Support for Virtual Learners in the Community
Subgrant Application

The mission of 200,000 More Reasons is to have 100% of United Methodist Churches in Arkansas participate in an initiative to alleviate childhood hunger through feeding ministries, public witness, and education for long-term stability. 200,000 MORE Reasons expands the understanding of education and long-term stability to include such poverty alleviation strategies as literacy and promoting a healthy, stable family. We recognize that by working to alleviate poverty, we have the best opportunity for ending childhood hunger in Arkansas.

Virtual learning support for students fits within this mission as we seek to prevent a widening of the academic gap for those students with limited or no access to the internet. This sub-grant will offer financial assistance to AR United Methodist to ensure the proper technology is in place to support students in their learning. Participating students should be able to connect to online learning platforms, homework support and other school- and learning-related opportunities during the pandemic. We anticipate that many of these children served through this sub-grant may be from food insecure, low income families. Rural and more urban areas offer their own dynamics, but in all cases, our concern is for the student's learning potential.

The Methodist Foundation of Arkansas has awarded 200,000 More Reasons with a grant of up to $25,000 to help provide financial assistance to churches seeking to offer Wi-Fi access on their church campuses/property to those students in their community who lack reliable access to the internet. Ministry designs may include, but are not limited to, internet access so that a) students can access virtual learning platforms from a local church's parking lot; b) a church may host family pods in Sunday school classrooms for virtual learning; or, c) a church may host students without a guardian in a large open space, like a gym, for virtual learning during limited hours.

This application is for those churches who need financial assistance in acquiring the technology and equipment necessary to implement their ministry design. This sub-grant is intended to cover one-time costs to expand broadband and internet access, up to 6 months of monthly rates, and/or other technological needs to host virtual learners on the church campus.

Please read carefully the requirements of this grant application. Grant amounts should be based on estimated costs with supporting documentation as requested below. We anticipate requests to be between $500 to $2,000. This is a reimbursement grant, meaning churches will need to submit for reimbursement for actual costs, not exceeding the awarded amount. Any actual costs above the awarded amount will be the responsibility of the subgrantee.

The strongest applications will:
1) Express financial need.
2) Show clear understanding of the technological needs for providing or expanding access to WIFI.
3) Demonstrate a well-thought out ministry design for your context, community and capacity to offer this support.

Items to note:

1) On November 2, 200,000 More Reasons staff hosted a zoom meeting with potential applicants. Discussion centered on ministry designs, technology and issues that arise for offering this type of ministry in the current context. If you were not part of this meeting, please listen to the recording before applying. It can be found at https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/YrgRYNP-ShbW1Da97eurHnuhnSbjq6hXGDv55Ncat60k5Ivzv8HzCBMRAF36OBo.ve2_MhrtsFa1_GTM.

2) As an applicant or a sub-grantee, you may be asked to join the staff in another zoom meeting to share best practices and to discuss concerns around ministry design, especially if you were not on the zoom meeting mentioned above.

3) You are encouraged to reach out to your local school(s) (school counselor, principal, etc.) and the library to assess community need; upload and download speed requirements for the virtual learning platforms; and, for assistance with communication to students who can participate.

4) We suggest assessing technological capability (bandwidth, etc.) for feasibility and cost effectiveness as one of your first steps. Recognize that any improvements made for this ministry will benefit other ministries as well.

5) If awarded, please take pictures, and collect stories of impact throughout your ministry to share on social media, with others and as part of the grant report mentioned below.

The grant request deadline period opens November 13 and will close January 30, 2021 or until the $25,000 total has been committed to sub-grantees, whichever comes first.

Virtual Learners Support Application and Requirements

Church Name/Organization: _____

Ministry Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

County: _____ ARUMC District: _____

Contact Phone (_____) _____ E-Mail _____

Title of Project/Ministry _____

Amount requested $ _____

Please answer the following. Answers may be provided on separate paper or document if necessary.

I. Ministry Design
A) Describe your ministry design.
- Include hours of operation or when access to Wi-Fi is available; number of volunteers required; if food will be offered; where the ministry will take place on the campus; start date; etc.
- Please include any plans to address issues related to following Safe Sanctuary policies and Covid-19 Safety guidelines.
- Note that only licensed childcare facilities are permitted by DHS to host children more than 5 hours/day or 10 hours per week outside of regular church programming hours. Please contact us if your ministry design does include this and you are NOT a licensed childcare facility. There are pathways to expedited licensing through DHS that you can explore.

B) Describe the need for this support in your community.

C) List any partnerships you may have such as with schools, libraries, etc. for implementing this program.

D) How many virtual learning students do you hope to serve? In what way will you track this number? (Example: "We will count the number of students each day of operation." Or, "we will count the number of different families that access the internet over the course of the grant period.")

E) How will you advertise this program to those you seek to serve?

II. Technology Needs & Budget*

A) Describe the church's <u>current</u> technological capacity to provide this ministry.

B) What else is needed to provide support?
- Consider bandwidth, access, and equipment. This may include modems, mesh networking, hardwiring, hotspots, tablets, malware, firewalls, etc.
- This grant can also be used to cover monthly rates while students are accessing learning opportunities.

C) Budget: Describe the feasibility and cost effectiveness of providing this ministry.
- Include an estimate of the technology costs.**
- A feasibility assessment should be conducted by your IT staff person or a local provider. In addition, ARUMC staff members Jacob Turner, Todd Burris or Palmer Lee are willing to offer consultations and advice. Contact mdassinger@arumc.org if you need assistance.
- Any estimate provided by a local company or the church staff must be on company letterhead.
- Attach any other supporting documentation of estimated expenses related to technology that will be helpful to grant reviewers.

D) List other funding resources that support the technology budget and describe the need for financial assistance.**

E) Who will be responsible for overseeing the technological aspect of this ministry, including any needed installation as well as trouble-shooting day to day?

* This portion of the application will be reviewed by the staff listed above for feasibility and best practices. Suggestions may be made for cost and technological effectiveness.

**Your grant will not be awarded if the technological costs far exceed our capability to grant your requested amount or the church's ability to make up the difference, either through the budget, donations, or other grants.

III. Please provide documents on church letterhead that express the following:

A) A letter from the Board of Trustees indicating approval of this project signed by the Pastor and Trustees Chair. This step is crucial to assure building and grounds use for this project is supported by the congregation.

B) A copy of your congregation's reopening plan as submitted to the District Office. See https://arumc.org/covid19/safe-church-reopening-guidance/ for further guidance and information. This plan should indicate commitment to follow Covid-19 Safety Guidelines as set forth by the Governor of Arkansas, Bishop Mueller, and any other body that provides oversight, such as DHS if the church is a licensed childcare facility.

C) A copy of your congregation's Safe Sanctuary policy signed by the project coordinator. Please make any adjustments necessary to ensure child safety for your proposed ministry design.

Please complete this application after reading the above carefully.
You may fill out the form online OR download a paper copy from https://arumc.org/our-ministries/200k-more-reasons/ and return via email or postage mail to:

Mary Lewis Dassinger, Project Coordinator, 200,000 More Reasons
33 Saint Andrews Drive, Little Rock, AR 72212
mdassinger@arumc.org

If funds are granted, a written report listing and describing use of the funds should be submitted by March 30, 2021. More information will be provided closer to time.