



**YEAR 2024**

**CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT  
NEW START/NEW FAITH COMMUNITY  
GRANT EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY FORM  
AND CONSECUTIVE GRANT APPLICATION**

Please Send Completed Form To:  
Kristine Roberts, Executive Director  
Nebraska United Methodist Foundation  
100 W. Fletcher Avenue, Suite 100  
Lincoln, NE 68521  
Phone: 402-323-8842, Fax: 402-323-8840  
[kroberts@numf.org](mailto:kroberts@numf.org)

**Grant Deadline is March 31, 2024**

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## CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT NEW START/NEW FAITH COMMUNITY GRANT ANNUAL PROCESS

It is the mission of the Nebraska United Methodist Foundation (“Foundation”) to be a catalyst that strengthens our Nebraska ministries and supports and develops innovative ministries meeting the needs of a diverse and rapidly changing society.

Grant applicants should be aware that priority will be given to the following:

- A *New Start* deemed to be of an outreach and beneficial nature to the larger community.
- A *New Start* that is in collaboration with other United Methodist entities.
- A *New Start* that has identified other sources of revenue.
- A *New Start* that is an integral part of a long-range plan for growth and outreach.

Grants will be awarded on an annual basis. Grant applications must be received no later than **APRIL 1<sup>st</sup>** to be considered for a grant to be awarded upon commencement of the program during the following calendar year.

Grants approved by the Foundation’s Stewardship Committee are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors of the Foundation. The Foundation reserves the right to reject in whole or in part any grant application that it deems to be incomplete or not in accordance with the mission and policies set forth by the Foundation. The decision of the Board of Directors of the Foundation regarding all awards shall be final.

**Grants may be renewable up to three consecutive years contingent upon the availability of funding sources and the quality and scope of the project.** It is not guaranteed that grants will be awarded the full amount of the request. Grants will be conditional upon requirements being met and documented to the Foundation’s satisfaction. All grants awarded shall require no less than annual reporting to the Foundation as to the progress of the project, how the funds were used within the progress and the financial activity resulting from the grant in the event that the grant is awarded and will be applied for again the following year. **If a new application with a progress and financial activity report is not received, the ministry will not be considered for future grants.**

## Grant Description and Criteria

### Definition of New Start/New Faith Community

1. **Partner Church/Multiple “Parent” Strategy** - An existing United Methodist congregation (or, perhaps, several churches) serves as an anchoring, sponsoring or parenting force in launching a new church. This could be a cluster of partner churches or a combination of partner church(es) and another entity (e.g., a United Methodist campus ministry, retirement home or church agency).
2. **Classic Missionary Strategy** - This type of plant happens when a cabinet sends a planter into a territory to plant a church and (a) that planter is not from that territory plus (b) there are no active partnerships in place with other United Methodist churches or institutions in the area.
3. **Multi-site Expansion Strategy** - A new faith community meeting at a new site remains part of a sponsoring church, even as they may develop a distinct staff and ministry team system. Multi-sites vary in pastoral and staffing strategies. They typically have a site pastor – who may or may not be the lead preacher at the site.
4. **Church-Within-a-Church Strategy** - In a world of very expensive real estate, many new churches will share space with other churches (both partner churches and other collegial congregations). Existing congregations choosing to share property may find that new churches may better serve their immediate neighbors, especially when the new church specializes in a certain racial-ethnic culture and/or a certain generation or social group.
5. **The “Elijah/Elisha” Strategy** - This strategy requires a proactive discernment process with the district superintendent or conference staff. Congregations may either discover a new vision and recommit to fruit-bearing ministry or respond to God’s call to become an “Elijah” new church start (2 Kings 2:1-14 tells how Elijah passed on the legacy of his ministry to Elisha). Elijah churches intentionally choose either to (a) join another church and give their physical assets to the conference to reach a new group of people or (b) open their doors to a planter and launch team that takes over management of the facility to start a new congregation.
6. **Vital Merger Strategy** - Most of the time, mergers do not truly create new churches. Two declining churches typically agree to share one facility and decline together rather than alone. However, East Ohio Conference, for example, has a strategy that requires both of the merging churches to sell their buildings, pool the funds, move to a temporary location, find a new name, receive a trained planter and proceed as if they were a new church. Leadership of the planter is key.
7. **Closed/Reopened Facility Strategy** - Similar to the above strategies, except that there is no church left to share its facility, turn over its ministry, or merge with another congregation to create something new. The new church begins to address the needs and culture of the community population.
8. **House Church Strategy** - This may well be the oldest strategy for church planting that exists, certainly reaching back to Asia Minor in the first century, and also to frontier America when population was very sparse. House churches are typically small, limited to the number that can fit in a home or a small meeting space. They are often lay-led, with clergy visiting to bring the Sacraments. House churches may organize into networks, akin to circuits of very small congregations.
9. **Intentional Communities** - The strategy is often traced back to the early church movement described in Acts 2. There have been Intentional Communities throughout most of Christian history, going back to Franciscan, Benedictine and early Celtic orders. More contemporary examples of this

strategy, still in existence, were founded in the early 1950s. Typically, Intentional Communities remain small in size (3-12 people) and have no plan to “formalize” as chartered churches with land and a church structure.

10. **The Surprise Birth** - Sometimes, churches are born unexpectedly – just as children may come along in a season when we did not expect them. Some of our best United Methodist congregations have emerged in this way, as a work of the Holy Spirit and faithful laity. With wise pastoral care and negotiation, these projects often can be brought into the United Methodist fold as official new church projects.

11. **Integrated Multi-Ethnic Projects** - This strategy results in an intentionally multi-ethnic church plant that worships as one integrated body to create a unique cultural expression and reflect all groups involved. This is what heaven looks like, so why not intentionally plant churches that are integrated? This strategy reflects the work of the Holy Spirit to bring together as one in Christ a multitude of cultural, racial and ethnic groups. We recognize that The United Methodist Church is just learning how to implement this strategy effectively.

### Purpose of This Grant

The Nebraska United Methodist Foundation offers grant funds to support the development of new start/new faith communities in the State of Nebraska. These funds were created years ago for the **express purpose** of providing **start-up** grants for developing Nebraska United Methodist Churches during their **first three years of operation**. It’s important to note that the amount of Congregational Development Endowment Funds available from the Foundation are limited and were never intended to provide the total amount of funds required to fully support new congregations.

### Criteria

A new or consecutive grant request must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a New Start/New Faith Community in the State of Nebraska.
- Must have been approved by the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church as a New Start/New Faith Community and the individual who has been appointed or assigned to develop this church plant must have been through an assessment and training process.
- Every New Start/New Faith Community that received a grant in the previous year is required to submit a new application each subsequent year, complete with all information requested, including a summary of how the grant was used from the previous year.
- All applications need to be filled out completely with all appropriate signatures in order for the application to be considered. Missing information or signatures will result in the application being denied.
- The application must be postmarked by **March 31, 2024**. Applications received after the **March 31, 2024** postmark will not be considered.

### Process

Applications should be sent to Kristine Roberts, Executive Director, Nebraska United Methodist Foundation, 100 W. Fletcher Ave., Suite 100, Lincoln, NE 68521.

### Review of Application

The Stewardship Committee made up of members of the Nebraska United Methodist Foundation’s Board of Directors, will review all applications at the April board meeting. Upon recommendations of the Stewardship Committee, these recommendations will be brought before the Board of Directors for approval or denial.



## New Start/New Faith Grant Application

Name of Church/Congregation Applying For Grant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Completing This Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please choose one:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Partner Church/Multiple “Parent” Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_ Classic Missionary Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_ Multi-site Expansion Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_ Church-Within-a-Church Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_ The “Elijah/Elisha” Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_ Vital Merger Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_ Closed/Reopened Facility Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_ House Church Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_ Intentional Communities

\_\_\_\_\_ The Surprise Birth

\_\_\_\_\_ Integrated Multi-Ethnic Projects

**Have you consulted with your DS, and if so, have you received approval at the Conference level to move forward?**  Yes  No

*You must have approval at the Conference level to be considered.*

**What are (or were) your reasons for planting this “New Start/New Faith Community”?**

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**What is the physical location of the “New Start/New Faith Community”?**

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**What is or was your launch date?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Average attendance at Sunday worship:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have other worship times besides Sunday, please fill in when and how many attend:**

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**Please provide the number of new members that joined the first year and every year since (please include date range per membership, example Jan. 1, 2020 – Dec. 31, 2020 = x number of members). If you are a new launch, please provide details on current and expected membership.**

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**Please provide the number of new baptisms the first year and every year since (please include date range per baptisms, example Jan. 1, 2020 – Dec. 31, 2020 = x number of baptisms). If you are a new launch, please provide as current of data as possible.**

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How many small groups are currently active? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a church school?  Yes  No

What kind of stewardship and tithing education is being presented to the congregation?

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Please use a separate sheet to provide a brief narrative on goals from your ministry plan according to the questions below:

1. Have you been achieving or achieved your goals according to your ministry plan?
2. What worked or is working well?
3. What did not go or is not going according to your plan? How did you adjust?
4. What are your goals for 2024? Please be specific.

Please list ALL current financial commitments you will be receiving or have received organizing this New Start/New Faith Community. (*Note: pledges are a valid form of financial commitment*)

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What percentage of your budget would this grant provide for the year in which you are applying?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

**Does the pastor/staff plan on further education in congregational development? If so, please provide more details.**

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**Do you plan to ask for a grant in 2024?**  Yes  No

**If so, what is the approximate amount?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How will this grant be used (approximate use) if received?**

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**If this is a new launch:** Provide a timeline for the first 18 months and include benchmarks.

**If this is not a new launch:** Provide a timeline for the next 12 months and a brief summary of benchmarks met in the past 12 months:

**Required benchmarks include:**

- One-on-one community contacts.
- Strategic events to connect with target group.
- Adults added to contact list.
- Adults committed as Core/Launch team members.
- Number of people participating in events related to your ministry.
- Monthly financial support.
- Any additional benchmarks related to living out your core values.



**Please also attach the following information to this application:**

- A projected cash flow sheet for the first two years of operation.** (If this is a renewal application, then a projected cash flow for the next two years of operations.)
- The demographic information that supports this location.**
- If this is a renewal application, provide a brief summary of how the previous year's grant dollars were used. Please be as specific as possible.**

**Other comments you would like to share that may prove useful in the Committee's evaluation process:**

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**Signature of Person Completing Form**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of District Superintendent**  
*(Required)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Coordinator of Congregational Development**  
*(Required)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

For more information or questions regarding this grant application, please contact, Kristine Roberts at 402-323-8842 or [kroberts@numf.org](mailto:kroberts@numf.org)