

CONTEXT:

After natural disasters, Week of Compassion first responds *to and through* local Disciples of Christ congregations, while the primary emphasis is on long-term recovery. In the short term, we provide solidarity grants as an expression of love from the wider church and as a way to, in the words of the author of Galatians, “bear one another’s burdens.” These grants are structured to provide rapid flexible financial assistance to Disciples congregations and households, especially those who are among the most vulnerable.

POLICY:

As a sign of the presence and care of the whole church, Week of Compassion will provide, through the Solidarity Grant program, rapid direct assistance to Disciples congregations for households and congregations that sustain property damage or loss due to disasters and for congregational disaster relief efforts. The allocation of funds should follow a standard process informed by Week of Compassion’s organizational commitment to racial equity, prioritizing assistance to vulnerable populations.

PROCEDURE:

Week of Compassion staff will work with local clergy and lay leaders, as well as with Regional Ministers and leadership of the racial/ethnic ministries, to obtain as much of the relevant information as is feasible for evaluating and awarding solidarity grants in a timely and responsive manner.

Household Solidarity Grants (\$100-\$750)

Week of Compassion staff will use the metrics outlined in this procedure to determine household solidarity grant amounts - this can be through the use of an application form or gathered in direct conversation with church leaders.

Household solidarity grants are available to households who meet the following criteria:

- are staff, members, or regular participants of Disciples of Christ congregations/ministries
- sustained property damage to their *primary residence* from house fires or disasters (natural or human-caused)
- have a gross annual income less than [150% of the Estimated Median Family Income](#) in each state or province (we trust churches to honor the intent of these grants; to reduce the administrative burden for application, documentation of income is not required)

Grant amount based on graded scale of impact and vulnerabilities.

- Damage to primary residence (+0.5pts)
- Anticipated out-of-pocket cost to household (including insurance deductibles and expenses not covered by insurance):
 - \$1-\$10,000 (+0.5pts)
 - \$10,001-\$50,000 (+1.5pt)

- More than \$50,000 or total loss (+2.5pt)
- Home unsafe for occupancy (+1pt)
- Income below 80% FMI (+1pt)
- Disabled (+1pts)
- Elderly (+1pts)
- Children in home (+0.5pts)
- Single parent household (+0.5pts)
- Low English proficiency (+1pt)
- Not eligible to apply for governmental disaster assistance (+2pts)

Significant evidence indicates communities of color are more likely to experience negative impact from disasters and are less likely to have access to adequate resources for recovery. Week of Compassion takes this into account in determining solidarity grants, if households choose to share their racial/ethnic identity (+1pt): _____

We also take into consideration other pastoral concerns or factors that will make recovery more difficult (+0.5-2pts):

Also available to staff, members, and regular participants at Disciples of Christ congregations or ministries who *experience financial hardship* due to evacuations or prolonged power outages.

- Evacuation: \$100/household
- Power Outages: \$50/household

Congregational Solidarity Grants -

These grants are available to Disciples of Christ congregations that have sustained damage to church facilities (building or equipment) from disasters (natural or human-caused) or acts of vandalism.

Grants are capped at the lower amount of either \$2000 or 10% of the estimated cost to the church (including insurance deductibles and expenses not covered by insurance). Grant amounts are capped at the lower of \$3000 or 20% the estimated cost in the following circumstances:

- Church was founded within the last 10 years
- Church is identified as a experiencing congregational or geographic, economic, or contextual vulnerabilities by the Regional Minister or the leadership of one of the Racial/Ethnic Ministries

Community Solidarity Grants

These grants, of up to \$2000, are available to Disciples of Christ congregations and ministries that are providing disaster relief and assistance to their neighbors immediately following

disasters. Responses can be through ministries of the congregation or in collaboration with local ministry partners (if the latter, grants must be used to support active participation, not simply a pass-through of funds). Along with grant support, Week of Compassion staff will work with congregational leaders to think through best practices, identify possible partners, and connect with other available resources.

Common uses include, but are not limited to: using buildings as shelters, warming/cooling/charging centers, or volunteer housing; feeding ministries - including food pantries and distribution of hot meals; clean-up teams; emotional and spiritual care - including support groups, pastoral counseling, and community vigils; and direct household assistance through distribution of gift cards or supplies.