



UNITED THANK OFFERING

Dear members of Executive Council,

The members of The United Thank Offering Board send their greetings to you. We are submitting our new 2022 grant focus and criteria for approval. The Board has elected to make an addition to the pre-approved 2021 grant focus (which we delayed a year to address COVID-19) to provide clarity on the types of projects eligible for funding within this focus area. The focus now reads: ***Care of Creation: Turning love into action by caring for God's creation to protect the most vulnerable who will bear the largest burden of pollution and climate change through justice, advocacy, environmental reparations or the development of formational materials.*** These additions were decided after the Grants Committee met with The Rev. Melanie Mullen and Jerusalem Greer.

In addition to adjusting the focus, we are also suggesting a grant maximum of \$55,000. This decision was made based on the 2014-2020 average amount funded and in light of what we learned from the COVID-19 grants which also had maximum amounts named. We believe that offering people a maximum amount will help applicants create a more manageable budget for a project that needs to be completed within a year and will allow UTO to continue to fund as many projects as possible. Because some projects are inherently expensive, applicants will be permitted to submit a request for funds up to \$100,000. They will be asked to submit a clearly stated justification and show significant in-kind support.

The last major change that was made to the criteria is regarding companion relationships. The UTO Board has chosen to discontinue receiving companion applications. The companion application process was started in 2008 and sadly we do not have any record as to why that process was started. During the COVID-19 grants, we encouraged Americans interested in doing work in a diocese outside of the United States to support their partner in applying directly. Only one diocese did this, and that grant was awarded in the fall cycle. As we reflected on the companion process, and because Executive Council no longer approves companion relationships, we believe that continuing to ask overseas dioceses or the Anglican Communion to find someone to endorse and oversee their application to be a form of paternalism. With that said, we know that the need is great and having two chances at a grant is really needed. Therefore, dioceses of The Episcopal Church who receive funding from the General Convention budget as well as the Provinces of The Anglican Communion will be permitted to submit two applications. If a relationship is involved in the project, then we welcome a letter of support from the other bishop participating in the project. It is our hope that this change will empower those dioceses with a strategic plan to submit the best two projects within the focus that also help support the overall work of the diocese.

Finally, after a year without the Young Adult and Seminarian (YAS!) Grant program, we have also decided to discontinue this process due to lack of applications in previous years and the availability of grants for this group from other entities.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the work of the United Thank Offering, especially this year as we tried to adapt and change alongside the pandemic to provide as much help as possible.

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