

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES TO APPLY FOR THE GENERAL FUND GRANT

In His Steps Foundation makes grants to non-profit, tax-exempt charitable ministries, exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Eligibility for the General Fund Grant is limited to Northeast Ohio ministries whose primary purpose is to responsibly communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people they serve. This can be accomplished either as the sole intention of the ministry or together with other services that are delivered to the community through the ministry. Grants are made year to year, and ministries should apply annually. Grant approval in one year does not imply future approval. The Foundation assumes that staff who work for ministries that require staff to raise their own support have already done so, and this Grant request is for projects or program needs other than personnel support.

The project or program for which funds are requested must exhibit:

- A high probability for success
- A qualified staff and responsible Board of Directors
- Financial accountability

Grants are for ministry programming only and will not be awarded to support individuals, salaries, endowment funds, previously incurred deficits from any project or operating budget, special internal projects of individual churches, loans, or capital campaigns. Local chapters of national ministries may submit the parent ministry's audit, board, and 501(c)(3), but **we are primarily interested in the statistics and information from the local ministry.**

The Foundation contributes yearly to this grant program from our General Fund and provides opportunities for stakeholders of our Foundation to also give to the General Fund Grant pool of money. The goal of the General Fund Grant is to reward and encourage responsible evangelism, which assumes discipleship and follow-up. This grant application will be used to evaluate eligibility and make monetary recommendations. Much good work is being done in the name of Jesus Christ without specifically presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We understand this, and we acknowledge the importance of mercy and compassion ministries of all kinds. However, *the purpose of this specific grant program is responsible evangelism.* While all ministries have costs associated with support and overhead, we desire to contribute to ministry programming and direct evangelistic projects, training, materials, and/or programs that are measurable and results oriented.

We also highly encourage ministry involvement with Mission Increase (MI) to qualify for the General Fund Grant (or provide an explanation regarding how your ministry is receiving comparable training elsewhere.)

DOCUMENTS REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMISSION

1. **2026 General Fund Grant Application.**
2. **A one-page (maximum) proposal narrative** giving a more detailed description of the program or project. When possible, the proposal should be on the ministry's letterhead signed by the Executive Director or ministry leader. It should contain all of the following:
 - a. Concise description of the program or project (more detailed than the one-sentence summary provided in the *Application*).
 - b. Total amount requested.
 - c. A summary of the cost to perform the program or project, including a summary of what specific funding needs the General Fund Grant will meet.
 - d. How the project's success will be measured and evaluated.
3. **IRS Form 990, Financial Review, or Audit**
 - We define a "*financial review*" as a CPA-performed examination of an organization's financial records that reports on the plausibility of its financial statements.
 - We define "*audit*" as a CPA-performed examination of an organization's financial records that results in a verified certification of financial statements and assurance that accounting practices have been followed in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
 - a. If 2025 budget was less than \$50,000, please contact IHSF for our short form application.
 - b. If 2025 budget was under \$500,000, please submit IRS Form 990 (full).
 - c. If 2025 budget was \$500,000 - \$750,000, please submit a financial review or audit from either 2023 or 2024 or 2025.
 - d. If 2025 budget was \$750,000+ please submit audit from either 2022, 2023, 2024 or 2025.
4. **Board of Directors:** Submit a list of names of your ministry's *local* governing board and its officers.
5. **Tax-exempt Verification:** Submit a copy of your federal tax-exempt determination letter under section 501(c)(3) from the Internal Revenue Code.
6. **Annual Report:** Submit your most recent edition or ministry statistics for the local work of the ministry.
7. **Statement of Faith:** Submit whatever you use for this document.
8. **Follow-up Report from Last Year's Grant.** If you received this grant last year, please include a summary statement on how last year's funds were used, and an overall review of the project or program that received funding.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- **Email your submission to office@ihsfound.org by 5PM on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, to qualify.**
 - Submissions should be emailed as individual files (Word or PDF) within the same email. If your files are too big to email, you may send us a download link.
- Name the files to correspond with the documents required for submission:
 1. 2026 General Fund Grant Application
 2. Proposal Narrative
 3. 990, Financial Review, or Audit
 4. Board of Directors
 5. Tax-exempt Verification
 6. Annual Report
 7. Statement of Faith
 8. Follow-up Report from Last Year's Grant.
- Applicants whose General Fund Grant application has been approved for an award will be notified via email in September 2026. All grants will be distributed at the *Fall Focus on Giving* event in Fall of 2026.

Please plan on having representatives from your ministry present at this encouraging, uplifting event. We highly recommend you invite a board member and a major donor to accompany staff.

Many organizations feel uncertain how to ask for and receive non-cash gifts. With In His Steps Foundation as your fundraising partner, we'll help you grow planned gifts, estate gifts, stock gifts, and a thriving endowment, giving you diversified income & enduring stability to fulfill your God-given mission.



2026 GENERAL FUND GRANT APPLICATION

For best results while filling out this form, use a PDF Reader (not a tab in your browser)

I. MINISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

Ministry name _____

Physical address _____

Mailing address (if different) _____

Exempt under sec. 501(c)(3) of the IRS code? Yes___ No ___ EIN # _____

What is the purpose or mission statement of your organization?

Board Chairperson _____ Phone _____

Mailing address _____

Email _____

Executive Director _____ Phone _____

Mailing address _____

Email _____

Treasurer _____ Phone _____

Mailing address _____

Email _____

II. BOARD, STAFF & VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

of active board members _____ # of times your board met in 2025 _____

part-time paid staff _____ # full-time paid staff _____ # of total paid staff _____

of total volunteers _____

Ratio of paid staff to volunteers _____ to _____ Average total volunteer hours per week _____

Monetary value of your volunteer contributions for 2025 (multiply \$34.79 by the total number of volunteer hours you receive per week, and then multiply that number by your number of ministry weeks in a year):

\$_____ (\$34.79/hour is the valued amount the government estimates for each hour of volunteer service in 2025)

What is your evangelism training method for staff & volunteers?

II. MINISTRY STATISTICS for 2025:

Total # of individuals served by your ministry last year _____

of individuals presented with the Gospel _____ # of individuals responding to Christ _____

What was your most effective method or program for sharing the Gospel?

III. FINANCIAL INFORMATION (local ministry numbers only – not national)

2025 budgeted income \$ _____ 2025 actual income \$ _____

2025 budgeted expenses \$ _____ 2025 actual expenses \$ _____

Fiscal year end date ____ / ____ / ____

2025 income from: Individuals \$ _____ Churches \$ _____ Companies \$ _____ Foundations \$ _____

In-Kind \$ _____ Programs \$ _____ Government \$ _____ Endowments \$ _____

2025 expenses: Administrative _____% Fundraising _____% Program Services _____%

Is Administrative plus Fundraising less than 20% of total? _____Yes _____No (if no, please explain)

2026 budgeted income \$ _____ **2026** budgeted expenses \$ _____

Do you affiliate with a larger/parent organization? Yes _____No _____ (If yes, please explain)

Do you have an endowment of any kind? Yes _____No _____

Are you interested in learning more about our endowment program? Yes _____No _____

If you have an amount of cash sitting in a low interest earning bank account, are you interested in learning more about how we can invest/grow those funds for you until you need them? Yes _____No _____

Is your development office set up to receive non-cash gifts like stock, retirement accounts, real estate, physical property or administer long-term planned gifts? Yes _____No _____

Do you have any fundraising questions we can assist you with?

Are you participating with Mission Increase? Yes _____No _____

If yes, in what capacity and frequency?

If no, please explain why, and how your ministry is receiving comparable training

IV. GRANT REQUEST

Grant amount requested \$_____

In **one sentence**, please summarize below how the requested grant will be used:

Is this a new program for your ministry or has this ministry program occurred in prior years?
Please explain

Yes ____ No ____ This requested grant will fund a program that clearly and evangelistically shares the Gospel of Jesus Christ (If *no*, this grant request will not be approved).

Yes ____ No ____ This requested grant will fund a program that will - at least partially - take place in Northeast Ohio. (If *no*, this grant request will not be approved). We broadly define "Northeast Ohio" as the space between Lake Erie to the north, Pennsylvania state line to the east, I-70 to the south, and Toledo to the west.

Contact person for this grant proposal _____

Relationship to organization _____

Mailing address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

V. SIGNATURE

I/We hereby apply for a grant in the amount listed above and certify that the information contained herein and in the attached materials is true and correct to the best of our knowledge.

By (authorized officer):

Typed Name

Title / Relationship to Ministry

Typed Signature

Date

