

Ways to Fund a Dinner Church

DONATION BOX AT DINNER

Each week, we announce, "The food here is always free, but if you would like to donate toward future meals, there's a donation box on the dessert table." We have a locked, marked donation box on the dessert table. We get \$400-\$500 a month with 120 in attendance.

FOOD DONATIONS

We partner with multiple warehouses and grocery stores each week that donate food products to us. We visit the BOLO Warehouse at Newport AG once a month. Each week, a local grocery store gives us food that is near expiration. Since we are cooking every week, we can either use the product or give it away to those attending our dinners. We also belong to our local food bank. They have a warehouse available as well. We go there 1-2 times a year if they are running a special. Most grocery stores will give you at least \$25 once a year in gift cards for an event.

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

Once a year, we send letters to our local businesses asking them to consider sponsoring one week's meal. In exchange, we thank them on social media, give them an optional opportunity to serve dinner with their staff that night, and thank them at dinner.

If you know someone who works at a large corporation, a restaurant, a warehouse, as a truck driver, or a grocery store, ask them to send you contact info for the person in charge of donations or ask them to deliver a letter for you.

PUBLIC CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Multiple times a year, I go to our public town meeting and inform the council members of what we are doing. I give them a flyer for Dinner Church and let them know that we are available if they come across families who need food and support. They have referred many people to our dinners. They have also given us significant funding (without us asking) because of the value our dinner brings to the community.

NETWORKING

Fundraising is all about connections. A letter, email, or phone call won't get you as far as getting involved in your community. Serve on a committee, meet the mayor, take your firemen Gatorade, etc. When money becomes available, you want your community to know who you are and what you do. **LOTS of money and products are given without advertisement or grant applications.**



Grant Writing

Cargo Van - DEP Grant

Dinner Church is a great opportunity to access grants throughout the year! Here's some things to keep in mind:

The easiest grants to get will fund **food, equipment, and supplies**. Grants to cover staff and building expenses are more limited and less accessible.

Organizations and businesses offering grants are seeking statistics and stories about how your initiative is **addressing a specific need in your community**.

Initiatives that mainly serve your church membership likely won't qualify.

Be creative! You are feeding the community, but you may also be recovering food that would otherwise go to waste. Many grant-giving organizations are committed to food recovery! Don't make things up, but brainstorm problems your dinner is solving in the community.



Food/Supplies - Walmart Grant



Trailer - Community Aid Grant

QUICK TIPS

If you see a para-church organization thanking a grant donor on their social media or in their newsletters, add it to your list of grants to check out. Likely, if the grant organization is willing to fund the para-church organization, they will be willing to fund you! Most para-church groups are heavily grant funded and have full time grant writers on staff.

Make sure you have your official 501c3 paperwork. Every grant will require this paperwork!

Common Concerns

- **I don't have enough experience writing grants** - Lots of grants are pretty easy to write as long as you have a clear mission, statistics, stories, and your 501c3 paperwork.
- **If we receive a grant, they will dictate how (or if) we can share the Gospel** - You pick the grants, don't pick the ones you aren't comfortable with. There are PLENTY of grants that have NO restrictions, even some grants from the government.
- **There's too much follow-up** - Most grants are fully administered online. Once you have an account, uploading receipts to justify your grant spending is incredibly easy!
- **Some grants have a non-discrimination clause** - Most of the time, the clause does not mean you have to agree with a lifestyle. Typically, it means that you must be willing to provide the same services to anyone who comes to you, regardless of sexual identity, race, gender, disability, etc. For example, if a grant provides food, you cannot discriminate and refuse food to those you don't agree with. This clause is not mandating your organization's belief, or limiting the Gospel; it's mandating you equally serve everyone with the funds or equipment you receive.

You can do it

Grants to Check Out

Passenger Van -
Community Aid Grant

- **PennDel Grant** - (Reimbursable) \$6,000 total. \$2,000 initial start-up of a Dinner Church (PAC). \$2,000 after 6 months, \$2,000 after a year. Dinner Church training is required to qualify.
- **Walmart Community Spark Good Grants** - (Cash) Every year, you can apply for up to \$5,000 from any Walmart or Sam's Club within a 20-mile radius of your church address. These funds DO NOT have to be spent at Walmart or Sam's Club.
- **Community Aid Grants** - (Cash) If you have a Community Aid Thrift Store near you, become a partner! They have multiple easy grants and provide numerous other benefits to their partners!
- **Brotherhood Mutual Kingdom Advancing Grant** - (Cash) Up to \$50,000 and a coach for a new ministry initiative solving a problem in your community. The deadline is usually the end of March.



Commercial Oven - DEP Grant



Freezers - Food Bank Grant

- **The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC) Grant** - Check the TFEC website for a chapter near you. The deadlines are February, May, and December. Grant amounts vary by chapter.
- **Local Food Bank** - Connect with your local food banks. The Central PA Food Bank sends grant opportunities when they are made aware of them. They also partner with other organizations to provide grants to their partners.
- **Lilly Endowment** - The Lilly Endowment has a ton of grant opportunities; check their website for the ones you might qualify for.
- **Highmark Corporate Giving Grant**
- **Member's 1st Charitable Foundation**
- **Aetna Voices of Health Grant**
- **Food Lion #Feeds Charitable Foundation**
- **The Mustard Seed Foundation**
- **Wells Fargo**
- **Bank of America**
- **4 Imprint One by One Grant** - (Product) Up to \$500 in product
- **DEP Food Recovery Grant** (Reimbursable)

*Nation-Wide Grants

*Grants Specific to Pennsylvania (check your state for similar grants)

TYPES OF GRANTS (Be aware of what type of grant you are applying for)

Product - You apply and get the product (example: 4 Imprint)

Cash - You apply and get a check mailed to you. You submit receipts after the money is used.

Reimbursable - You purchase the equipment or food and then are reimbursed when you submit receipts.

SAMPLE BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP LETTER AND INFO

NEW CUMBERLAND



PENNSYLVANIA

WWW.FAITHNEWCUMBERLAND.COM

November 1, 2025

Dear Community Partner,

We are so glad to have you in our community! Did you know, we serve a free dinner to our community each week at the Fairview Fire Hall? Over the past three years, we've served over 16,000 hot, home-cooked meals! In addition, we always have volunteers available to connect families to resources such as housing, food, healthcare, and employment.

This year, we plan to serve over 10,000 meals! We believe that community is powerful! We've seen our meals bring people together, solve problems, allow attendees to walk through challenges, and grow us all in patience and understanding. None of this would be possible without our community sponsors!

Would you consider partnering with us to sponsor a weekly dinner? Please review the community sponsor details on the next page and let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you for your willingness to support and donate!

Sincerely,

Jessica Jones

Lead Pastor

pastorjessjones@gmail.com

806 FISHING CREEK RD
NEW CUMBERLAND, PA 17070
PASTOR JESSICA JONES

SAMPLE BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP LETTER AND INFO



Community Sponsor

This year, we plan to serve over 10,000 meals to our neighbors! We love partnering with local organizations and businesses. Coming together to serve the community is making a difference. We would love for you to be a part!

Our Community Sponsors -

- Donate at least \$500 (that's \$2.50 per meal) to cover one week's meal. OR, donate product consistently to our dinners!
- Bring a team to help us serve the meal you are sponsoring (optional). We serve at 6:00 pm each week.

Dinner Information

- Every Tuesday night @ 6:00 pm
- Fairview Fire Hall: 340 Lewisberry Road, New Cumberland, PA 17070
- Average attendance: 120 (200 meals cooked for seconds and to-gos)
- We also feed our firemen! 6-8 live in firemen join us for dinner each week!

When you sponsor a week or donate consistently, we will thank you by -

- Announcing your sponsorship before dinner
- Allowing a representative from your organization to share for up to 5 minutes about the services you provide our community (optional)
- Posting a thank you and tagging you in our weekly social media post on Facebook and Instagram
- Displaying "Tonight's Dinner is Sponsored by (your organization)" at our dinner
- Inviting you to our yearly thank you lunch to celebrate the wins from the year before

FOR MORE INFO & TO SIGN UP TO SPONSOR

CONTACT PASTOR JESS | 717.856.5324 |
PASTORJESSJONES@GMAIL.COM

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER!

Thank You Community Aid

Because of all you do and the way you team up with organizations like ours, we've been able to make an even bigger impact in our community!

Over the years, Community Aid has helped us purchase:

- A 12-passenger van
- A trailer
- Food and supplies for our weekly free community dinner

Your partnership is making a difference! This year, we are on track to serve over 10,000 meals! **We cook for over 200 neighbors each week** at our local Fire Hall! Most of the food is donated and would otherwise go to waste. We rescue food and use it to make a difference, just like Community Aid rescues clothes and household items to make a difference!

In addition to meals, we provide resources to help families get to their next step, whatever that might be. Food, housing, jobs, healthcare, recovery, mental health services, and so much more! Our neighbors have become our friends and a true community!

This past year, we led **58 people to a relationship with Jesus** through meeting practical needs and building relationships! We took a survey, and 93% of the people who attended our dinner said they feel closer to Jesus because of our dinners!

We LOVE our partnership with Community Aid because we love giving back! Each week, families bring items they no longer need and take items they do need. We've found that way more people bring items than take them. **Because of this, we can donate back to Community Aid consistently.**



Your friends at Faith Assembly of God



FREE COMMUNITY MEAL
Every Tuesday @ 6 pm
340 Lewisberry Rd.
New Cumberland