

To: Executive Council

From: Executive Council's Joint Standing Committee on Finance

In response to FIN-127, January 2021

April 16, 2021

RECOMMENDATION FOR DIOCESAN RELIEF GRANT PROCESS:

In June of 2020, when faced with the potential economic dislocation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and in response to the unfolding awareness of the effects of white supremacy and racism, the Executive Council developed and approved *A Plan for Emergency Management of the Current General Convention Budget (2019-2021)*.

While the *Plan* focuses specifically on how to make cost reductions in the General Convention Budget should income decrease, the Executive Council believes that the principles set forth in the *Plan* provide a good framework for considering how to provide financial relief to dioceses as directed by Council's January 2021 resolution FIN-127.

The *Plan* includes a statement of the underlying theology and commitment:

We (Executive Council) hope and pray that the strategies employed will reflect our collective commitment to the way of love as embodied by Jesus of Nazareth. We pledge to respect the dignity of every person and strive for justice and peace among all people as we are called to do by the promises we renew in the Baptismal Covenant.... Remembering that we are the people of God, we are open to and heartened by the presence of the Holy Spirit who is calling us out of the wilderness to become the church we are called to be during this time.

The *Plan* continues...

The Executive Council renews its commitment to use its human and financial resources to support the most vulnerable, the marginalized, and the under-served and under resourced within our church and beyond. At no time in our recent history have the results of racist injustice been so apparent, and we pledge to keep this truth in our sight as we make decisions about the budget.

With the *Plan for Emergency Management* as a guide, the Executive Council has allocated funds for relief grants of up to \$40,000 to any diocese that discerns a need and makes a request over the next 18 months between May 1, 2021 and November 30, 2022.

1. The Council invites diocesan leadership to discern what needs might be met by receiving a relief grant. For example, (*words in italics are from the Plan for Budget Management*) how might our diocese use this relief grant:

- *To be the church we are called to be in this time:*
 - cover diocesan budget shortfall
 - provide support for diocesan congregations or institutions
 - provide support for diocesan programs or governance
- *To strive for justice and peace, to respect dignity, and to fight racial injustice:*
 - encourage outreach and justice work
 - explore and combat systems of oppression
 - promote beloved community among those who are estranged
- *To support the most vulnerable, the marginalized, and the under-served and under-resourced within our church and beyond:*
 - request the funds and share them with ministries, congregations, and dioceses in need or that support the most vulnerable among us
 - request the funds and share them with congregations, organizations, or institutions that are working on combating racism and white supremacy
 - not request a grant - EC will allocate undistributed funds for diocesan relief after all requests are met, as soon as feasible, after November 30, 2022.

2. How to request a Relief Grant

- a. The diocesan Ecclesiastical Authority should fill out the grant relief request form [\[link here\]](#) between May 1, 2021 and November 30, 2022. It will be sent to the Treasurer & chair of FIN,
- a. The request form asks the ecclesiastical authority to state the amount of Relief Grant requested, up to \$40,000. And to
- b. Provide the name of the diocesan contact person - phone and email

3. How the funds are sent -

- a. Funds will be wired to the diocesan account upon receipt of the form to authorize transfer that is included in the grant request form.
- b. Optional, included on the request form: Is there any non-financial relief that would be helpful to your diocese? Anything you want the Executive Council to know?

4. All requests will be responded to by the Office of Development or the Treasurer's Office, with something like... The Executive Council hopes that you will share your good news with the larger church as to how this grant has assisted in your mission and ministries and in responding to needs within the diocese or beyond. While reporting is not required, the hope is that the sharing of stories in the spirit of abundance will be a witness to the Church. A few sentences or paragraphs will

suffice. Please send stories along to the Office of Development any time before December 31, 2022. Development could send occasional reminders, too.