

Agency Support Grant Policy

Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster

Proposed Revision – March 2026

Vision & Purpose

The Agency Support Grant Program seeks to connect the congregation's resources with the **most pressing needs in our local community** and to support organizations effectively addressing those needs. Through this approach, our congregation ensures its resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact.

Guiding Principles

1. **Community-Rooted Priorities:** The process begins with identifying priority needs within the Lancaster area, ensuring that support is directed where it can have the greatest impact.
2. **Congregational Engagement:** Congregation members are invited to provide input through digital and print questionnaires and in-person conversations with Peace and Justice Committee representatives, fostering broad awareness of local challenges.
3. **Discernment of Impact:** Following input and research, the Committee selects organizations whose work most effectively addresses the identified needs.

Annual Process Overview

1. **Needs Conversation (March–April):**
 - Congregation input will be collected through **questionnaires** (digital and print) and in-person connections with Committee representatives.
 - The goal is to focus on the **community's most pressing needs** and identify where congregational support can have the greatest impact.
2. **Research & Discernment (April–May):**

- Following collection of input, the Committee will research potential partner organizations whose work aligns with identified needs.
- Committee members may consult external data, engage with organizational representatives, and seek input from church leadership.
- Through careful discussion and discernment, the Committee will identify one or more organizations for support in the current fiscal year.

3. **Notification & Reporting (June–July):**

- The Committee will notify selected organizations and request any necessary information for reporting.
- Reports to the congregation will include the names of supported organizations, a summary of the needs identified, and how each organization’s work addresses those needs.

4. **Congregational Awareness:**

- As schedules allow, representatives from supported organizations may be invited to speak at services or Christian Ed to share their work and community impact.

Criteria for Recommendation

Organizations recommended for support will generally demonstrate:

- A **clear alignment with community needs** identified through the congregation input process.
- Evident **impact in meeting those needs** effectively and inclusively.
- **Transparency and accountability** in focus and use of funds.
- Connections with church members (e.g., volunteers, partnerships) are valued but not required; lack of a direct church contact should not preclude recommendation if the organization is strategically important to community needs.

Funding Parameters

- Annual funding levels for the Agency Support Grant will continue to be determined through the church’s budgeting process.

- The Peace and Justice Committee will work within the budgeted amount to propose how funds are distributed, prioritizing highest impact recommendations.

Review & Revision

This policy and process will be reviewed periodically by the Peace and Justice Committee to ensure it remains responsive to both congregational discernment and the evolving needs of our broader community.