



ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
Church Planting Grant
Requirements & Application

Grant funding for January through December 2027
*With continuing funding being offered provisionally
in 2028 and 2029 if qualifications continue to be met*

Applications due by September 15, 2026

GENERAL INFORMATION

Since the early 1990s, the Orthodox Church in America's Department of Evangelization has administered the OCA Church Planting Grant Program, reviewing and supporting mission communities seeking assistance in establishing and strengthening Orthodox Christian witness throughout North America. Over more than thirty-five years, the program has helped numerous missions mature into thriving parish communities. This important initiative continues to play a central role in advancing the Church's missionary calling and fostering sustainable parish growth. In 2025 and 2026, the Department, together with diocesan and departmental partners, reviewed the program and updated portions of the application process and eligibility criteria to better reflect current realities in mission development, clergy support, and parish growth. This grant is intended not merely to establish mission communities, but to assist them in developing into healthy, self-sustaining parish communities.

MATCHING GRANT ASSISTANCE AMOUNTS

The Church Planting Grant Program is designed to unfold over 3 years, with the priest's salary and benefits being partially supported by the grant in descending amounts each year:

- **Year 1** - Grant award of 50% of the priest package (salary, benefits, and pension)
 - *OCA contribution cap of \$60,000*
- **Year 2** - Grant award of 40% of the priest package (salary, benefits, and pension)
 - *OCA contribution cap of \$48,000*
- **Year 3** - Grant award of 25% of the priest package (salary, benefits, and pension)
 - *OCA contribution cap of \$30,000*

Applicants should indicate the total clergy compensation package they are prepared to provide, including salary, benefits, and mandatory pension contributions. The amount requested from the Church Planting Grant Program will then be calculated in accordance with the funding percentages outlined above for each year of the grant.

The Church Planting Grant application should be prepared by the mission community in consultation with the local Dean and with the blessing of the Diocesan Bishop. Before an application may be considered by the Department of Evangelization, it must receive the written blessing of the Diocesan Bishop.

MISSION QUALIFICATIONS

- The Church Planting Grant Program presupposes that the grant funds be used solely to stipend the salary and benefits package of a full-time priest and must include contributions to the OCA's pension plan.
- Each applying mission should have standardized bylaws and present all governing documents with the application.

MISSION PRIEST EXPECTATIONS

- The mission priest is expected to devote himself fully to his ministry within the mission community and to serve in a manner consistent with the objectives of the Church Planting Grant Program.
- The Department recognizes that, in certain circumstances, limited outside employment may be necessary or appropriate. Any outside employment must be fully disclosed either as part of the application process or at any time it is sought during the life of the grant and must not materially hinder the priest's ability to serve as a full-time priest in the mission. The nature and extent of such employment will be considered as part of the Department's evaluation of the application.
- The mission priest shall participate in a mentoring relationship with a representative of the Department of Evangelization, as designated by the Department. In addition, a local diocesan priest, blessed by the Diocesan Bishop, shall serve as mentor. The diocesan mentor priest must be identified during the application process and approved by both the Diocesan Bishop and the Department.
- The mission priest shall submit monthly reports using forms provided by the Department. Reports shall be distributed to the Diocesan Bishop, Diocesan Mentor Priest, Dean (or Diocesan Mission Director), and the Department of Evangelization.
- Mission priests participating in the Church Planting Grant Program may be invited to contribute to the work of the Department by sharing their experience, assisting with training initiatives, or mentoring future grant recipients following the successful completion of their own participation in the Program.

TERMINATION OF GRANT FUNDING

Grant funding may be suspended or terminated under any of the following circumstances:

- The approved grant term has concluded, and no additional funding has been authorized.
- The mission or mission priest fails to comply with the terms of the grant agreement or with the requirements of the Church Planting Grant Program.

- The Diocesan Bishop requests termination of the grant or withdraws his support for the participating mission.
- Funds allocated to the Church Planting Grant Program are insufficient to continue support.
- The mission, parish, or mission priest fails to remain in good standing with the Orthodox Church in America or otherwise fails to adhere to the Statute, governing documents, policies, or canonical discipline of the Orthodox Church in America.

PROCEDURE

- In consultation with the local Dean, obtain the blessing of the Diocesan Bishop to apply.
- Submit the completed application to the Diocesan Bishop for review and written endorsement.
- Upon receiving the Diocesan Bishop's endorsement, submit the complete application and all required attachments in PDF format to the Department of Evangelization by the published deadline: OCA Departments: jpatterson@oca.org
- Applications that remain incomplete, unresolved, or lacking required documentation after the submission deadline of September 15 will be considered late and may be removed from consideration.

All Church Planting Grant applications will be reviewed by the Department of Evangelization. Following its review, the Department will make funding recommendations to the Metropolitan Council, which will consider and act upon those recommendations. Applications approved by the Metropolitan Council will then be submitted to the Holy Synod of Bishops for final approval at its Fall Session.

Applicants are ordinarily notified of funding decisions in November or early December. Approved grants become effective on January 1 of the following year and operate on a calendar-year basis.

APPLICATION

2027 CHURCH PLANTING GRANT

SECTION 1: CONTACT

Mission Name:	
Diocese:	
Deanery:	
Mailing Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Year Founded:	
Rector:	

SECTION 2: MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

Average Sunday Attendance:	
Number of Adults:	
Number of Children:	
Number participating in catechism:	

SECTION 3: ADMINISTRATIVE

Does the mission hold an annual meeting?	____ Yes ____ No	<i>(If yes, please attach report)</i>
Is the mission legally incorporated?	____ Yes ____ No	<i>(If yes, please attach articles)</i>
Has the mission adopted mission bylaws?	____ Yes ____ No	<i>(If yes, please attach bylaws)</i>
Mission Federal EIN:	<i>(Please attach copy)</i>	
Name of insurance carrier:		
Number of members on mission council:		
Does the mission have a choir director?	____ Yes ____ No	
Number of regular choir members:		
Does the mission offer church school?	____ Yes ____ No	
Does the mission offer adult education?	____ Yes ____ No	

Please list deacons, subdeacons, and tonsured readers in the mission:

SECTION 4: FACILITIES

Does the mission rent or own?	
Monthly rent / mortgage:	
Is this a permanent space?	☐ Yes ☐ No

Describe the current worship space (square footage, hall, classrooms, etc.) Please attach photos:

List any assets owned by the mission (land, buildings, etc.):

Mission website url:	
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SECTION 5: CLERGY

Does the mission priest have outside employment? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, please describe including remuneration):

If the mission priest has outside employment, please describe how this arrangement will not affect full time ministry:

SECTION 6: FINANCES

MONTHLY INCOME

General Mission Income:	
Regular Diocesan Support:	
Regular Deanery Support:	
Other:	
Total Monthly Income:	

MONTHLY EXPENSES

Priest Salary:	
Priest Housing Allowance:	
Priest Pension:	
Priest Insurance:	
Priest other:	
Rent / Mortgage:	
Utilities:	
Insurance:	
Other:	
Diocesan Assessments:	
Total Mission Monthly Expenses:	

ASSETS

Real Estate:	
Liquid Assets (checking, savings):	
Fixed Assets:	
Other:	
Total Assets:	

LIABILITIES

Mortgage Balance:	
Loans:	
Other:	
Total Liabilities:	

SECTION 7: REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

- *In addition to the administrative documents listed in Section 3, please provide the following:*
 - 2 years of financial summaries (budgets, income, expense)
 - Current operating budget / balance sheet
 - On mission letterhead, please provide a **one-page summary** of the mission's history, recent growth, and overall health, including metrical data.

SECTION 8: SIGNATURES

MISSION PRIEST _____

MISSION WARDEN / PRESIDENT _____

HIERARCHICAL BLESSING

With my signature I give my archpastoral blessing and support for this mission to be considered as recipient for the Church Planting Grant Program of the Orthodox Church in America.

DIOCESAN HIERARCH _____

Email this application and all requested documents in PDF format to:

Archpriest Justin Patterson, OCA Departments: jpatterson@oca.org