

THRIVING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Thriving Rural Communities Grant Program Request for Proposals

Summary

The mission of Thriving Rural Communities (TRC) is to foster strong rural churches and communities in North Carolina, partnering with the church's leadership and energy to address challenges these communities face. The TRC grant awards intend to provide resources to strengthen or expand the mission and ministry of the church in the community and the world.

Under this Request for Proposals (RFP), Thriving Rural Communities is inviting its model rural church partners to apply for funding for ministries that address pressing issues in their communities, and that might creatively bless the lives of those "outside the walls" of the church. Special consideration will be given to proposals that address issues such as the following:

**childcare/youth
eldercare
health and spirituality
affordable housing
hunger ministries**

**substance abuse
ending violence
prison ministry
Latino ministries
evangelism**

Grant Amount and Schedule: \$15,000 over 3 Years

Applicants may request up to **\$15,000 overall for a given project or projects over a three year period**. Projects may be of shorter duration and lesser amount. Churches are also required to provide 10% of project funding in years two and three, and to offer "in-kind" contributions of facilities, time, and other resources to their proposals.

Funding is contingent on the availability of annual TRC funding. **These funds are not intended to supplant other funds for building projects or maintenance, or for salary support of existing staff unless a portion of their time will be dedicated solely to this project.**

Eligibility

These grants are limited to the model rural church partners ("Thriving Rural Churches") of the Thriving Rural Communities program.

Application and Grant Dates

Applications will be accepted quarterly, on a rolling basis, with first applications due **June 16th**, and first awards received **July 28th**. Subsequent application dates will be **July 1st** (*granted October 1st*), **October 1st** (*granted January 1st*), **January 1st** (*granted April 1st*) and **April 1st** (*granted July 1st*).

Discernment, Planning, and Application Assistance

Individual TRC churches who seek assistance in assessing their community's needs, defining their assets, discerning a common purpose, or devising a focused proposal may apply through TRC for limited funds to contract with an experienced church leader to provide this service. **(To apply for these funds, please use separate "Planning Grant Application")** Churches that need more funding for this planning assistance than are provided in the limited planning grant may also choose to use some of the larger grant for this capacity-building purpose. The TRC Director can refer congregations to the resources and individuals who can assist with this grant planning and

preparation. The TRC Director and the Chair of the Grant Subcommittee will also be available to congregations to assist in the grant process.

Application and Reporting Requirements

- Each church applying for these funds must convene a working group to prepare its application. The working group shall be designated by the Church Board, and shall include, at minimum, the pastor(s), the TRC lay liaison, and a youth representative. The working group's proposal must be approved by the church's governing board before it is submitted for acceptance by the Thriving Rural Communities Grant Committee.
- It is expected that the grant working group, and not solely the pastor, will be responsible for preparing the grant application and required reports.
- A brief, one page quarterly report will be submitted to the TRC Director by mail or email providing an update on the progress of the grant project on or by January 1st, April 1st, July 1st, and October 1st (**Please see Quarterly Grant Report Form**). This report shall be written and submitted by someone other than the pastor.
- A telephone call or personal visit from the TRC director will be arranged to discuss the grant program at six-month intervals through the grant.
- One final written report is required at the end of the grant that provides a financial report and a narrative summary describing program development, program impact, and lessons learned.
- A ledger signed by the church treasurer of all financial transactions related to the grant is required at the conclusion of the grant, to testify that all funds have been used for the intended granted purpose.

Selection Process

The TRC Director is available to work collaboratively with each church and will attach a letter of support to proposals that meet the broad parameters of the grant guidelines. Funding decisions, however, will be made by the Grants Subcommittee of the TRC Advisory Board (of which the TRC Director is not a voting member). All applications will be reviewed, and selections made, based on the following criteria:

- **clarity of theological purpose,**
- **degree of possible impact upon individuals and the community,**
- **degree of impact on the congregation,**
- **involvement of community partners,**
- **innovation in program design,**
- **utilization of existing resources (people, space, funds),**
- **involvement of lay leadership, and**
- **future sustainability of the program.**

Upon receiving a proposal, the Grant Sub-Committee shall either approve the request as written, approve a grant for an amount different from the one requested, send the proposal back to the Church Board and working group for revision, or deny the request altogether. Any notification of denial will clearly state the reasons for denial, and what steps might be taken to make the proposed program viable for future funding.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

Your proposal **must** include the following components:

1. A **Cover letter**, signed by the Church Board, submitting the proposal for consideration;
2. A **Letter of Support** from the TRC Director;
3. **Cover Sheet** (see sample attached)
4. **Program Grant Narrative** in the following form (Limit 3-4 pages):
 - a. **Problem statement:** the nature and focus of the problem that the proposal is to help resolve, including any data or supporting evidence that this is a problem in your community/area.
 - b. **Who will this program/proposal serve?** Be sure to describe their location, the size of the group, anything else you know about them (age, race, gender).
 - c. **What is your understanding of why God wants you to do this project and what you hope to accomplish?**
 - d. **Objectives of the program** - these must be measurable and time-framed, i.e., *by July 1, 2015 the Omega Program Food Bank will have served 300 clients, averaging 25 people a month.* Most small grants have only 2-3 objectives.
 - e. **Program Plan:** Describe the steps you plan to take to start and then maintain the program. Put these in logical sequence, and include a timeframe. Include a description of the persons who will staff/oversee/volunteer with the effort, and what their responsibilities will be.
 - f. **Experience and Innovation/creativity:** (paragraph) What past experience or evidence that you have makes you think this project will be successful? What is new or creative about your approach to tackling this problem?
 - g. **Facilities available to carry out the program:** where located, number of rooms, etc.
 - h. **Program results:** How will you measure whether your program is successful? What information will you monitor to keep it on track?
 - i. **Sustainability:** (paragraph) How do you intend to keep this program going after its TRC funding ends?
5. **Budget and Budget Justification** (see attached sheet)

Remember that your community partners can also contribute funds, and they can contribute in-kind as well, with furniture, equipment, and volunteer or staff time.

Please ensure that your proposal includes all of the above elements (1-5), and follows the above process.

**Thriving Rural Communities Grant Program
Application Cover Sheet**

Applicant Church: _____ County: _____

District: _____ Conference: _____

Pastor: _____ Phone: _____

Church's Tax ID # _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

TRC Liaison: _____ Phone: _____

Grant Working Group Members:

_____ Pastor

_____ TRC Liaison

_____ Youth Representative

Date: _____ Total Grant Amount Requested: _____

Grant Request Breakdown: \$ _____ in Year 1

\$ _____ in Year 2

\$ _____ in Year 3

**Submit a copy of the application to:
Rev. Brad Thie
Director, Thriving Rural Communities
Duke Divinity School
PO Box 90968
Durham, NC 27708**

**(919) 660-3423
bthie@div.duke.edu**

**Thriving Rural Communities Grant Program
Budget and Justification**

	Year One Budget	Purpose of Proposed Expenditure
Sources of Revenue		
TRC Grant		
Total Revenue	\$	
Program Expenses		
Total Operating Expenses	\$	
In-Kind Contributions		

Signature

Date

	Year Two Budget	Year Three Budget
Sources of Revenue		
TRC Grant		
Congregation 10% match		
Total Revenue	\$	
Program Expenses		
Total Operating Expenses	\$	
In-Kind Contributions		

Purpose(s) of new expenditures:
Year Two:

Year Three: