

THRIVING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Thriving Rural Communities Kickstart Grant Program Request for Proposals

Summary

The mission of Thriving Rural Communities (TRC) is to foster strong rural churches and communities in North Carolina, using the church's leadership and energy to address challenges these communities face. The TRC Kickstart Grant Program intends to provide resources to strengthen or expand the mission and ministry of the church in the community and the world. Particularly our hope is to offer Rural Fellow Graduates an opportunity to receive grants to strengthen the ministries of the Churches they serve and to develop skills that would allow them to better write, implement, and evaluate grants.

Opportunity: The Rural Ministry Fellowship Kickstart Community Outreach Grant Program would seize upon the opportunity provided by the community shared among the Fellows alumni and address the challenges of limited resources and grant experience by making a small-scale grant fund available that would be co-administered by the Rural Ministry Fellowship alumni themselves. Under this Request for Proposals, Thriving Rural Communities is inviting graduates of the Rural Fellows Program and the Churches they serve to apply for funding for initiatives that address pressing issues in their communities. Special consideration will be given to proposals that address issues such as the following:

childcare/youth

eldercare

health and spirituality

housing repair

hunger ministries

substance abuse

ending violence

prison ministry

Latino ministries

evangelism

Grant proposals could include such projects as a major meal for the community, a wheelchair ramp to be built on an elderly person's home, or a special children's Vacation Bible School to take place in a local trailer park community: whatever might enable a rural congregation to encounter its neighbors in life-giving service and witness. Applicants may request up to \$1500 overall for a given project for a one year period. Only one grant may be applied for and received in a year.

Eligibility

These grants are limited to Rural Fellows Graduates and the Churches they serve as part of the Thriving Rural Communities program. Technical assistance in grant planning and preparation is available from the TRC Director.

Application and Grant Dates

Applications will be accepted quarterly, on a rolling basis, with first applications due May 15th, and first awards received July 15th. 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).

Funding is contingent on the availability of 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.**

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 and one staff or Lay person involved in implementing the ministry. The working group's proposal must be approved by the church's governing board before it is submitted.

Selection Process

The TRC Director must review each application. Each year, five Rural Ministry Fellows, under the leadership of the Thriving Rural Communities Director, would serve as that year's "Trustees" of the Kickstart Community Outreach Grant Program. Trustees will evaluate programs based on:

- 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

Upon receiving a proposal, the Trustees 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.

Instructions

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

1. Thriving Rural Communities Kickstart Grant Program Application Cover Sheet.
2. Program Narrative in the following form (Limit 2 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 serve? Be sure to describe their location, the size of the group, anything else you know about them (age, race, gender).
 - c. Theological purpose of your program and your program's goal (the over-arching statement of what you hope to change or improve).
 - 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. Innovation/creativity: (paragraph) 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 impact: How will you measure whether your program is successful? What information will you monitor to keep it on track?
3. A Simple Budget (optional) - Remember that your community partners can also contribute funds, and they can contribute in-kind as well, with furniture, equipment, volunteer or staff time. **Note: If the use of the funds is explained within the Program Narrative, this will suffice as a Simple Budget.**

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

Applicant Church: _____ County: _____

District: _____ Conference: _____

Pastor: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Grant Working Group Members:

_____ Pastor

_____ TRC Liaison

_____ Youth Representative

Date: _____ Amount Requested: _____

**Submit a copy of the application to:
Rev. Brad Thie
Director, Thriving Rural Communities
Duke Divinity School
PO Box 90966
Durham, NC 27708
bthie@div.duke.edu
(919) 660-3477**

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

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

Signature

Date