



CONFERENCE GRANTS TOOLKIT

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Council of Seattle-King County**

Letter of Introduction

To our dear Vincentians,

Across King County, Vincentian Conferences are applying for funds under the same SVdP nonprofit 501(c)3. This grants toolkit was designed to support and encourage Conference grant-seeking efforts and to ensure our shared 501(c)3 maintains a sterling reputation with regional funders.

How we communicate individually defines our collective presence in the community. Our willingness to work together will make it possible to establish a foundation we can all build upon for years to come.

The toolkit includes an overview of grants compliance standards, answers to commonly-asked application questions, a guide to inclusive language, and detailed advice on how to research funding opportunities in your area.

Use these tools to strengthen your request. For example, funders won't know anything about us at first - so it helps to explain 'jargon' that we use conversationally. Here is an example of introducing the term 'neighbors' to someone new, right from the start:

“Vincentians make thousands of compassionate, caring, in-person home visits each year to individuals and families in our community – whom we call our ‘neighbors’ - who are low-income or experiencing homelessness.”

Now, when we continue telling our story, we can comfortably refer to our neighbors knowing the funder reading the application is not distracted by terminology unknown to them.

This toolkit is designed for a 'brand new' grant writer. Many of you have years of experience writing grants. If you feel you have helpful tips for others - or have questions which are not addressed in the toolkit - please reach out to grants@svdpseattle.org. Every Vincentian has a unique perspective on our shared mission; your valuable input will help others as we continue to develop supportive materials in the future.

Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Lisa Hubert
Adrienne Corpuz Joyce
Office of Mission Advancement

Grants Readiness Checklist

CONFERENCE READINESS

- We are an Active Conference:
 - Full set of officers
 - In Compliance with SVdP Board of Directors' W9 policy
 - Up to date on officer training, financial reviews, and annual reports
 - Current on debt repayment –or– have negotiated a payment plan with Council
- We have designated a Conference Grants Liaison

GRANT READINESS

- This funding opportunity:
 - IS more than two (2) weeks away from the grant deadline
 - IS offered by a foundation, private fund, or corporation –or–
 - IS local government funding (city, county, or state) –and–
 - IS NOT a federal funding request
- Our project is:
 - Well-aligned with the grant's funding priorities or focus areas
 - Geographically eligible for funding (impact numbers are within service area)
 - Able to fulfill the capacity and reporting requirements of the grant
- Our Conference has:
 - Submitted notification of our request to apply to the grants@svdpseattle.org.
 - Received permission from the Council to move forward with applying

IF AWARDED

- Submit a copy of the award letter and/or contract to the Council at grants@svdpseattle.org:
 - **All contracts/agreements must be signed by the Executive Director**
- To receive funds:
 - Funds should be sent by the funder to the Council office directly
 - Council will notify the Conference Grants Liaison of funding date
 - SVdP Finance will issue a check to the recipient Conference once funds are received
- Submit a copy of all completed reports to grants@svdpseattle.org

Researching Grant Opportunities

The funding landscape shifts with new and emerging community needs, so we must know how to research what is available to us each year.

1. Begin with search terms related to geography, demographics, or focus area(s):

Category	Key Search Terms
Types of Grant Funders	Community Foundations Family Foundations Corporate Giving Private Funds/Trusts Tribal Foundations
Geography	Your City Zip Code County Region State
Focus Area(s)	Housing Stability Affordable Housing Food Security Poverty Basic Needs Financial Assistance Rent/Utility Assistance
Age Demographic	Early Childhood Children/Youth Young Adults Adults Older Adults
Life Stage Demographic	School-aged children Parents Unemployed or Under-employed Caregivers Families
Race/ethnicity Demographic	BIPOC Diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds Underserved Communities Marginalized Groups Historically Disadvantaged

2. Once you find a foundation, check their website for important information.

Every foundation/company is a little different. As you become familiar with the different ways funders describe their grants, you will begin to recognize important information:

Look for:	Important Information
Focus Area/ Funding Priority	This might also be called ‘What We Fund’ or ‘How We Grant’. For example, “we fund nonprofits in Washington State serving low-income families”.
Past Grants/ Past Grantees	Find out if the foundation has funded nonprofits/programs in the past that resemble our nonprofit/program - that would be good news!
How to Apply/ Application Process	Find out what is required to apply. Will I need to start with an LOI/Letter of Introduction? Do I apply through an online portal? Is there an application form or application questions I can preview ahead of time?
Grant Cycle/ Deadline	Find out if you have enough time to develop the proposal before the deadline arrives. Use this timeline to help plan your annual funding goals.

3. Be sure to check the focus areas and funding priorities carefully for alignment.

Focus Areas/Funding Priority	Alignment
<i>We fund organizations working to prevent homelessness and provide basic needs support to families.</i>	<u>Strong alignment</u> - rent/utility assistance, vouchers
<i>We fund children and youth programs*</i>	Program <u>must</u> be youth-specific*
<i>We fund programs for sustainable building/climate change</i>	<u>No alignment</u>

*Important note: We know that children are supported when a parent receives our rent/utility assistance, but this would still be considered an ‘indirect’ impact for a grant funder. This focus area refers to youth-specific programs that directly serve children; for example, sports and clubs, tutoring/academic support, school supplies, or mental/emotional development.

Commonly Requested Documents:

Please reach out to grants@svdpseattle.org to obtain the most current copies of the following:

- Recently signed W9 Form
 - IRS Determination Letter
 - Articles of Incorporation
 - Current Board List with Affiliations
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Answers to Common Questions

Please provide your organizations Mission and Vision:

Mission:

Ignited by Gospel values, we listen, respond, and act with compassion to serve neighbors in their struggle to meet basic needs, as we advocate for a more just and equitable society.

Vision:

We envision a world where individuals and families who face financial challenges or who are experiencing homelessness are empowered to improve their circumstances, achieve self-sufficiency, sustain their families, and thrive.

Please provide your organization's DEO Statement/Policy:

Many of our community members face disproportionate socio-economic challenges in terms of income level, unemployment and under-employment, access to health services, safe and stable housing, language barriers, and more. We acknowledge the embedded barriers to access that can negatively impact those we serve.

St. Vincent de Paul prioritizes diverse representation in hiring and staffing decisions to ensure our employees come from a wide variety of lived experiences and bring the professional skills and experience to better understand and serve our communities. Our programs and services are available to everyone without exception.

Guide to Inclusive Language for Grants

Language is always changing. Making our best effort to communicate effectively with people from all walks of life - with differing perspectives and experiences - is an opportunity to demonstrate our adaptability and willingness to grow.

When we build a narrative for a grant funder, we take into account the funder's history and values, finding out where those values align with ours, and focusing on the common ground.

Using terminology that is 'standard' in grant applications will ensure that your proposal aligns with the funder's priorities. Check out the right column for good examples:

Plain-Language	Terms Commonly Used in Grant Applications
the homeless homeless people transient(s)	unsheltered unhoused experiencing homelessness
the poor poor people	low-income experiencing poverty
the elderly seniors	Use age-range where possible (eg, 65 and older)
special needs handicapped	disabled person person with a disability
minority	Use race/ethnicity where possible: eg. Hispanic, African-American Underserved, marginalized
suffering from victim	living with faced with [challenges]

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If we have applied for a grant in the past, do we still need Council authorization?

A: Yes - any conference using the 501(c)3 to apply for funds must complete the Readiness Checklist and receive Council approval prior to submitting a grant request. If multiple conferences express interest in the same grant opportunity, the Council will connect them with one another for collaboration.

Q: How will the Partners in Gospel affect grants processing and reporting?

A: As our internal service boundaries are redrawn, the communities we serve will grow and our impact numbers will expand. This is a very positive development for grant writers. Funders want to see impact and collaboration. As our parish families and conferences come together, our grant narratives and reports will become stronger and show a larger community impact.

Q: How do we provide demographic data to funders?

A: At this time, conferences will need to track their local program and staff demographics. The Council is working to implement future collection of demographic information in the database.

Q: How will the Conference receive grant funds from the Council?

A: Once funds are received at the Council, a check will be issued to the recipient Conference.

Q: Our grant report is uploaded through an online app/portal. How can we email the report to you?

A: We strongly advise that anytime you use an online portal, you copy the questions and report information into a separate document to draft the report. This helps avoid submission errors and loss of content. Send a copy of the report document to the Council at grants@svdpseattle.org.

Q: How can we tell if the grant includes federal funds?

A: If you are unsure, contact the funder directly.

If you have another question, please contact grants@svdpseattle.org.