



UPPER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD

*United as Christ's disciples, we
Support one another and
Serve God in the world.*

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION FUND

Adopted by Synod Assembly – 6 June 2026

Fund History

- In 2013 the synod council of the Upper Susquehanna Synod adopted a resolution to raise \$30,000 over five years “to provide scholarships for candidates.” Over \$50,000 was raised in only three years (2/3 from a closing congregation).
- At the 2014 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly Bishop Robert Driesen stated in his report that the fund would provide “additional scholarships” to seminary students from the synod as well as to candidates enrolled in “an advanced educational program.”
- At the 2025 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly, the assembly voted to approve the Synod Council’s recommendation that an ad hoc committee be formed “for the purpose of reviewing the Synod Fund for Leaders in accordance with current policy.”

Purpose of Fund

The Leadership Education Fund of the Upper Susquehanna Synod provides for expenses related to education, training, and experiences for leaders that will enhance the ministry within the synod. The individual leaders supported may include Rostered Leaders (Pastors and Deacons), Candidates seeking rostered leadership, Synod Authorized Ministers (Authorized Lay Worship Leaders), and other leaders serving a congregation or ministry within the synod. Funding may include but is not limited to expenses related to seminary course work, Clinical Pastoral Education, certificate programs, continuing education, or advanced theological degrees.

Administration

- The Fund will be for the purposes set forth in this document unless two-thirds of the synod meeting in assembly agree to alter these terms.
- The Fund will continue to solicit and receive donations to provide for ongoing sustainability.
- All money in the Fund will be invested in accordance with the investment policy of the Upper Susquehanna Synod.
- The Bishop of the synod will appoint a committee of three people to oversee the fund and manage the grant application process. The synod council will approve appointees. Committee members will be appointed to terms of three years, staggered so that one member is appointed to a new term in each year.

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- The synod council, at the request of the bishop, may from time to time approve expenditures from the Fund to subsidize workshops for leadership development in the synod.
- A committee member related to an applicant shall be ineligible to vote on that application. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).
- Professional Career Services (psychological evaluations) for candidates for ordained ministry in this synod shall be covered from this fund.

Disbursement

- Disbursements from the Fund will be made upon recommendation from the above-mentioned committee.
- Grants of \$5,000 and above must be approved by the Synod Council at the recommendation of the committee.
- Grant applications will be reviewed and grants awarded in two cycles – spring and fall annually.
- Approved grants will be paid directly to the educational institution or training agency. In some cases, grants may be paid as reimbursement to the applicant.
- Those receiving grants for continuing education will be required to provide proof of attendance or completion, such as a certificate or letter from the training/educational organization. These will be verified by the committee at the next review meeting. Any missing verifications will be reported to the synod staff for further action.
- Any tax obligations incurred because of these grants are solely the responsibility of the recipient of the grant.
- After each grant cycle, the grant approval committee will provide a report of outcomes to the Synod Council.
- The grant approval committee will provide an annual report to the Synod Assembly regarding the use of the funds.
- The committee will review this policy for necessary revisions at minimum every 5 years.

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LEADERSHIP EDUCATION FUND Grant Application

The Upper Susquehanna Synod provides the Leadership Education Fund as a means to support its leaders by encouraging and supporting funding for their ongoing education and formation.

Rostered Ministers (Pastors and Deacons), Synodically Authorized Ministers and other leaders within the Upper Susquehanna Synod may apply to the fund for financial assistance related to their education and training needs.

Grants are awarded in two cycles – spring and fall – and are normally paid directly to the educational institution or training agency. In some cases, grants may be paid as reimbursement to the applicant. The size of grants depends on the number of applicants and the amount of funds available in the grant period.

Those receiving grants for continuing education will be required to provide proof of attendance or completion, such as a certificate or letter from the training/educational organization.

Any tax obligations incurred because of these grants are solely the responsibility of the recipient of the grant.

Name of Applicant (individual or group): _____

Role within your congregation/organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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1) Congregation or ministry context

2) Purpose of grant

Please describe how you believe this meets the goals and challenges of ministry in your current environment. How do you believe this opportunity will enhance your ministry skills for leading the church's mission into the future? Use last page for more space.

Dollar amount requested: \$ _____

Name and mailing address of the Organization providing the program
(attach information about the specific education/training applying for):

☐ Check here if payment should **not** be sent to this location and specify alternative directions on last page.

3) Anticipated completion date of education/training: _____

4) Will you receive assistance from any other agency?

Yes ____ No ____ If yes, please indicate source(s) and amount(s):

Signature of Applicant: _____

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Name of Applicant: _____

Date: _____

For a rostered leader serving in a congregation/organization, complete this section

Parochial Report Submitted (date): _____

Congregational/organization budget for Continuing Education: _____

For all individual applicants

CONGREGATION COUNCIL OR SUPERVISOR ACTION

The congregation council (or supervisor) supports this application

The bishop signs for rostered ministers on leave

Signatures

Council President/Supervisor: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

If in a congregation setting

Council Secretary: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

For a group application

Name of group leader (e.g., Conference Dean): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____

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