes on January 7, 2020.*
- * Any reference to any physical meetings may be changed to virtual depending on the state of the pandemic of 2020 - 2022. The Episcopal Foundation of East Carolina reserves the right to schedule virtual or physical meetings, visits, or gatherings as all parties feel comfortable.