



TITHING FUND GUIDELINES

Overview

One way Saint Mary's commitment to service and social justice is put into action is through our tithing fund program. Up to 10% of weekend and holy day collections are distributed each year to organizations that address problems associated with poverty, marginalization and social injustice. Our tithing fund program has two goals: to financially support non-profit organizations that empower vulnerable people, and to build relationships between our parish and our brothers and sisters in need.

Tithing fund recipients must demonstrate that they support the principles of Catholic social teaching, as described by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops at www.USCCB.org.

Within sixty days of receiving their third quarter check, recipient organizations are required to send a report on their progress in the use of funds before a fourth quarter tithing fund payment will be issued. Reports are to be sent to the Parish Social Ministry Director and must describe how Saint Mary's funds were used.

Whether applicants are sponsored by a Saint Mary's parishioner or are self-sponsored, they must show how they could involve Saint Mary's parishioners in their project or work.

No more than 20% of the tithing fund budget will be allocated to support foreign missions, i.e. charitable organizations working among the poor outside the United States.

Up to 20% of tithing funds will be reserved each year for organizations that have not previously received tithing funds. Any unused portion of the 20% at the end of the fiscal year will be available for the Pastor's discretionary distribution.

Only non-profit organizations will be eligible for tithing funds.

Preference will be given to non-profit organizations with budgets of less than one million dollars, unless parishioners are involved in hands-on activities with the organization.

Application Process

Applications for one year of tithing funds are accepted during March; applications for new tithing fund organizations may also be accepted in October. They can be initiated by a parishioner of Saint Mary's or by the applicant organization. Application forms are available on-line and in the Parish Center. When completed, they may be submitted by mail, fax or electronically. The application and supporting documents for consideration in April are due in the Parish Social Ministry Office no later than March 31st. Applications for consideration in November are due no later than October 31st.

The Parish Social Ministry Director will review the applications to ensure they are complete and appropriate for tithing funding and will schedule a meeting of the Committee of Application Reviewers. Each reviewer will receive copies of all accepted applications a week before the meeting. Applications that are not accepted will also be available to any member of the Committee who desires them.

The role of the Committee is to advise the Pastor concerning applications for tithing funds, as well as any other matters relating to the program. The Parish Social Ministry Director chairs the Committee, which is comprised of nine parishioners appointed by the Pastor for three-year terms, and the Director. Membership is rolling, so that there is continuity. In order to ensure fair consideration for all applications, each member will be required to pledge that they have no conflict of interest with any application being considered and no member can be a sponsor of an application.

The Committee meets in April and October to review the criteria for funding and to discuss any applications that warrant special consideration, due to the size of the

request or other factors. These applications may be assigned to one or more members of the committee for investigation and reporting back to the Committee. Within three weeks the Committee reconvenes to consider the reports of any inquiries and investigations, and to decide whether to grant tithing funds and in what amount for each application. The Committee's recommendations are made by majority votes, and the Pastor makes all final decisions.

The Director forwards the committee's recommendations to the Pastor. The Director also notifies applicants of his decision regarding funding.

A member is selected to act as Committee Secretary. The Secretary records minutes of each meeting, including all votes taken. Minutes of the meetings are available for review in the Parish Office.

Criteria for Funding

Applications are reviewed based on the following criteria:

- The organization must adhere to the principles of Catholic social teaching; it must foster Saint Mary's purpose and goals for tithing funds.
- The organization must identify opportunities for involvement by the parish community.
- Funds must be used to support activities that empower people in need.
- The organization must have the expertise and experience to achieve the goals stated in the application. Applicant must measure and report outcomes or progress as a result of Saint Mary's funds before issuance of the fourth quarter payment.
- The amount requested must be justified by the proposed project and the stated need or problem.
- The applicant must describe the criticality of the need or problem, and all other sources of funds for the project.

Tithing Fund Application Requirements

Description of Organization

- Name of organization, address, phone, email, website
- Executive Director, phone, email
- Name of contact person, phone, email
- Purpose and structure of organization, number and type of staff and volunteers; Tax ID number
- Mission statement, vision, values of the organization
- Name and position of person(s) who will appear before the review committee if needed to speak on behalf of the organization. There must be at least one non-parishioner representative. There may be a waiver of this requirement for foreign missions.
- Description of how Saint Mary's parishioners will be involved in the project or work.

Organization's Activities and Clients

- Primary programs and services
- Number of people served in the past 12 months
- Goals for the use of Saint Mary's tithing funds
- Number of Saint Mary's parishioners involved in the organization

Organization's Budget and Finances

Copy of most recent audit, if one is available, or the most recent Form 990.

Proposed Use of Saint Mary's Funds

- Description of project or program
- Amount requested
- Detailed description of the proposed use of Saint Mary's funds
- Budget for the project or program

References

- Estimated number of Saint Mary's parishioners involved in the organization
- Names, phone and email of two references with first-hand knowledge of the organization