



# EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE

The United Methodist Church

*Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

## Wholeness Centers Frequently Asked Questions

As part of EPA's commitment to addressing systemic racism and economic inequity, the EPA Urban Commission & EPA Congregational Development Team are partnering together to award grants up to \$10,000 to EPA UMC churches that are committed to intentionally connect, engage, and partner with BIPOC communities through the development of a Wholeness Center.

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet is designed to help you understand more about Wholeness Centers and what is expected of participants.

### 1. Q: What is a Wholeness Center?

A: Wholeness Centers are church-based ministries located within BIPOC (black and indigenous, people of color) communities and under-served populations that work with local residents and community partners to develop new ministries or significantly strengthen existing ministries. Wholeness Centers seek to understand and address specific needs of a given community. Wholeness centers work with residents and organizations to develop long term sustainable transformation. At its core, Wholeness Centers make themselves visible in a measurable way and are recognized as a stakeholder/asset to its community.

### 2. Q: What will Wholeness Centers be expected to do?

A: Based on the identified needs of a community, Wholeness Centers will be expected to create partnerships with community organizations, schools, community lead businesses and elected officials. These collaborations should lead to real resources that will benefit that community in a concrete and measurable way.

### 3. Q: What are some examples of a Wholeness Center's work?

A: Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Help connect and increase resources to communities
- Connect congregations with local stakeholders
- Collaborate with organizations/concerned neighbors to address educational, social, and economic challenges
- STEM programs; after-school programs; reading programs
- Addressing food desserts through healthy meals, nutrition, and food distributions
- Partner with affordable housing initiatives
- Low cost or free immigration legal services
- Create or partner with job training programs
- Home repair for seniors and disabled individuals
- Establish childcare and other development initiatives for youth
- Offer financial education, career and life skill coaching etc.

### 4. Q: Are churches outside of urban areas eligible to apply for this grant?

A: Yes, all United Methodist Churches within EPA are eligible for this grant.

### 5. Q: How often will this grant be made available?

A: This grant will cycle twice a year; November and May.

**6. Q: What are the deadlines for application submissions?**

A: All Applications **must** be submitted to your District Superintendent before or on November 1st and May 1st. Submissions on or before the 1st will ensure proper time for review and/or any necessary edits. Once approved by your DS, applications are due to the Director of Connectional Ministry by Nov. 15 and May 15.

**7. Q: How often can churches apply?**

A: If a church is awarded a grant they can only apply once a year. For example: if a church applies in November and is awarded the grant, they will only be eligible to reapply in November of the following year. If a church applies in November and is denied, that church can reapply in the next cycle which would be May.

**8. Q: How often can a church be awarded?**

A: Depending upon the effective use of the initial funds and the overall measurable impact of the Center, awards can be granted up to 3-years. Churches will need to develop and report on other funding sources to sustain their programs within this 3-year period.

**9. Q: What will the second- and third-year funding be based on?**

A: To receive additional funding, ministry evaluations must show:

- Responsible use of funds
- Documented logs of all activities
- Accomplishments or significant progress toward goals
- Alignment with EPA Conference Mission (See vital congregations on [www.epaumc.org](http://www.epaumc.org))

**10. Q: How much time does a church have to use the funds?**

A: Churches will have an entire year to use the funds. However, keep in mind evaluations are due every 6 months.

**11. Q: How will my Wholeness Center be evaluated? \***

A: Wholeness Center will be expected to achieve 3 or more of the following markers.

- A growing relationship with a community stakeholder
- Establish a new partner that is aligned with your initiative (either to aid in the work or as part of a long-term sustainability strategy)
- Testimonies and/or documentation of progress from volunteers and those being impacted by the Wholeness Center (letters, pictures and/or videos)
- Establish at least one small discipleship group dedicated to the work of the initiative
- Report on how this work has strengthened your congregation and community in a tangible way

*\*Please note that submission of an evaluation form is required every 6 months.*

**12. Q: If a church is denied, are there any other options to participate in this initiative?**

A: Yes! First, an explanation of the denial will be provided. Two options will then remain for that congregation:

1. The congregation can work on the recommended items which will strengthen their application for the next cycle and reapply.
2. The application, as submitted, can be considered for the next cycle of Urban Ministry Grants. They can then strengthen their profile by the work accomplished using these Urban Ministry funds.

**If you have any additional questions not listed here, please feel free to submit them to Pastor Terry Bridges; Coordinator of Urban Ministries. Forward all questions to [tbridges@epaumc.church](mailto:tbridges@epaumc.church).**