

**APPLICATION PERIOD FOR THE SPRING 2025 DISBURSEMENT**  
**March 31, 2025**  
**THIS IS A GRANT - NOT A LOAN!**

**THE STRONG MINISTERS PROGRAM**

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Strong Ministers Program is to foster strong and enduring ministries by supporting Teaching Elders, Retired Teaching Elders, Temporary Supply Pastors (including Interim Pastors), and Christian Educators of Shenandoah Presbytery.

Grants are available in six categories including: Housing Assistance, Emergency Medical Assistance, Seminary or College Debt, Continuing Education Grants, Sabbatical Support and College Grants (for spouses and children). Each grant category has specific eligibility and grant award amounts. Please check guidelines for details.

**Guidelines**

**BACKGROUND:** In 1948, the former Lexington Presbytery created a "Minister's Revolving Loan Fund" for the purpose of providing low interest loans for Ministers purchasing homes (many for the first time) upon retirement. Over time, this fund has grown and gone through many changes. Most recently, it has been known as the "Minister's Grant Fund", and it has continued to provide assistance.

Please be aware that it may not be possible to meet all requests. This is a shared, limited resource. The Strong Ministers Program Committee welcomes your suggestions for improving the allocation of this resource.

Since resources contributed for and distributed by the Strong Ministers Program are designated funds held by the Shenandoah Presbytery Corporation for the benefits of the program, it is the Strong Ministers Program's understanding that awarded grants are distributed for restricted purposes. Should the purpose for which a grant is offered (e.g.in support of a ministerial sabbatical, continuing education, housing grant etc.) cease to exist it is expected that the grant funds will be returned to the Strong Ministers Program account of Shenandoah Presbytery.

### **Who may apply?**

- Installed Teaching Elders currently serving Shenandoah Presbytery
- Certified Christian Educators currently serving Shenandoah Presbytery
- Temporary Supply Pastors (including Interim Pastors) currently serving and have actively served in Shenandoah Presbytery for three years or more.
- Non-certified Christian Educators currently serving Shenandoah Presbytery are eligible for Continuing Education grants.
- Retired Teaching Elders who are members of Shenandoah Presbytery are eligible for Housing Assistance and Emergency Medical Grant

## **ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE IN THREE BROAD CATEGORIES**

### **I. Housing Assistance**

A Grant of \$5,000 (Maximum) is a one-time grant. It is available to Teaching Elders, installed full-time or retired, and Full-Time Certified Christian Educators in good standing, and Stated Supply Pastors who have been under contract with the same congregation(s) within Shenandoah Presbytery for 5 years or more. If retired, the Teaching Elder must have served Shenandoah Presbytery in an installed capacity. This Grant is available at the time of a home purchase or mortgage refinancing within the bounds of Shenandoah Presbytery or upon the occasion of a move to a retirement facility within Shenandoah Presbytery. In the event that the number of requests exceeds the amount available in a given year, priority for distribution will be based on years of service within Shenandoah Presbytery will be used. Applications for housing assistance may be received and distributed year-round or at the established spring and fall application deadlines. Housing Assistance (Application for this category may be made at any time. Please submit online application, also send a copy to Tom Holden, [tholden3@gmail.com](mailto:tholden3@gmail.com) and to Deb Klein, [kleindeh@gmail.com](mailto:kleindeh@gmail.com))

### **II. General Grants**

General Grants are available for members of Shenandoah Presbytery defined in the "Who May Apply" Section above. Ordinarily, only one grant will be awarded per calendar year per member with priority given to those who have drawn less frequently from the Program:

- **Emergency Medical Expenses:** Medical expenses not covered by the Board of Pensions. Up to \$3,000/year maximum
- **Seminary or College Debt:** Up to \$1,500/year maximum. Application may be made once each year until the debt is retired.
- **Continuing Education Grants for Ministers:** Up to \$3,000/year maximum each year. This grant is available after three full years of installed service or 5 years of stated supply contracted service in the same call within Shenandoah Presbytery. Recognizing the importance of Continuing Ed, the

Committee is flexible on the years of service requirement. For these grants we also ask the recipient if they would like the check to go to them personally, or to their church.

- ***Sabbatical Support:*** Up to \$6000.00/sabbatical. This grant is available after six (6) years of service to a particular position in Shenandoah Presbytery. An applicant must provide a detailed explanation of the intended use of this request, including an itemized estimate of all costs involved in the projected sabbatical. The applicant's Session or appropriate body must give their endorsement of this request. If the applicant is a Teaching Elder of a Parish, that Parish Council shall give its endorsement of the Sabbatical Plans. If the applicant is a member of Presbytery Staff, the plan shall be submitted to the Office and Personnel Committee, and then recommended to The Presbytery Leadership Team. This Grant is payable to the employing church or organization within Shenandoah Presbytery.
- ***College Grant Fund:*** Up to \$1,500/year per child or spouse. This is for children and/or spouse of those defined in the "Who May Apply" section. This is an annual grant for undergraduate degrees. This is not a need-based grant. In the event of a large number of applications, grants will be awarded equally, not to exceed the annual tuition fees of the applicant.

### **III. General Presbyter's Discretionary Fund for Ministers**

The Strong Ministers Program will make provision for confidential assistance for purposes other than those already enumerated and for other emergencies through the General Presbyter's Discretionary Fund for Ministers. This portion of the Strong Ministers Fund will be funded from the investment proceeds from the sale of the "Sunrise Avenue" house in Harrisonburg. This fund will be allocated at the sole discretion of the General Presbyter.

Should you have a concern that needs to be considered confidentially, please contact the General Presbyter for this assistance.

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

\* Those Minister members who are part of a clergy-couple shall be treated as two separate and independent individuals.

\* The Strong Ministers Program Review Committee will oversee the semi-annual distribution of Grants from the Strong Ministers Program. This committee will consist of seven members, of which five are to be Teaching Elders of Shenandoah Presbytery (three active and two retired) and two lay members. Further, at least one of the Minister members shall be a female Minister member of the Presbytery. This Committee will be created and maintained through the normal nominations process.

\* This Program will be reviewed and modified as necessary, and the Committee will adopt criteria by which disbursements may be made. For reasons of confidentiality, final approval and determination of all disbursements and decisions regarding the Program will rest with the Committee, which shall be accountable to Presbytery Leadership Team and the Presbytery of Shenandoah, through the Funds Administration Committee.

\* Please note that some Grants require the completion of a specified number of "years of service" to Shenandoah Presbytery.

\* Strong Ministers Committee members include:

Tom Holden, Co-Chair

Deb Klein, Co-Chair

Rachel Crumley

Nancy Hopkins-Garris

David Howard

Kate Rascoe

Bobby Spurgeon

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION FOR SPRING 2025**

**March 31, 2025**

You may complete the application form [HERE](#).