



What is Expansive Church 2023!

Expansive Church 2023! is an outreach initiative of Bethlehem Lutheran Church (BLC), St. Charles, IL. This program is an incubator or an accelerator for entrepreneurs and nonprofits with innovative ideas to address social issues.

How does Expansive Church 2023! work?

This initiative seeks grant applications from entrepreneurs and nonprofits with business models that address social issues and/or community needs. A selection process defined by a team of Bethlehem disciples will determine eligibility and grant awards in December of the current calendar year.

Are there certain focus areas?

Expansive Church 2023! awards grants to organizations building solutions to address homelessness, affordable housing, refugee resettlement, criminal justice reform, racial equity, poverty, human rights, employment, health care, community development, and education. NOTE: Other programs and initiatives may be considered based on their individual merits.

Are there geographic limitations?

We are focused on solutions that address the challenges of those living in the Fox River Valley, Elgin, to Aurora, Illinois. We welcome ideas that demonstrate potential for replication and scaling beyond the local community.

What is the timeline for 2023?

September	October	November	December
September 1 is launch of open applications	BLC Expansive Church Team will begin to review submissions	Deadline for applications is November 1; team will continue to review submissions	Grant recipients announced by December 20

Eligibility & Guidelines

-Expansive Church 2023! Qualifying projects should represent the following major characteristics:

- Holistic in conception and design
- Meaningful in approach and execution
- Lasting in effect and outcomes
- Empathetic in context and character

-Nonprofit applicants need not be faith-based to be considered for an award.

-Expansive Church 2023! is faith-based and our Christian values will inform and be applied to the screening and determination process.

-Applicants in all stages of their project, from the idea stage to fully established, are welcome. Expansive Church 2023! is not risk-averse and welcomes idea stage ventures.

-Prior grant recipients may apply again.

-Prior applicants who did not receive funding are welcome to apply again.

-Grant awards will be up to \$5,000 each. We perceive our grant awards being leveraged with other grant awards a nonprofit may receive.

-Disciples of Bethlehem Lutheran Church may not directly apply.

What are we looking for?

-How the model has the ability to create a clear social impact.

-A thorough understanding of the problem being tackled as well as the landscape of others working on the same issues.

Technical Criteria Categories:

The grant review team will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals.

- Degree of overall social impact and innovation
- Personal capacity of individual and/or team
- Clear articulation of obstacles and risks
- Funding model and sustainability plan
- Degree of personal commitment

What You Will Get:

-A chance at receiving a grant award.

-Access to mentorship and repository of business knowledge and acumen from disciples of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

-Prayer support.

-Community and networking opportunities with other like-minded awardees.

Expectations:

-Agree to use the award within 12 months of receipt.

-Agree to come to Bethlehem within that 12 month period to share how the grant award was used and the impact it made.

Who Decides on the Awarding of Funding?

A Bethlehem review team will determine grant recipients.

How soon will I hear the decision on my application?

You will hear from the team with news on whether your application is selected by December 20, 2023.

If I have questions about the application process, who do I contact?

We invite you to reach out to our grant liaisons during the submission period for any questions or clarification. Please contact Lori Linkimer at lori@starckre.com or 630-841-3278 or Brian Warner at bwarner929@gmail.com or 630-391-0578.

What happens if the grant is not used for it's intended purpose?

You will not be able to reapply in future grant cycles.

What are the intellectual property terms of Expansive Church 2023!?

You will own your intellectual property. Applications/ideas will be held in confidence and will not be shared outside the Expansive Church 2023! team.

What types of applications don't you accept?

While we accept many types of applications, we do not look for academic projects, or research initiatives.

Is there anything that Expansive Church 2023! cannot fund?

Expansive Church 2023! will support all selected projects excluding activities prohibited by law.