

#### Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church

#### Commission on Disabilities

#### (804) 521-1138 Fax: (804) 521-1179

The Commission on Disabilities has set aside funding to assist local churches in working their way toward total accessibility (accessibility grants) and to assist any church and/or organization wanting to establish new programs (program grants) to reach and serve individuals with disabilities. These funds are limited and will not cover the entire cost of most projects. However, through the awarding of a grant, the Commission is offering its support to efforts toward full inclusion of all persons in worship and Christian education experiences and to advocacy for the needs of persons with challenging conditions. Funds are made available through the contributions of the United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, local churches, individual donors, and other church-related groups. Only one grant per calendar year will be considered for a church.

**Accessibility Grants**:

The ***Book of Discipline*** calls upon the board of trustees of each local church, in cooperation with the health and welfare ministries representative, to conduct an annual accessibility audit of their building, grounds, and facilities to discover and identify any physical, architectural, and communication barriers that impede the full participation of people with disabilities and to make plans and determine priorities for the elimination of all such barriers. Once an audit has been completed and priorities established, a church may apply for an accessibility grant. A visit by members of the Grants Committee may be required. Technical support from the Commission is available upon request. **Grant maximum: $700.**

**Program Grants**:

The ***Social Principles*** of The United Methodist Church clearly address the rights of persons with disabilities. The Church and society are called on to protect the civil rights of persons with disabilities and to be sensitive to, and advocate for, the full inclusion of ALL people in the community of faith and in the larger world community. To this end, the Commission on Disabilities of the Virginia Conference is charged with providing advocacy, education, and direct services on behalf of persons with challenging conditions, affirming that ***ALL PEOPLE*** are ***ONE*** in the Body of Christ. Churches and/or organizations may submit proposals for new programs and services to the Commission for assistance with startup costs. **Grant maximum: $500.**

For hearing assistance systems or other ministries with individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, you may also want to explore grant opportunities through the United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries (UCDHM). The grant application can be found at <http://www.umcdhm.org/>

To be considered for grant funds, complete the following form, save it under the name of your request, print a copy, obtain the required signatures, and submit the form to the Commission on Disabilities. A copy of the mini-audit/accessibility survey must accompany a request for accessibility grant funds. The forms can be sent by mail or scanned and e-mailed to:

Commission on Disabilities

Virginia Conference UMC

PO Box 5606

Glen Allen VA 23058

[serving@vaumc.org](mailto:serving@vaumc.org)

All applicants are responsible for ensuring that their application has been received. You may call (804-521-1138) or e-mail ([serving@vaumc.org](mailto:serving@vaumc.org)) for confirmation. Each grant request will be reviewed by the Grants Committee. If you have questions or need more information, please contact the Commission on Disabilities at 804-521-1138

**Helpful Resources**

**Accessibility Audit for Churches:** Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the United Methodist Committee on Disability Ministries offers an extensive audit of facilities, features, and programs. You can find the complete audit materials on-line at <http://www.umdisabilityministries.org/> Under the “Resources” tab, scroll to “Welcoming and Accessibility.”

**Breaking The Sound Barrier in Your Church: Ministry and Mission with People Who Are Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened**. Booklet *compiled by t*he United Methodist Congress of the Deaf Standing Committee on Church Accessibility Promotion. Available for download from the General Board of Global Ministries website: <http://gbgm-umc.org/disc/breakingsound.html>

It can also be found on the website for the United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Ministries: [http://www.umcdhm.org/](http://www.umcdhm.org/3000.html)

**Accessible Faith: A Technical Guide for Accessibility in Houses of Worship:** This booklet provides a concise guide to planning, designing, funding, and constructing for greater accessibility in your church without detracting from the beauty or historical significance of your worship space. Readers will discover ways to make parking spaces, walkways, restrooms, doors, telephones, and water fountains more accessible as well as suggestions for creating ramps, railings, elevators, and lifts. Other items highlighted include tips on covering costs, choosing contractors, establishing schedules, and managing projects. The booklet can be downloaded from the website for the Retirement Research Foundation at:

[www.rrf.org/wp-content/uploads/Accessible\_Faith1.pdf](http://www.rrf.org/wp-content/uploads/Accessible_Faith1.pdf)

**National Council of the Churches Equal Access Guide for Meetings, Conferences, Large Assemblies, and Worship.** The National Council of Churches' Committee on Disabilities, part of the Education and Leadership Ministries Commission, has prepared a comprehensive "Equal Access Guide for Meetings, Conferences, Large Assemblies and Worship.” The guide helps meeting planners with detailed practical advice ranging from the maximum slope of access ramps to the seating of Sign Language interpreters, adequate space for work dogs, and much more. The booklet can be downloaded from the National Council of Churches USA website at: [www.ncccusa.org/elmc/disabilitiesmanual.html](http://www.ncccusa.org/elmc/disabilitiesmanual.html)

**DISC** (**DIS**abilities **C**oncerns) is for persons living with physically or mentally challenging conditions, their friends, families, caretakers, lay associates, and clergy. This web site and e-mail list offer information related to disability concerns, yet add the dimension of spiritual care. Materials available on developmental disabilities, mental illness, creative writing by or related to persons with disabilities, and resources in the area of disability ministry for both individuals and faith communities. <http://gbgm-umc.org/disc/>

**Commission on Disabilities**

**Accessibility and Program Grant Application**

**Date:** Click here to enter a date. **District:** Click here to enter text.

**Church Name:** Click here to enter text.

Street Address: Click here to enter text.

City, State, Zip Code: Click here to enter text.

**Name of Local Church Contact Person:** Click here to enter text.

Office Phone: Click here to enter text. Cell or Home Phone: Click here to enter text.

E-Mail: Click here to enter text.

**Guidelines for Awarding Accessibility and Program Grants**

1. All accessibility grants awarded are to be used for ***existing structures***. All new construction must follow applicable state and local codes for accessibility according to law.
2. Local churches may apply for a single grant request per calendar year.
3. Actual work on the proposed project must begin within the calendar year when the grant is awarded.
4. An on-site consultation may be required in order to assess the need to be met by the proposed project.
5. Technical support is available upon request.
6. Payment will be made after approval of the Grant Committee of the Commission on Disabilities.
7. All recipients of grants from the Commission on Disabilities must be connected to The United Methodist Church in the Virginia Annual Conference and provide a service to persons with disabilities.

**Reason for Application**:

Provide a written statement describing the project and anticipated total costs of what you propose to do. Be specific and give details where possible.

Click here to enter text.

**For Accesibility Grant Requests:**

1. Have state and local codes for accessibility been followed? Choose an item.

If not, why? Click here to enter text.

1. Can you provide drawings or pictures that will assist the Commission to fully understand your needs and grant request? Choose an item. If yes, please submit your drawing/pictures as a separate attachment with the application.

**For Both Accessibility and Program Grant Requests:**

Attach to this form:

☐ A copy of the accessibility audit/survey for your church/facility which can be found on the Virginia Conference website under “Ministries” > “Disabilities”

☐ Any financial detail which may be available (i.e. estimates, budgets, payment invoices if work has been completed)

Which of the following categories best describes the category of disability that this grant project will assist? Choose an item.

If “Other,” please describe: Click here to enter text.

**Audit/Financial Review:**

As noted in ¶617.2 and ¶617.3 of the ***2012 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church***, any district office, agency, institution, and organization receiving financial support from conference funds or from any authorized conference-wide appeal are subject to review of their audited financial records by the Conference Council of Finance and Administration or designated body. In order to be in compliance, please check the appropriate statement below and submit any required documentation with this application.

🞏 ***For local churches*** of the Virginia Conference UMC, the signature of the District Superintendent below confirms that the church has complied with charge conference audit requirements.

Charge Name: Click here to enter text.

Date of Charge Conference Review: Click here to enter text.

* ***For organizations outside the Virginia Conference UMC***, attach the last completed financial audit or review. Organizations will not be considered for funding unless this information is provided.

Name of Firm/Individual Completing Audit/Review: Click here to enter text.

Date of Audit/Review: Click here to enter text.

**Statement of Intent to be Signed by Local Church/Agency Representative:**

We agree to use the funds provided by this grant within a period of six (6) months unless the Commission on Disabilities (COD) has granted an extension. We also understand the need to re-apply if the work is to begin later than the specified six (6) months period. If we do not use the grant as requested, said funds will be returned to the COD so that another church/agency may benefit from the support. It is also understood that we are to account for funds if requested by the COD.

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Signature of Church Representative Date

**Certification by District Superintendent**

Does this project require approval by the District Board of Church Location and Building? Choose an item. If yes, give date approval was granted: Click here to enter text.

By affixing my signature to this application, I endorse the church’s request.

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District Superintendent Signature Date

Return this application with the necessary attachments to Commission on Disabilities,   
PO Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058. E-mail: [serving@vaumc.org](mailto:serving@vaumc.org)