

# Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Endowment Fund Request for Applications

## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in applying for ministry support from the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Endowment Fund. Please read through this guidance prior to submitting an application for consideration. If you have questions that are not answered here, feel free to contact Elizabeth Bartsch, Assistant to the Bishop-Administration, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. Email: [lbartsch@nswsi.org](mailto:lbartsch@nswsi.org)

## Purpose of Endowment Fund

The Purpose of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Mission Endowment fund is to:

1. Encourage the concept of whole life stewardship and to receive and manage donations, bequests and charitable gifts from individuals, congregations and organizations
2. Strengthen and resource the ministry of the Synod
3. Enhance the ministry of the Synod in addition to, and apart from, its yearly operating budget, with emphasis on, but not limited to:
  - Equipping and supporting leaders
  - Strengthening congregational vitality
  - Developing and supporting ministry for the next generation

## Structure of the Endowment Fund

The Fund is comprised of two parts - principal and earnings. The principal exists because of generous donations by congregations, organizations and individuals since the Fund's creation in 2001. The earnings, a combination of interest and market changes, are eligible for distribution in any given year. The larger the principal, the more funds are likely to become available for distribution. The Endowment Committee determines the amount available each year, consistent with the Bylaws, Fund balances, and market conditions.

## Granting Cycle

1. Release of Request for Applications (RFA) - week of February 20
2. Proposals (using online electronic form only) will be accepted from March 1 through midnight May 1, 2025
3. Prescreening of applications by individual Endowment Committee members - May 2 – 20. Applicants will be notified if proposals will be moved forward to further review no later than May 31. Those not qualifying for further review will also be notified.
4. Further review and scoring of applications will occur between late May and early July.
5. The Endowment Committee will meet to make award decisions no later than early July and will immediately notify applicants of the funding decision.
6. Funds will be disbursed no later than August 1.

## Who is eligible to apply?

- Groups that are part of a ministry affiliated with the NW Wisconsin Synod

- Rostered Leaders are eligible for support from a separate portion of funding available through a process led by the ELCA that is not addressed in this RFA.

#### Maximum amount available to be disbursed in 2025

- Up to \$29,742 (total for all recipients combined)
- Within this parameter, there is no limit on the amount each applicant may request. The Committee reserves the right to award all or part of the requested amount.

**For what type of support may we apply?** There are three general categories of activities for which you may request support, consistent with the Fund Bylaws, which read:

1. *Equipping and supporting leaders*
2. *Strengthening congregational vitality*
3. *Developing and supporting ministry for the next generation*

**What types of requests will not be considered?**

In general, requests for the following will not be considered:

1. Staffing
2. Capital improvements.
3. Requests from organizations or individuals not connected with an affiliated ministry of the NW Wisconsin Synod
4. Things that would normally be part of a church's/organization's operating budget
5. Other requests that are not consistent with the Endowment Bylaws guidance as described above

**Who will review applications?** The Endowment Committee of the NW Synod

**What are the primary criteria that will be considered for decision making?**

1. The proposal clearly and completely addresses the questions in the RFA
2. The proposal responds to one of the three areas of support in the Fund Bylaws
3. The proposal describes ways in which other resources are leveraged to support the proposed activity/project
4. The proposed activity or project is innovative
5. If applicable, there is a plan to sustain activities/project beyond the initial year
6. The application addresses ministry that expands and supports community inside and outside the traditional church

**Are there funding priorities for the grant cycle?**

- Priority number one each year is debt reduction for seminarians. A total of up to \$19,827 will be available to qualified applicants. This award process is handled separately by the synod, but we share it here so that applicants gain an understanding of the reach of the Endowment Fund.
- There have been no priorities established for other award types.

**When can I expect a response if I apply?**

- A preliminary review will be completed no later than May 31. Applicants will then be notified if their proposal is or is not moving forward to the final review process as outlined in the *Grant Cycle* section above.

**Where can I submit questions before applying?**

- Submit questions to Elizabeth Bartsch, Assistant to the Bishop-Administration Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. Email: [lbartsch@nwswi.org](mailto:lbartsch@nwswi.org)

### Can our organization receive multiple grant awards?

No more than one award will be granted per organization.

### How do I apply?

Applications will be accepted only through the online portal, that is, through completion of the online form.