

Critical Clergy Needs Fund

Guidelines as of September 2021

The Diocesan Fund for Critical Clergy Needs (CCN) is an endowed fund that provides financial grants to clergy to assist with costs relating either to a critical need or to the education of their children.

Eligibility

Bishops, priests and deacons, active or retired, who are canonically resident in the Episcopal Diocese of New York are eligible to apply for CCN grants.

Grants are typically available only to clergy. Surviving spouses and family members of clergy are not generally eligible to apply.

How Grants Are Determined

Grant requests are reviewed by the CCN Committee, a body of ordained and lay leaders appointed by the Bishop of New York; grant decisions are in accordance with CCN Fund guidelines.

Typically grant requests are for healthcare needs or tuition scholarships. Requests are submitted by application of the form available on the diocesan website.

All applications must be filled out completely and include documentation in support of the grant request.

The CCN Committee generally meets four times a year. Applicants are informed soon after each quarterly meeting about the grant decisions.

Application Deadlines are the last Friday of February, May, August, and November.

In urgent situations requiring immediate consideration, please contact the Canon for Pastoral Care to inquire about initiating a grant request.

Further information about the application process can be found below, by type of grant.

Critical Need Grants

A critical need is an unexpected and unusual expense that arises due to crisis or unexpected hardship.

The CCN Committee reserves the right to determine whether a situation is of a critical nature.

When making a grant request, a cleric must provide documentary evidence of the costs associated with the critical need.

Healthcare Grants

The most common type of critical need grant provides financial assistance in times of medical crisis or for extraordinary healthcare costs not covered by insurance.

Click here to download the Healthcare Grant Application.

Critical healthcare can include, but is not limited to:

- medical care provided in time of severe illness or other family medical crisis;
- extraordinary dental, vision, or auditory care, or hearing aids;
- acute mental healthcare in time of crisis;
- acute medical or rehab care in situations involving addiction.

Grant requests for financial assistance with healthcare-related costs will be considered only for reasonable and necessary expenses not covered by medical or dental insurance. It is the responsibility of the applicant to understand the parameters of her or his insurance plans, and to work within their health plans' requirements.

Before Applying:

Prior to submitting a CCN Healthcare Grant Application, an applicant must verify that costs associated with the healthcare critical need are not covered by insurance or cannot be funded through other sources, such as social service agencies. All healthcare bills must first be submitted to an insurance provider before the CCN Committee will consider approving a grant.

Healthcare bills for “Out of Network” services will not be considered, if a cleric opted out of available “In Network” service providers.

Regular costs of health insurance, such as co-pays and deductibles, and premiums for a Medicare Supplemental Insurance Policies, are not considered a critical need.

CCN grants are not to be considered an ongoing funding source.

Any subsequent application for a CCN grant that relates to an ongoing health crisis will be reviewed in the context of previously awarded grants.

When Clergy Travel or Live Abroad:

CCN grants will **not** be made to assist with healthcare costs incurred outside of the United States.

Clergy need to be aware that many health insurance plans, including Medicare, **do not** cover such healthcare expenses. Clergy planning to travel abroad are urged to **obtain traveler’s insurance**. Clergy who reside abroad for an extended period are encouraged to investigate appropriate healthcare options, including for emergency situations.

Other Critical Financial Need Grants

Other financial hardship situations may be eligible for consideration

Any financial need of a critical nature not related to healthcare expenditures, may be brought to the attention of the Canon for Pastoral Care, for review and recommendation to the CCN Committee.

The CCN Committee reserves the right to determine whether a situation is of a critical nature.

Tuition Assistance Grants for Children of Clergy

The CCN FUND offers Tuition Assistance Grants to the children of clergy of three kinds: for college; for certified adult vocational training; and for primary or secondary school education under special circumstances.

Click here to download the Tuition Assistance Grant Application.

For College

Applications will be received from January through May for the next academic year. The CCN Committee will consider applications at the early June meeting. Grants for applications received after the published due date, if awarded, may be subject to a 10% penalty reduction.

The maximum amount of a grant is \$4,000 per student per academic year. Grant amounts may vary from year to year, depending on the availability of funds and the number of grant applications.

Annual grants for each child will be awarded for no more than four years.

Applications must be supported by tuition invoicing documentation from the college or university at which the student is enrolled.

The CCN Fund does not provide grants for graduate-level study.

For Certified Adult Vocational Training

Clergy may apply for a Tuition Assistance Grant for their children's participation in a certified adult vocational training program. Applications may be submitted at any time.

The maximum amount of a grant is \$2,000 per student per year. Annual grants for each child will be awarded for no more than four years, whether for college, vocational training or both.

Applications must be supported by tuition invoicing documentation from the certified training program in which the student is enrolled.

For Primary or Secondary School

Clergy may apply for Tuition Assistance Grants for their children's primary or secondary education, under the following circumstances:

When a child has special needs requiring a particular educational setting or pedagogy;

When a cleric lives and works in a critical mission area of the diocese, where public schooling is clearly inadequate. In this case, the cleric may apply for a Tuition Assistance Grant for their child's private school education.

Applications may be submitted at any time, but only one grant per child, per academic year, will be awarded.

Financial aid applications must be supported with invoicing documentation from the school at which the student is enrolled.

General Guidelines

All applications and grants are kept strictly confidential.

Each year, 25% of the CCN Fund is set aside for use by the Bishop of New York for certain requests received directly and/or requiring immediate response. Any grants disbursed from this portion of the Critical Needs Fund are to be reported to the entire Committee at the subsequent meeting.

Alternatively, the CCN Committee is empowered to review and vote on urgent requests electronically between meetings at the request of the Bishop.

Grants are not available for clergy continuing education or sabbaticals.

If a cleric's need for financial assistance is not eligible for a CCN Fund grant, the cleric is encouraged to contact the Canon for Pastoral Care to inquire about other possible sources of support.

Information about the CCN Fund, the granting process, and application deadlines is to be regularly published on the Diocesan website, in the Episcopal New Yorker, and in reminder emails to the clergy of the diocese.

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