

ASSISTANCE AND RETIREMENT HOUSING COMMITTEE

ASSISTANCE FUNDS

WEST VIRGINIA FUND

The West Virginia Fund consists of funds from the estates of Annie Gebhardt and Frances Littlepage Irwin that were given to the Board of Pensions for the purpose of ministerial relief in the State of West Virginia. The Board of Pensions is the trustee for the Irwin funds and One Valley Bank, Charleston WV is the trustee of the Gebhardt fund. All of the remaining gift and accumulated income from the Irwin fund is available to be spent while the principal amount of the Gebhardt fund will be preserved and the accumulated income can be spent.

In consultation with the Presbyteries of West Virginia, Shenandoah, and Upper Ohio Valley, staff recommends that eligible persons for the West Virginia Fund be current or former Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, their dependents, spouses, surviving spouses, whose current permanent residence lies within the state of West Virginia.

Staff recommends that the income derived from the West Virginia Fund be used as outlined below:

- The Board of Pensions will administer the West Virginia Fund in partnership with the presbyteries that lie partially or totally within the state of West Virginia.
- These presbyteries will initiate requests (apply) for Shared Grants from the Board of Pensions for Eligible Persons normally using a Short Form supplied by the Board of Pensions.
- These Shared Grants will be shared equally between the presbytery and the Board of Pensions. The presbytery's portion will come from the West Virginia Fund. The Board of Pensions portion will come from the Benefit Supplement Fund, the same fund from which all other shared grants are paid.
- The presbytery applying for the Shared Grant will document the eligibility of the individual.
- The presbytery will retain adequate records suitable for an audit for a period of three years following the award of the grant

Shared Grants using the West Virginia Fund may be used for regular Shared Grants. In addition they may be used for the following purposes:

REPAYMENT OF DIRECT SEMINARY DEBT

The purpose of this grant is to assist an Eligible Person in liquidating debt incurred seeking a Master of Divinity degree.

- Debt is that which is owed at the time of the initial application to a seminary, state, or federal agency for debts incurred while seeking a Master of Divinity Degree.

- To qualify an Eligible Person must be willing to serve and be a member of one of the three presbyteries for a minimum of three years. If a minister leaves before that period of time, the debt will be repaid on a prorated basis.
- Ministry must meet the expectations of the presbytery.

INITIAL EXPENSES INCURRED WHILE MOVING TO SERVICE

The purpose of this grant is to provide for the cost of relocation, such as the unusual high cost of automobile registration, over and above the reimbursement for moving household goods and travel.

- The Shared Grant will be no more than \$1,000.

MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT FOR A SURVIVING SPOUSE

The purpose of this grant is to provide Medicare supplement coverage for a survivor spouse.

- A presbytery may apply for a Shared Grant for a surviving spouse and dependents for the cost of Medicare Supplement obtained through the Board of Pensions. The Board of Pensions will also review these applicants for additional assistance under the income supplements program.

COMPUTER PROGRAM

This program is designed to provide computers to church workers, primarily Ministers of the Word and Sacrament who serve in a congregation of 200 or less members, and who, because of the type and locale of their employment, are not able to purchase one. Many West Virginia employees of a local church or yoked field serve in relative isolation, receive small salaries, and at times inadequate reimbursement of expenses incurred in connection with their ministry.

The computers will be standard units as designed by the Board of Pensions Information System Team. Shared Grants will be limited to \$1,300.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

The purpose of this grant is to assist in relieving the reality of isolation incurred while serving within West Virginia. Shared Grants will be given to Eligible Persons participating in community building activities such as:

- An annual or semi-annual retreat planned by one or more of the presbyteries.
- An annual event for Ministers of the Word and Sacraments and their spouses.
- A gathering of persons by areas of presbytery up to four times a year.
- The Shared Grants will include the cost of housing, meals, person care, group meeting space, leaders, and the cost of auto at the current federal government rate for Eligible Persons.

The presbytery may apply for a block Shared Grant attaching a list of individuals participating.

EDUCATION

The purpose of this grant is to assist Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and their spouses and dependents to obtain education that they might not normally be able to afford.

- For ministers, this program is for continuing education beyond the Master of Divinity Degree.
- For spouses and dependents, the grant of no more than \$2,000 can be used for education leading to certificates, diplomas, etc. and which program the presbytery has approved.
- The Shared Grant will include the cost of registration, tuition, books, and materials. The Shared Grant will not include housing or transportation.
- The presbytery must initially approve the course of study and conduct an annual evaluation of progress to ensure that it meets presbytery's expectations.
- The pursuit of the certification or degree shall not exceed five years. The eligibility may be extended one additional year upon review and approval by presbytery.
- Resources other than Shared Grants (General Assistance/Discretionary Funds) may be used to fund this program.

SUPPLEMENTAL COUNSELING

The purpose of this grant is to provide funds for vocational counseling that is not covered by the Benefits Plan. The Presbytery must request this counseling. The counselor shall be approved and recommended by the Presbytery.

- The Shared Grant is for direct expenses to the counselor or therapist.
- After each ten counseling sessions, the presbytery shall verify the need to continue for an additional ten counseling sessions.
- If the nearest counselor or therapist is more than 40 miles from the place of residence the Shared Grant may include for each session the cost of car operation at the current federal rate plus \$10.00 for cost of meal.