



Faithful Innovation Team Renewal Grant Application

Due May 1, 2026

Submit to: renewal@chicagopresbytery.org

This Presbytery-funded program is available to qualified congregations, as determined by written application, guided by the rationale below. Applications are accepted by May 1 of each year. The program has an anticipated 3-year enrollment, but does require a form of application each year and is subject to Faithful Innovation Team approval each year. Acceptance into the Renewal Grant program requires a significant commitment of time and energy from Pastors and congregations, as participation in an intensive, guided examination of your church life is the foundation of the program. Funding is annually, in December of each year.

Program Rationale:

The best way to redevelop a congregation is to be sure that they have inspired, trained and focused leadership. Presbyterian congregations are designed to work best with a pastor and session working in tandem with each other. A pastor and congregation constantly worrying about money have less focus on God's call to them to live into the future. In order to address this need for assistance with operating funds, the Presbytery of Chicago will provide funding from its 21st Century Fund to support churches who qualify, according to program guidelines.

In addition, the congregation will participate in the New Beginnings curriculum provided by the Presbytery. Pastors and congregational leaders will participate in the study and coaching provided, and the coaching will include making a plan for the end of this funding.

Qualifications for a Congregation:

Please review and confirm each line item below:

- The congregation has less than \$300,000 in unrestricted investments, endowments, memorial funds, etc. Supporting documentation must be attached._____
- The congregation has a total budget of under \$250,000 and has a budget that has balanced income and expenses. Supportiing documentation must be attached._____
- While participating in the Renewal Grant program, the congregation must commit to submitting its per capita payments in full and to contributing to general mission giving and/or special offerings through the PC(USA)._____
- The congregation has a system in place for accurately tracking and reporting worship attendance both in-person and online; as well as participation in post-worship and mid-week activities._____



- The congregation is able to show recent growth in participation and/or membership and can demonstrate active efforts to encourage this growth. _____
- The congregation has some kind of outreach to the community – food pantry, tutoring program, free use of the church’s space by not for profits, etc. _____
- No more than 25% of the church’s income comes from rental to other groups. _____
- No more than 25% of the church’s income comes from investments or savings draws. _____
- The congregation has an annual stewardship campaign and system for tracking giving. _____
- The session has its session records reviewed by the Presbytery regularly. _____
- The congregation has by-laws that reflect its current structure. _____
- The congregation is up to date on any loan payments either to a local bank or to a PC(USA) entity. _____

Qualifications of the Pastor:

Please review and confirm each line item below:

- The pastor will be PC(USA) Minister of Word and Sacrament or Commissioned Pastor or a pastor in a denomination as mentioned in G-2.0505. _____
- The call will be full-time and will meet all of the Presbytery requirements for full-time calls. The funding provided through this program may be used to bring the call to full-time status. _____
- The pastor’s Boundary Training will be up to date. _____
- The pastor will use their Continuing Education time each year and will report on the content of the continuing education to the session. _____
- The pastor is actively engaged in the life of the Presbytery, to include attendance at assembly meetings and service on at least one Presbytery entity. _____

Funding Sources and Parameters:

- The funds for this program will come from the 21st Century Church Fund and other legacy funds in the Presbytery.
- At the end of the three years, the session may not apply for additional funds through the Renewal program for 10 years.



Process:

- Once formal application has been received by the Faithful Innovation Team, an in-person meeting will be scheduled with Presbytery Staff and a member of the Presbytery's Faithful Innovation Team. Pastor, along with Finance, Mission and Personnel chairs, will be expected to attend. Application, financial documents submitted, and New Beginnings work component will be discussed at this time.
- Recommendations from this group will inform the Faithful Innovation Team, which will review all applications and determine suitability for funding at its regularly scheduled meeting in August.
- Once approved, each year's cohort of Renewal congregations will be enrolled in the New Beginnings program, a multi-phase evaluation, leadership development and discernment effort which will engage a minimum of 50% of the congregation over the course of the first year. This is a very labor-intensive process involving several large and small group gatherings, evening and weekend meetings, and full-day retreats as you all work together to plan a bold new future for your congregation.
- Session will report to or meet with the Faithful Innovation Team annually to demonstrate progress within the New Beginnings program and to determine suitability for subsequent years of funding.

Please note: Additional Resources May Be Available

In addition to the Renewal Grant program, there are general grants available through the Mission Committee. There are also additional resources available through the Commission on Ministry which may apply to some pastors and/or congregations. Please refer to the Presbytery's website or reach out to your COM liaison for information.



APPLICATION

for Pastor, Session and Congregation

**Please answer the following IN DETAIL and
attach additional information where necessary:**

1. Thank you for taking this first step! What is your rationale for applying for a Renewal Grant?
2. Please re-confirm that your church and Pastor meet the Qualifications as noted above:
3. Please give some insight into any Qualification(s) your church or Pastor might not meet at this time:
4. Please attach documentation to confirm unrestricted investments, endowments, memorial funds, etc. as noted in Qualifications for a Congregation. Are there any line items for which you'd like to provide additional commentary?
5. Please attach a copy of your annual budget. Are there any line items for which you'd like to provide additional commentary?
6. Do Pastor, Session and Congregation understand and agree to the 3-year commitment to the work this program requires, once approved?



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Submitted by: _____

Congregation: _____

Your Role: _____

Email address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Submission Date: _____

Please submit this completed form, supporting financial documentation and any questions to:
renewal@chicagopresbytery.org.