



The Kaleidoscope Fund

*A Granting Initiative Established by
Lutheran Church Extension Fund*

WHAT MAKES A HIGH-QUALITY PROPOSAL?

The Kaleidoscope Fund at Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is structured to provide the Synod, its congregations (their schools & childcares) and LCEF member districts maximum freedom to propose opportunities for ministry suited to their own context. This initiative was established to impact ministries that have as their focus outreach and expansion, education and rostered church worker wellness.

In its inaugural year in 2016, the Kaleidoscope Fund provided grants totaling over \$683,000 to 11 ministries across the United States. Though early in the process, we have already begun to see how ministries have benefited from grant-funded programs and are learning a great deal through reports from recipients. In the spirit of that learning, we have observed that the strongest applications share several common characteristics. Below, we list some of those characteristics for the consideration of potential applicants.

This opportunity can impact ministry through outreach & expansion, education and rostered church worker wellness.

In addition, we note characteristics that may undercut the quality of a grant request and weaken an otherwise excellent proposal. Several examples of these are also listed.

One way to understand how these factors all work together in an excellent proposal is coherence. In a coherent proposal, the character of the organization, the need to implement the ministry, the proposed activities and accompanying budget and the shape of the planning process come together in a way that makes sense and indicates a meaningful and effective ministry experience focused on maximum Gospel impact.

There is no one formula for crafting a successful proposal. Instead, they are offered as observations from experience to encourage you to design the most effective program possible for your ministry.



CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG PROPOSALS

1) IDENTIFYING INFORMATION COMPLETE

- This portion of the application (p. 1-3) is thoroughly completed and signed, including a brief summary and requested documents.

2) NARRATIVE

- The narrative is organized and contains clear, comprehensive information.

3) ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

- The topic is completely addressed. Statements are clearly supported by many facts and detailed examples.

4) FOCUS AREA FULFILLMENT

- There is a clearly stated and identified need with defined goals, an explanation of what success will look like and what will be different at the conclusion of the project.

5) NEEDS STATEMENT

- Needs are plainly addressed. All information is clear and comes from reputable sources. Extensive details and relevant examples are used to support the content.

6) WHO WILL BE SERVED AND HOW

- It is clearly identified/explained who will be served by the program. Services are completely addressed and clearly supported by many facts and detailed examples.

7) REALISTIC TIMELINE

- The plan provides a comprehensive roadmap for completing the project.

8) CONSISTENCY WITH GOALS

- Comprehensively addresses organization's goals and clearly reflects goals of LCEF Mission Statement, "...to support the Church in fulfilling its mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

9)

PLAN FOR LONG-TERM FUNDING BEYOND GRANT FUNDING

- Provides a comprehensive plan for long-term funding of the project with dedicated funds

10)

GRANT VS. CAMPAIGN

- Clearly explains capital campaign experience and describes how plan better fulfills focus area and needs than a capital campaign would.

11)

EVALUATION

- Outcomes and goals are completely addressed. Goals are clear, measurable and realistic, supported by many facts and detailed examples of follow-up.

12)

PROGRAM BUDGET TEMPLATE

- The template is fully completed, and numbers are realistic to the project; it also reflects the financial responsibility of the applicant.

Characteristics that Weaken Proposals

- Submission not received by postmark deadline.
- Application has not been signed, and not all requested documents have been provided.
- The funds are requested for an unqualified purpose:
 - Operating costs (including salaries)
 - Operating deficits
 - Capital improvements
 - Debt payments
- The request doesn't meet the minimum \$15,000.
- The request is made by an unqualified entity. *Qualified entities include: The Synod, a Congregation of the Synod (including its School or Childcare), a Member District of LCEF*