

A NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

A \$15 Million Investment in the Future of Louisiana United Methodist Ministry · 2026–2028

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1. Jubilee Initiative

The Jubilee Initiative is the Louisiana Annual Conference's multi-year commitment to invest and empower the local church to meet its greatest needs and to have transformative impact in their communities. This Initiative is a two-year, \$15 million campaign created to help congregations address significant barriers to ministry, strengthen vibrant congregations and affiliated ministries, and accelerate missional momentum throughout Louisiana. Creating two funds, Debt Relief Fund and the Missional Momentum Fund, the Jubilee Initiative invests in the local church to increase ministry capacity, expand community impact, strengthen leadership and/or remove financial barriers that limit future ministry.

Executive Summary Table

Item	Description
Initiative	The Jubilee Initiative
Partnership	The Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church will partner with the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana
Eligibility	Louisiana United Methodist churches, campus ministries and camp
Total funding amount	Debt Relief - \$5,000,000 Missional Momentum - \$10,000,000
Individual grant amount	No minimum or maximum (typically \$20,000–\$250,000)
Letter of Intent	See Appendix A
Letter of Intent Deadline	October 23, February 1, and June 1, by 11:59 PM CST
Application	See Appendix B
Application deadlines	November 13, February 15, and June 15, by 11:59 PM CST
Applications per organization	1 per cycle
Number of awards	No limit

2. Funding Considerations

The Jubilee Initiative invests in major needs that stand between a vibrant congregation and its next season of ministry.

Debt Relief Fund – For churches whose major needs are servicing capital debt, the Jubilee Initiative will pay off the debt entirely. The hope is debt relief for these churches frees their imaginations and resources for impactful mission and ministry.

Missional Momentum Fund – The Missional Momentum Fund intends to invest in the local church to identify significant needs or opportunities that accelerates the churches capacity for mission and ministry in their local settings. The Conference has identified the following categories — this list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

- Capital Improvements — facility repair, renovation, or accessibility projects that support ministry
- Strategic Staffing — funding new or expanded ministry positions that build lasting capacity, for a term of up to two years

- Other Major Programming Initiatives or significant needs aligning with the Louisiana Conferences Strategic Initiatives of
 - Evangelizing new generations while embracing and pursuing diversity.
 - Creating a culture of call for both laity and clergy.
 - Prioritizing congregational vitality and leadership development.
 - Faithfully and creatively tell the story of The Louisiana Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Not every transformative opportunity fits into a predefined category. Churches are invited to apply sharing the substantial needs or ideas unique to their setting, particularly when addressing them could remove a major barrier, strengthen the congregation or open a meaningful new direction for ministry.

While there is a limit of one application per church or affiliated ministry per review cycle, there is no limit to the number of awards a church or affiliated ministry may receive over time. Previous amounts awarded will be a consideration by the Steering Committee when making final funding decisions.

3. Funding

Total funding available for the Jubilee Initiative

The Louisiana Conference will disburse up to \$15,000,000 through two funds.

- Debt Relief Fund - \$5,000,000
- Missional Momentum Fund - \$10,000,000

Award amounts

Individual awards are anticipated to range from \$20,000 to \$250,000; there are no fixed minimum or maximum restrictions.

4. Eligibility

Eligible applicants include Louisiana United Methodist churches and Louisiana United Methodist campus ministries and Louisiana United Methodist camps.

5. Deadlines

The Jubilee Initiative operates on three annual funding cycles. A Letter of Intent (LOI) must be submitted online at www.jubileelouisiana.com/loi on LOI deadline before an application can be submitted (see Appendix A for examples). Complete applications must follow the provided template and submitted online at www.jubileelouisiana.com/apply by 11:59 PM CST on the application due date listed below.

Cycle	LOI Due	Application Due	Award Notification
Fall	October 23	November 13	December 15
Winter	February 1	February 15	March 31
Spring	June 1	June 15	July 30

6. Review and Funding Decisions

Phase I — Blinded Scoring Committee Review

Clergy and lay reviewers from around the state serving on the Scoring Committee will independently evaluate blinded Missional Momentum Fund applications using the standardized review rubric (see Appendix C). At least two reviewers will independently score each application. The Reviewers are selected by CFA. The number of reviewers is determined by the number of applications received each cycle.

Phase II — Steering Committee Funding Decisions

The Steering Committee will receive Phase I scores and comments from the Scoring Committee, alongside identifying applicant information, to make award decisions. The Steering Committee will be comprised of two designated people from CFA, the Foundation and 1 representative from each district recommended by the District Superintendents. Members with conflicts of interest will be recused.

Scoring Rubric

Appendix C outlines the scoring rubric that will guide the Scoring Committee in objectively evaluating applications. Applicants are encouraged to reference the rubric while preparing their application to understand the criteria used to evaluate proposals and the characteristics of a competitive submission.

Characteristics of Competitive Applications

- Clear alignment with the purpose of the Jubilee Initiative
- Demonstration of clear need and clear vision for ministry momentum.
- Active and engaged lay and clergy leadership
- Realistic implementation plan
- Responsible financial stewardship
- Long-term sustainability
- Meaningful congregational and community impact
- Current on Conference apportionments

7. Award Disbursement

Coinciding with receipt of the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA), the Steering Committee will determine the disbursement method: a lump sum for non-phased projects, or tranche-based disbursements for multi-phased projects (e.g., upon signed contract/permits, contractor deposit, progress payment, etc.).

8. Recipient Expectations

Debt Relief Fund

- The Louisiana will provide churches with process and expectations for receiving debt relief in collaboration with the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana.

Missional Momentum Fund

- Submit a Missional Momentum Fund Report twice each year until the project is complete (see Appendix E)
- Maintain financial documentation
- Request approval for significant scope changes
- Participate in impact stories or site visits when requested

9. Contact Information

Britney Winn Lee, Jubilee Initiative Steering Committee Coordinator

Email: jubileequestions@laumc.org

10. Frequently Asked Questions

What can Jubilee support?

- Jubilee may support capital debt relief, facility improvements, strategic staffing, major ministry initiatives and other significant needs that can increase ministry capacity. These are examples, not a complete checklist. Other significant opportunities may also be considered.

Where do the funds for Jubilee come from?

- The Louisiana Conference has reached a strong position to strategically direct reserve funds toward the mission and ministry of our local churches.
- These funds do not come from apportioned dollars, funds designated to meet pension obligations, or funds dedicated to retiree health benefits.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Eligible applicants include Louisiana United Methodist churches, affiliated campus ministries and camps. Applicants must also meet all requirements in the current Jubilee program guidelines. Review the full program guide for final eligibility requirements, or contact the Jubilee team to discuss whether your church or affiliated ministry qualifies.

When are Letters of Intent due?

- Fall letters of intent are due October 23.
- Winter letters of intent are due February 1.
- Spring letters of intent are due June 1.

What makes a strong application?

- A strong application expresses clear alignment with the purpose of the Jubilee Initiative, explains the need or opportunity, the church's plan and the impact the investment could make in the life of the church and/or community. Applicants should demonstrate responsible financial stewardship and showcase a plan sustaining the work into the future.

Why do we have to prepare our applications without identifying information?

- Applicants should prepare their project descriptions, information and plans without identifying information so that the Scoring Committee may remain objective as they review applications based on the scoring rubric. All applicant identification will be removed before the Scoring Committee begins their blind review.

How does the review process work?

- Each application will undergo a two-phase review process. Phase 1 will be a blind review by the Scoring Committee made up of clergy and lay leaders from around the state. Two members of the committee will independently score each blinded application based on the Scoring Rubric. These scores and comments by the Scoring Committee will be provided to the Steering committee, who along with identifying applicant information will make funding decisions. The Steering committee is composed of two designated people from CFA, the Foundation and 1 representative from each District.

What is the scoring rubric?

- The scoring rubric guides the scoring committee in objectively evaluating applications. Applicants are encouraged to reference the rubric, found in the Program Guide, while preparing their application.

What is the Program Guide?

- This contains all the information needed to understand the Jubilee Initiatives. It contains deadlines, processes and contact information if you have any questions.

Can we discuss our idea before applying?

- The Jubilee team is available to talk through your idea, answer questions and help you understand the program before you apply.

Are matching funds required?

- No.

Can organizations apply more than once?

- Organizations may submit one application per cycle, and may apply in any funding cycle with no limit on the number of cycles. The Steering Committee will consider previous awarded amounts of applicants submitting multiple applications over the course of different cycles.

How often are progress reports due from award recipients?

- For churches requesting Debt Relief, one report within 12 months of receiving funds is to be submitted (see Appendix D).
- For Missional Momentum Fund reports are submitted twice each year until the funded project is complete (see Appendix E).

What approvals or signatures are required to submit an application?

- Before submitting an application, applicants should obtain approval for the proposed project from the lead pastor, Chair of the Board of Trustees, and Chair of the Leadership Board (or equivalents, as applicable). To keep the application process as simple and low-burden as possible, signatures are not required. By submitting an application, the applicant certifies that all required internal approvals have been obtained prior to submission.

Appendix A: Letter of Intent Instructions

Purpose: Letters of Intent notify the Jubilee Initiative Steering Committee of an impending application by briefly describing the anticipated project and applicant. Letters should emphasize how the proposed work aligns with the purpose of the Jubilee Initiative — specifically, debt relief, capital improvements, strategic staffing, other major initiative opportunities for increasing ministry capacity in the life of the local church.

Instructions

- Letters of Intent must be submitted online at www.jubileelouisiana.com/loi prior to submitting an application on the LOI deadline (i.e., October 23, February 1, or June 1, by 11:59 PM CST). No response is necessary before proceeding to submit a full application.
- Letters of Intent are limited to 500 words.
- Use the following headings to outline your upcoming request for funding:
 - Applicant Information: Name, District, Project Director
 - Project/Request Name
 - Project Summary: describe what you are requesting and why
 - Anticipated length of project
 - Estimated amount to be requested

Letter of Intent Example 1:

October 15, 2026

Dear Jubilee Initiative Steering Committee,

Please accept this Letter of Intent from St. Asbury United Methodist Church for our upcoming request for funding for our Communications Re-vamp Project. We look forward to submitting our full application by November 13.

Sincerely, Rev. Hope Full

Applicant Information: St. Asbury United Methodist Church, Northeast District, Rev. Hope Full

Project Name: Communications Re-vamp

Project Summary: St. Asbury United Methodist Church is requesting financial support to modernize our communications infrastructure to strengthen our ministry, improve community engagement, and better connect with people seeking a church home. In the past 2 years, we have experienced 250% growth in our church membership in our 30–45 year old age group, with over 10 new families with young children joining our church. Several new members have mentioned inviting friends to our church, but when their friends looked up our church online, they weren't impressed and didn't see evidence of the wonderful children's and youth ministry that has been in bloom these past 2 years. We are requesting a part-time salary (~\$20,000) to hire a Communications Director for one year to design and execute a social media strategy that shares the great work St. Asbury is doing and builds our online presence. This position would also support modernizing the design and process for our weekly service bulletins, congregation communications, and email, possibly with the support of AI tools. We anticipate also requesting about \$2,500 for camera equipment, editing software, and potential AI tool subscription fees. Anticipated length of project: 15 months (3 months for search and hire, 12 months of employment) Estimated amount to be requested: \$22,500

Letter of Intent Example 2:

October 15, 2026

Dear Jubilee Initiative Steering Committee,

Please accept this Letter of Intent from Charles Wesley United Methodist Church for our upcoming request for funding for our Preschool Renovation Project. We look forward to submitting our full application by November 13.

Sincerely, Rev. Susanna Wesley

Applicant Information: Charles Wesley United Methodist Church, West District, Rev. Susanna Wesley Project
Name: Preschool Renovation Project

Project Summary: Charles Wesley United Methodist Church is requesting financial support to renovate an existing church building to expand our preschool ministry and begin serving infants under 12 months of age. Our preschool has experienced sustained enrollment growth over recent months. We currently maintain a wait list for families seeking faith-based early childhood education and have heard from families in our community that there is high need for affordable infant care in our area. While we can serve toddlers and preschool-aged children, we are currently unable to accept infants due to space limitations and the specialized classrooms required for this age group. The proposed renovation will reconfigure underutilized church space into infant classrooms that meet state licensing requirements, including age-appropriate learning environments, restroom and changing facilities, secure entry access, and outdoor play accommodations. Expanding our preschool will let us serve families earlier in their parenting journey, build lasting relationships with young families, and introduce children to a Christ-centered environment from their earliest months of life. This investment will increase the church's capacity to minister to the community by expanding access to high-quality, faith-based childcare, while strengthening a ministry that serves as one of our congregation's primary connections with families not currently active in a church. Anticipated length of project: 12 months (3 months for design and permitting; 9 months for construction, licensing, and classroom preparation) Estimated amount to be requested: \$185,000

Appendix B: Missional Momentum Fund Application

Instructions

- This is a template application to help applicants begin preparing their applications.
- Applications must be completed online at www.jubileelouisiana.com/apply on November 13, February 15, or June 15, by 11:59 PM CST.
- **Applications must be written in a blinded manner**, without any information that would enable reviewers to identify the applicant.

Review Process

- Applications will undergo blinded review by the Scoring Committee, composed of clergy and laity.
- Scores and reviewer comments will be submitted to the Steering Committee for funding decisions.
- There is no limit to how many applications will be funded per cycle.
- Applicants will be notified of the funding decision within six weeks. Only one application per organization per cycle is permitted.
- In the event an application is not approved by the Steering Committee, scores and comments will be returned to the applicant.

1. Organization Information — excluded from reviewer view

- Name of applicant (*Church / Organization requesting funds*)
 - District
 - Select the entity that best describes you (*United Methodist Church / Affiliated Campus Ministry or Camp*)
 - Project Director (*name, email, phone, address*)
 - Lead Pastor Name
 - District Superintendent Name
-

2. Request Overview *(please provide information for your grant request without including identifying information to help the Scoring Committee remain objective scoring the application blindly)*

- Project/Request Name
 - Grant Category (*check all that apply: Capital Improvement / Strategic Staffing / Programing Initiative / Other / Combination*)
 - Amount requested
 - Total project cost
 - Expected start date
 - Expected completion date (*Strategic Staffing requests may not exceed a 2-year funding term*)
 - Project Summary (*describe what you are requesting and why (500 words)*)
 - Need Statement (*what challenge or opportunity does this request address? (500 words)*)
 - Why Now (*why is this the right time for this investment? (250 words)*)
-

3. Ministry Impact

- Who will benefit? (*mark all that apply: congregation, neighborhood, district, multiple churches, college students, children/youth, families, older adults, community partners, other*)
 - Describe the expected ministry impact (*500 words*)
-

4. Project Plan

- Goals *(list 2–5 measurable goals (e.g., hire youth director, acquire 3 bids for renovation))*
- Timeline
- Sustainability *(after grant funds are spent, how/will this ministry or investment continue?)*

5. Budget & Justification

- Total project budget
- Amount requested from the Missional Momentum Fund
- Amount provided by other sources *(optional — if none, enter \$0)*
- Explain how the requested funds will be used *(300 words)*
- Describe any funding your organization is contributing or will be secured from other sources *(e.g., district, capital campaign, etc.)*

- Itemize your Momentum Fund request *(high-level estimates are acceptable)*:

Cost	Source	Item / Service / Contract
	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	
	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	
	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	
	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	
	☐ Estimate ☐ Actual	

6. Readiness

- Worship attendance / participation over the past 2–3 years *(describe the trend and provide approximate numbers)*
- Lay leadership involvement *(describe active committees, volunteer leadership, leadership pipeline)*
- Current financial health *(brief narrative + basic figures: annual general fund budget, giving trend, any other outstanding debt)*
- Apportionment payment status *(current, substantially current, or in arrears — if in arrears, briefly explain)*

7. Certification

By submitting this application, I certify that I have read the above Jubilee Initiative Program Guide; that the information provided herein is accurate; that the lead pastor, Chair of the Board of Trustees, and Chair of the Leadership Board (or equivalents, as applicable) approve this request for funding; and that I understand a Missional Momentum Fund Report will be required twice yearly following any award until completion of the proposed work.

Appendix C: Missional Momentum Fund Scoring Rubric

Blinded applications will be scored by two independent reviewers across five categories: alignment with fund purpose (20%), expected ministry impact (30%), organizational readiness (20%), leadership capacity (15%), and financial stewardship (15%), using the rubric below.

Reviewers record their scores for each application using the companion Missional Momentum Fund Reviewer Scorecard (a separate spreadsheet, for internal committee use), which calculates each application's total weighted score automatically as scores are entered.

Criterion	Weight	Scoring Guidance
Alignment with Fund Purpose	20%	5 – Exceptional alignment; clearly catalytic and transformational.
		4 – Strong alignment; advances one or more key purposes.
		3 – Adequate alignment; generally supports the Fund's purpose.
		2 – Limited alignment; primarily addresses short-term or routine needs.
		1 – Little or no alignment.
Expected Ministry Impact	30%	5 – Exceptional, lasting impact on ministry and community.
		4 – Strong, meaningful impact with clear benefits.
		3 – Moderate impact with reasonable outcomes.
		2 – Limited or unclear impact.
		1 – Minimal or unsupported impact.
Organizational Readiness	20%	5 – Comprehensive, feasible plan with exceptional readiness.
		4 – Well-planned with strong readiness.
		3 – Adequate planning; feasible.
		2 – Planning gaps raise concerns.
		1 – Appears unprepared to implement.
Leadership Capacity	15%	5 – Exceptional clergy/lay leadership with strong support.
		4 – Strong leadership, clearly defined roles.
		3 – Adequate leadership.
		2 – Limited or uncertain capacity.
		1 – Insufficient capacity demonstrated.
Financial Stewardship	15%	5 – Excellent budget, justification, long-term stewardship.
		4 – Strong budget, appropriate use of funds.
		3 – Reasonable budget, minor weaknesses.
		2 – Budget lacks detail or raises concerns.
		1 – Poorly justified or unrealistic.

Scoring Guidelines:

Score	Representation
1	Weak
2	Limited
3	Adequate
4	Strong
5	Exceptional

Appendix D: Debt Relief Fund Report (Post-Award)

Debt Relief recipients submit this report within 12 months of receiving their funds confirming the debt has been paid and outlining the impact these funds have made on the local church through the Jubilee Initiative.

1. Report Information

- Organization Name
 - Project / Request Name
 - What Grant Cycle did you receive Funding From? (*Fall, Winter, Spring*)
 - Award Amount
 - Award Date
-

2. Debt Status

- Is the debt of your church paid off? (*Yes / No — explain if no*)
- Have you engaged the Foundation about healthy stewardship practices (*Yes / No*)
- What practices have been important for your church to implement since you received funding from the Debt Relief Fund (*Yes / No*)
- Have you established an endowment with the Foundation? (*Yes / No — explain if no*)
- Describe the impact the Debt Relief Fund has made on the organization's capacity to fulfill its mission and serve the community?

Appendix E: Missional Momentum Fund Report (Post-Award)

Missional Momentum Fund recipients submit this report twice each year until their funded project is complete, helping the Conference and Foundation understand both what's been accomplished and how the congregation's ministry continues to grow through the Jubilee Initiative.

1. Report Information

- Organization Name
 - Project / Request Name
 - Report Period (*e.g., January–June 2027*)
 - Report Number (*e.g., 1 of 3*)
 - Is this your final report for this award? (*Yes / No*)
 - Grant Category (*Capital Improvement / Staffing / Major Programming Initiative / Other / Combination*)
 - Original Award Amount
 - Award Date
-

2. Project Status

- Is the project on schedule as originally proposed? (*Yes / No — explain if no*)
 - Approximate percentage complete
 - Funds spent to date
 - Remaining budget and anticipated use
-

3. Category-Specific Update

Complete only the section that matches your Grant Category above.

If Capital Improvement:

- Status of construction/renovation work
 - Any change in project scope or cost since award? (*Yes / No — explain*)
-

If Staffing:

- Is the funded position currently filled? (*Yes / No — explain any turnover*)
 - How has this position affected ministry capacity so far?
-

If Major Programming Initiative or Other:

- Progress toward the goals listed in your original application
-

4. Ministry Impact Update

- Who has been served so far? (*mark all that apply: congregation, neighborhood, district, multiple churches, college students, children/youth, families, older adults, community partners, other*)
 - Describe the ministry impact observed so far
-

5. Readiness Update

- Any change in worship attendance/participation since your award?
 - Any change in lay leadership involvement?
 - Brief note on current financial health
-

6. Recipient Expectations Check-In

- Financial documentation is being maintained *(Yes / No)*
 - Any significant scope changes requiring approval? *(Yes / No — explain)*
 - Willing to participate in an impact story or site visit? *(Yes / No)*
-

7. Final Report Reflection — complete only if this is your final report

- In your opinion, what is the most remarkable outcome, accomplishment, or finding of this project?
 - How do you plan to sustain this project's outcomes going forward?
 - Photographs from the grant activity *(please include photos showing people benefiting from the grant)*
-

8. Certification

- By submitting this report, I certify that the information provided is accurate and reflects the current status of the funded project.
 - Submitted by *(name, role)*
 - Date
-