**

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**Applications pour in for COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund**

By Susan Kim

GOSHEN, Ind. – Anabaptist churches in the U.S. have submitted over 200 applications to the new COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund since its launch on April 13, 2020.

The great majority of the applications have come from churches serving racially or ethnically diverse communities – congregations whose needs center around lost jobs and income that have led to a standstill of ministry in underserved communities that most need hope.

“Applications have been pouring in,” said MDS executive director Kevin King, of the Fund, which was created by [Mennonite Disaster Service](https://mds.mennonite.net/), [Everence**®**](https://www.everence.com/) and [Mennonite Central Committee U.S.](https://mcc.org/) to aid churches facing financial crisis due to COVID-19.

Seeded with a combined $550,000 from the three organizations, the Fund’s organizers are urgently calling for additional donations as the needs, already great, will continue to rise.

“We are a community of faith, called to support one another through mutual aid,” said Leonard Dow, Everence stewardship and development specialist, and a key leader in the development and implementation of Everence strategies to serve urban churches and communities. “It is vitally important that we walk alongside our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ during this unprecedented time of need.”

In addition to financial help, many people also depend on the spiritual and pastoral care that their churches provide, King added.

“These grants are a lifeline for many churches that serve the most vulnerable in these economic crises. We are one body, let our generosity resource the members that need it most,” said Dina Gonzalez-Pina, MCC Ethnicity and Gender Equity Specialist.

Recipient churches are using the grants to meet their congregational financial needs (such as rent, mortgage, utilities, and staff salaries) or to help families and individuals recover from COVID-19 hardships. Priority is being given to churches with budgets of under $50,000 per year.

Donations to the COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund may be made here to help meet the many requests for assistance: <https://mds.mennonite.net/covid-19-donations/>

**About the COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund**

*Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), Everence and Mennonite Central Committee U.S. have joined together to launch a COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund to aid churches facing financial crisis due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. The Fund will assist churches with historic roots or relationships with the Anabaptist faith community. Priority will be given to racially and ethnically diverse churches serving in historically under-resourced communities (i.e. communities and households that are underbanked, underinsured and/or uninsured).*

*Recipient churches may use the grants to assist families and individuals in their midst recover from COVID-19 hardships. While primarily focused on domestic relief needs, a portion of the fund will support global partners through the Mennonite World Conference Global Sharing Fund.*

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