

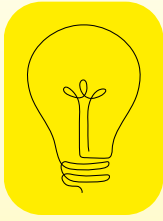
A large, stylized sunburst graphic with many thin black lines radiating from a central point, creating a circular shape. It is positioned behind the central text box.

Live: September 1, 2025 -  
Due: September 30, 2025

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## **2026 GO GRANT HANDBOOK**

*Fresh Starts & New Beginnings | West Ohio*

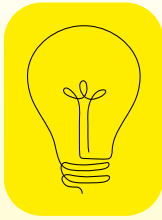


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## Pro Tips

- Think innovatively: What's never been done in your context?
- Focus on relationships first, not just programs.
- Align your project with your church's mission and neighborhood needs.



# 2026 GO GRANT INFORMATION

*Go Grants support new, innovative ministry ideas that help West Ohio United Methodist churches build meaningful relationships beyond the walls of the church and within their local communities—all for the purpose of making new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

Please carefully review the updated information below, as the Go Grant process has changed for 2026 Go Grants.

## NEW REQUIREMENTS

- **Eligibility:** Only chartered United Methodist churches and campuses of chartered UMCs within the West Ohio Conference are eligible to apply.
- **Disaffiliation Clause:** If a church disaffiliates from the United Methodist Church within seven years of receiving a Go Grant, the full amount of the grant must be repaid to the West Ohio Conference.
- **Limit per Church:** Each church or campus may receive only one Go Grant during the 2026 grant cycle.

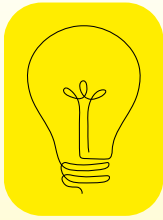
## OPEN DATES

**The 2026 Go Grant application will go live on September 1, 2025 and it is due September 30, 2025.**

## WHITEBOARD SESSIONS

If you would like to discuss some of your ideas or if you have questions about Go Grants, please sign up for a Zoom session below. Registration opens July 1, 2025. Visit <https://www.westohioumc.org/2026-ohio-episcopal-area-go-grants> for registration links.

- Thurs 8.21.25 - Zoom Whiteboard Session for Q&A (noon)
- Mon 8.25.25 - Zoom Whiteboard Session for Q&A (7pm)
- Wed 9.3.25 - Zoom Whiteboard Sessions for Q&A (noon)
- Tues 9.9.25 - Zoom Whiteboard Sessions for Q&A (7pm)
- Fri 9.12.25 - Zoom Whiteboard Session for Q&A (noon)
- Mon 9.15.25 - Zoom Whiteboard Session for Q&A (7pm)



# 2026 GO GRANT CATEGORIES

This year, while the Go Grant categories will largely remain the same, we are expanding the category definitions to make it easier for you to identify where your new ministry idea fits.

## **BEYOND BARRIERS**

Go create spaces and places where everyone can fully belong, participate, and connect. This grant supports physical and digital improvements that remove barriers to access, inclusion, and hospitality, ensuring your church reflects God's love for all people—regardless of gender, race, sexuality, or ability.

**Grant funding provided by: Trustees & Disability Committees**

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Go outside the walls of the church to build meaningful relationships in your community. This grant supports efforts that meet people where they are—at work, at school, in neighborhoods, and in gathering places—with the purpose of embodying Christ's love through presence, service, and justice. Community engagement means listening well, showing up consistently, and walking alongside others to foster transformation and belonging.

**Grant funding provided by: Fresh Starts Team**

## **EMERGING GENERATIONS**

Go engage with children, youth, young adults, and families in the spaces where they learn, play, and grow. Build ministries with them that speak their language, honor their leadership, and invite them into a vibrant, intergenerational faith journey.

**Grant funding provided by: Emerging Generations Teams**

## **GREEN CHURCH**

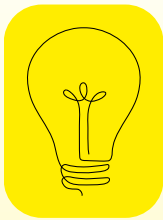
Go green by being good stewards of God's creation in your church and/or community! West Ohio's Green Church Movement is offering Green Church Mini Grants in 2026 (\$100–\$750) to support ministries and projects that reflect God's love for all creation. Questions? Contact Mariellyn Grace at [mgrace@wocumc.org](mailto:mgrace@wocumc.org).

**Grant funding provided by: Just Mission Team and The Care Creation Task Force.**

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Go support leaders in navigating change, strengthening mission, and guiding vibrant congregations through adaptive leadership frameworks. Rooted in three key dimensions—Lead Self, Lead Others, and Lead Communities—each Go Grant empowers leaders to grow spiritually, lead effectively, and inspire meaningful transformation. The overall goal to develop adaptive, faithful leaders (clergy and laity) who are equipped to navigate complexity and lead vibrant, hope-filled congregations.

**Grant funding provided by: Fresh Starts Team, Leadership Team & Office of Ministry.**



# BEYOND BARRIERS

Go create spaces and places where everyone can fully belong, participate, and connect. This grant supports physical and digital improvements that remove barriers to access, inclusion, and hospitality, ensuring your church reflects God's love for all people—regardless of gender, race, sexuality, or ability.

## **MAXIMUM REQUEST: \$10,000**

Projects over \$5,000 require:

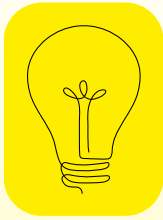
- A detailed project plan with timeline
- Proof of congregational commitment (e.g., matching funds, volunteer labor)
- Project budget
- Written plan to improve or address accessibility audit score

*Larger projects (over \$10,000) may be considered with significant matching funds or partnership commitments, but preference is given to projects within the standard range.*

## **EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Create sensory-friendly spaces: calm rooms or sensory break areas for neurodivergent individuals
- Building redevelopment projects that address historical red-lining and racial or economic segregation
- Inclusive playground equipment designed for children with disabilities
- Indoor and outdoor signage improvements for better navigation for people with disabilities
- Accessibility enhancements for people with disabilities that connect the congregation to the community and outside organizations.
- Hospitality space redesigns to foster inclusion, belonging, and ease of access for all

*\*Churches applying for a Beyond Barriers Go Grant must complete an Accessibility Audit.*

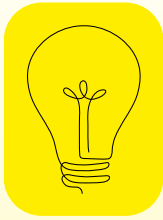


# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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## **EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Starting fresh expressions of church in everyday spaces (cafés, gyms, parks, salons, laundromats, barbershops)
- Partnering with local organizations or coalitions to pursue justice and meet practical needs (e.g., food insecurity, housing access, racial equity)
- Creating ministries that are inclusive and welcoming to people often overlooked—such as single parents, ethnic communities, the elderly, LGBTQ+ individuals, and the incarcerated
- Hosting neighborhood events or block parties that build trust and connection across lines of difference
- Starting support groups or healing circles for grief, addiction recovery, or trauma resilience
- Offering new ministries to support immigrant or refugee communities through language classes, legal support, or cultural exchanges
- Offering mobile ministry units or pop-up prayer stations in public areas



# EMERGING GENERATIONS

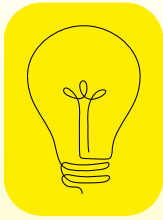
Go engage with children, youth, young adults, and families in the spaces where they learn, play, and grow. Build ministries with them that speak their language, honor their leadership, and invite them into a vibrant, intergenerational faith journey.

## **EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Developing new partnerships with local schools to support students and families
- Collaborating with other United Methodist churches to provide new outreach, programming, or events for children, youth, or young adults
- Empowering young people to dream and lead new ministries or outreach in their context

## **SUB-CATEGORIES INCLUDE:**

- Engaging Children (birth-age 12)
- Engaging Youth (ages 13-18)
- Engaging College-Age (ages 18-28)
- Engaging Multi-Generations



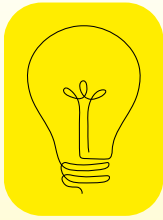
# GREEN CHURCH

Go green by being good stewards of God's creation in your church and/or community! West Ohio's Green Church Movement is offering Green Church Mini Grants in 2026 (\$100-\$750) to support ministries and projects that reflect God's love for all creation. Questions? Contact Mariellyn Grace at [mgrace@wocumc.org](mailto:mgrace@wocumc.org).

## **EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Providing recycling or composting stations in your church building or for your community
- Installing energy-efficient upgrades like LED lights or smart thermostats
- Hosting community-focused events like Earth Day celebrations or children's creation care camps
- Planting native gardens or installing rain barrels to model sustainable practices outside the church





# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Go support leaders in navigating change, strengthening mission, and guiding vibrant congregations through adaptive leadership frameworks. Rooted in three key dimensions—Lead Self, Lead Others, and Lead Communities—each Go Grant empowers leaders to grow spiritually, lead effectively, and inspire meaningful transformation. The overall goal to develop adaptive, faithful leaders (clergy and laity) who are equipped to navigate complexity and lead vibrant, hope-filled congregations.

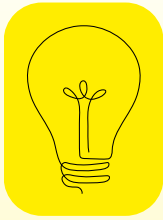
**(Grant requests are limited to \$5000 and are not intended for hiring employees.)**

## LEAD SELF

This grant supports leaders in cultivating a strong personal foundation through deepened discipleship and self-awareness. Grants in this category may focus on:

- Spiritual formation and resilience tools (such as Spiritual Direction)
- Intercultural competency development (such as Intercultural Development Inventory)
- Emotional intelligence and less-anxious leadership (such as Enneagram)
- Personal development coaching, retreats, or continuing education

**Goal:** Help leaders thrive spiritually and lead with grounded, authentic presence.



# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (CON'T)

## LEAD OTHERS

This grant supports the development of skills that strengthen relationships, foster collaboration, and enable congregations to experiment boldly in the face of challenge. Grants may support:

- Team-building initiatives and leadership cohorts
- Training in agile/design thinking or adaptive change
- Resilience and Positive Intelligence training
- Peer learning communities or coaching networks

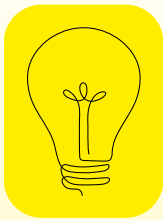
**Goal:** Strengthen relational leadership and capacity for collaborative change.

## LEAD COMMUNITIES

This grant supports leaders as they cast vision, align ministries with mission, and mobilize their congregation for transformational impact. Focus areas may include:

- Visioning retreats and strategic planning
- Congregational systems strengthening
- Innovation labs, leadership multiplication, and discipling leader development

**Goal:** Mobilize congregations for greater impact and faithful experimentation



# GO GRANT - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **1. Who do I contact if I am having trouble completing the Go Grant Application?**

Terri McClain, [tmcclain@wocumc.org](mailto:tmcclain@wocumc.org)

## **2. Is there a dollar limit on what we can ask for per grant application?**

Some of the grants do have a dollar limit. Please review the individual grant definitions. You may ask for whatever you want, but keep in mind that the various Teams may not be able to fund your full amount and so partial amounts may be awarded.

## **3. Can our church apply for more than one grant?**

Your church can apply for as many grants as you would like to. However, this year, only one grant will be awarded per campus. If you submit multiple applications, you may be asked which one is your top priority.

## **4. Can we apply for 2026 Go Grant for an existing ministry?**

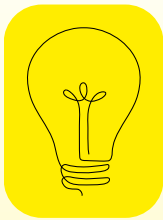
Go Grants are to encourage you to dream big, so new ideas are first and foremost. However, if you are enhancing an existing ministry to reach more unchurched people outside the walls of your church, then a Go Grant application will be considered.

## **5. Do we need to turn in all our documents at one time - i.e. application, video, ACH and budget?**

Yes. All documents need to be turned in at one time.

## **6. When are 2026 Go Grant applications due?**

2026 Go Grant Applications are available September 1, 2025 and must be turned in by September 30, 2025, at midnight.



# GO GRANT - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **7.Can I turn in my 2026 Go Grant application late?**

We will not accept 2025 Go Grant applications submitted after September 30, 2025, at midnight.

## **8.Who do we contact if we are having trouble submitting our documents?**

Terri McClain – [tmccclain@wocumc.org](mailto:tmccclain@wocumc.org)

## **9.When will we find out if we have received a 2026 Go Grant or not?**

Notification of being awarded or not being awarded a Go Grant should happen by the end of November 2025.

## **10.When and where will the 2026 Go Awards be?**

The 2026 Go Awards will be at Powell UMC on February 1, 2026.

## **11.When will we receive our funds if we were awarded a 2026 Go Grant?**

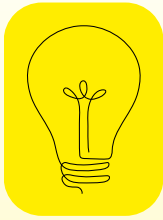
Depending on the category and amount, 2026 Go Grant funds awarded will be paid out at different times of the calendar year. You will be notified of your payout schedule in your award letter and email.

## **12.Are there any accessibility enhancements for disabilities that will not be considered for funding?**

The UMC disability ministry committee for the denomination has stopped providing grant funding for specific modifications such as chair lifts because this type of equipment has very limited effect. They do not work for people in wheelchairs who cannot transfer out of their wheelchairs.

## **13.Are there things that a Go Grant will not be awarded for?**

Go Grants will not be awarded for salary or building repairs for things such as roofs or a/c or boilers.



# 2026 GO GRANT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE CHECKLIST BELOW BEFORE TURNING  
IN YOUR 2026 GO GRANT APPLICATION:**

- ☐ I entered my church's full name including the city
  - ☐ I included a name for our new ministry/project idea
  - ☐ I am clear about what we are asking funds for
- 

**I HAVE ATTACHED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

- ☐ Budget
  - ☐ 60 sec video
- 

**MY VIDEO (\* VIEW BEST PRACTICES BELOW) IS:**

- ☐ 60 sec or less
  - ☐ Was taken in a landscape position
  - ☐ Includes our church name and project name
  - ☐ Explains our ministry/project
  - ☐ Includes the ask - (how much are we asking for)
- 

**\*VIDEO BEST PRACTICES**

- Using a phone to record your video is accessible
- Record in landscape/wide format (like you watch a tv)
- Use a tripod or record from a stable surface
- If possible, utilize a wireless or wired microphone instead of your phone's built-in microphone
- If you are using a script, consider downloading a free or low-cost teleprompter app for your phone  
i.e. <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/teleprompter/id941620509>
- Utilize video editing software (likely included with your phone) to trim and edit your final presentation
- Show us your project and ministry context in the video