



Minnesota Conference

United Church of Christ

Minnesota Conference UCC Pandemic Relief/Recovery Immediate Assistance Grants

The Minnesota Conference UCC is making dollars available to provide immediate assistance to member churches and actively serving authorized ministers. Grants will be awarded in three separate categories on a first come-first served basis and based on priorities named below. Grants will be awarded until funds designated for this purpose are exhausted. Application forms for each grant category are available in the following pages. All applications should be submitted to Conference Minister Shari Prestemon by email: sharip@uccmn.org.

1) Counseling assistance for clergy

These grants are designed to address the immediate mental health and spiritual needs of *actively serving* authorized ministers during this extraordinary and stressful crisis, regardless of the setting in which they serve. Grants will cover up to three (3) spiritual direction or tele-therapy sessions per person (one hour each) with professional practitioners at [LeaderWise](#) within six months of the grant award. (Spiritual direction or tele-therapy from other providers cannot be supported at this time.) Priority will be given to authorized ministers who are not currently receiving spiritual direction or counseling services. Authorized ministers serving congregations that are also applying for a grant in either of the other two grant categories are still eligible for a counseling assistance grant.

2) Website Development for churches (including online giving capacity)*

In the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, those churches without a website or online giving capacity have faced additional obstacles. This grant program will have longer term benefit for awarded congregations. Grantees will work with the "UCC Everywhere" program of the UCC's national setting to develop or re-design their congregational website. All websites will include online giving capacity. The Conference will cover a three-year contract with "UCC Everywhere" for up to five (5) congregations. Website development will generally take 2-3 months and requires the full cooperation of congregational leaders to provide written content specific to the church as well as other input. Priority will be given to congregations who do not currently have any website, but congregations with only very basic websites currently will also be considered.

3) Emergency Grants for Congregations*

These grants will range from \$500-2,000 each. These requests may assist congregations in one of three ways:

- a) help cover immediate-term regular operating costs in churches that lack the current means to pay their essential bills (e.g. church staff salaries/wages, utilities);
- b) support a congregation's ministry to the wider community, either an existing ministry experiencing higher demand or a new ministry to address a new community need resulting from the pandemic; or
- c) purchase of basic technology needed to support virtual worship or meetings

*Churches may apply for a website development grant and an emergency grant but may not be awarded both grants. The Conference seeks to help as many congregations as possible with a limited amount of funding.

APPLICATION
Website Development Grants*

Churches applying for this grant must be able to satisfy several requirements in order for this assistance to be most beneficial to you. Please review this list carefully before filling out an application. Churches must have:

- *A stable & reliable internet connection where the work on the website will be done (could be church office, home office, or other work setting)*
- *A commitment to setting up an account on UCC Resources to activate their participation in the program*
- *A commitment to joining the program for three years (UCC Everywhere contract costs will be covered by this grant, if awarded, for three years)*
- *A commitment to cooperating with website designers and meeting deadlines for providing website content specific to your church community. A typical website schedule is included on this page at UCCR - <https://www.uccresources.com/pages/ucc-everywhere> (not all may apply). Participants will be required to complete this content intake form in a timely and accurate way: <https://forms.gle/kai39P2D31nKTm9c9>*
- *A dedicated point person (paid or unpaid, staff or volunteer) who will take on the responsibility of keeping the website current over the three year period. The point person should possess:*
 - *An affinity for learning about and working independently on the back-end of a content management system (CMS)*
 - *Time and willingness to work through the training videos for working on the back-end of the CMS*
- *A commitment to establishing an online giving program through a third-party platform of your choice and the ability to connect your banking accounts to the giving portal for instant and easy transfer of funds.*
- *An interest in establishing a wider social media presence for engaging with congregants and promoting the website.*

If your congregation can fulfill the above requirements, please fill out the application below.

1. Name of person filling out application _____
2. Email address of person filling out application _____
3. Phone number of person completing application _____
4. Congregational role of person filling out application
 - Pastor
 - Moderator/Council President
 - Treasurer
 - Other staff _____
 - Other _____

5. Name and location of congregation _____
6. Does your congregation currently have a website?
 - Yes. Please include address of current website: _____
 - No.

7. Does your congregation have any other social media presence? (e.g. Facebook Page, Twitter feed, Instagram, other) If yes, please list.

Yes. _____

No.

8. Please briefly describe how this grant and a resulting church website would benefit your congregation's ministry. What excites you about this possibility? (250 words or less)

9. We understand that applying for this grant indicates our ability and willingness to meet all the requirements listed at the beginning of this application. We have the capacity necessary to work with the website developers at “UCC Everywhere” as they design the site and the capacity to maintain a website on our own thereafter.

- Yes**
- No**

Electronic Signature of Pastor

Date

Electronic Signature of Moderator/President**

Date

*Churches may apply for a website development grant and an emergency grant but may not be awarded both grants. The Conference seeks to help as many congregations as possible with a limited amount of funding.

**The congregation’s Moderator or Council President must be aware and supportive of this grant request.

Please email your grant application to Conference Minister Shari Prestemon, sharip@uccmn.org.