

Request for Proposals for Grants from the Catholic Marriage Initiatives Fund

Background/Introduction

On June 17, 2021, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved the release of a document entitled “**Called to the Joy of Love: National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry**” - which provides a framework for dioceses and parishes to follow when developing and implementing critically important Marriage and Family Life Ministries. The purpose of that document, which we refer to here as the “Pastoral Framework” is explained in its second paragraph which states:

“Catholic marriage and family life ministry serves all married couples and families by proclaiming the love of God to them and helping them embrace their vocation to love and discipleship. Inspired primarily by the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, **this document presents a framework of pastoral principles for marriage and family life ministry and advocacy that can serve as a resource to assist pastoral planning in parishes, dioceses, or eparchies nationwide.** This framework is offered in continuity with the pastoral letter *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan* as a practical and pastoral counterpart to the theological principles about marriage that are presented there”. (emphasis added)

The Catholic Marriage Initiatives Fund (“The CMI Fund”) has set aside the sum of one million dollars to be awarded in grants ranging in size between \$10,000 and \$50,000 to dioceses and archdioceses¹ who are serious about implementing new and/or enhanced ministry programs which are in alignment with both this Pastoral Framework and the goals and objectives of the CMI Fund, which are stated on the homepage of its website at www.CatholicMarriageFund.org as:

“The purpose of the Catholic Marriage Initiatives Fund is to dramatically increase the availability of and participation in high quality Catholic Marriage Ministries throughout the United States. We do this by empowering U.S. dioceses and parishes to implement high quality Marriage Ministries that are balanced between Vision, Skills, and Support, across all the ages and stages of the marital life-cycle. In this way, we are assisting and empowering the local Church to operationalize the Gospel by teaching people how to love.”

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to provide the information a diocese or archdiocese (hereafter both referred to as “diocese”) will need to provide to apply for this grant opportunity. This RFP document will be supplemented by additional information provided by the Funder during the application process, all of which will be made available on the CatholicMarriageFund.org website.

Overview of the Pastoral Framework

The Pastoral Framework is a 57-page document, consisting of the following 4 pillars:

- Pillar 1 – Prayer and Relationship with Christ
- Pillar 2 – Formation
- Pillar 3 – Accompaniment
- Pillar 4 – Advocacy.

The bulk of the document (29 pages) describes Pillar 3 – Accompaniment – which has components from Pillars 1 and 2 interwoven within it. The expanded Table of Contents for Pillar 3 is on the following page.

¹ The CMI Fund is a Donor-Advised Fund housed at the National Christian Foundation (NCF). NCF restricts its grants only to 501(c)(3) organizations that are in alignment with Christian principles, which includes all U.S. Catholic dioceses and archdioceses.

Called to the Joy of Love: National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry
Expanded Table of Contents for Pillar III - Accompaniment

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Specific Information about the Grants:

- 1) **Eligible Applicants:** Catholic Dioceses² within the United States
- 2) **Amount of Funding and Project Period:** A diocese is eligible to receive a maximum grant allocation from the CMI Fund up to \$50,000 to fund a project that will span two to four years, at the diocese's discretion.
- 3) **Number and Timing of Grant Awards.** Because different dioceses will be at different stages of readiness to apply for and begin implementing these grant projects, the current plan is to award approximately twenty of these grants in 2022, across four rounds of funding³, with each round starting at the beginning of a quarter. The application deadlines for each of these rounds are 11:59 pm ET on:

<u>Round #</u>	<u>Application Due Date</u>	<u>Grant Period Begins</u>
1	December 10, 2021	January 1, 2022
2	March 1, 2022	April 1, 2022
3	June 1, 2022	July 1, 2022
4	September 1, 2022	October 1, 2022

Dioceses are encouraged to apply in whichever round best fits their state of readiness.

- 4) **Match Requirement:** Yes – a dollar for dollar match is required. Additional information about this is provided in Item 6A on page 6 of this document.
- 5) **Length of Initial Grant Period and Commitment:** One year. Although it is anticipated that most dioceses are likely to apply for the full \$50,000 amount over a two-to-four-year project period, the initial grant period will be for only 12 months. This provides greater focus on the first 12-month time period, and allows the initial match requirement to be only for the amount of funding requested during the initial 12-month period.
- 6) **Scope of Project:** Combining the grant and match amounts gives a combined project budget for most applicants of \$100,000 to be spent over two to four years. As the expanded table of contents on the previous page indicates, the Accompaniment Pillar of the Pastoral Framework is organized into four main sections and 27 Named Ministry Areas (NMAs). It is expected that most approved grant projects will implement new and/or enhanced ministry program offerings, with some balance between Vision, Skills and Support, in at least three of those 27 Ministry Areas including at least one of the following four Ministry Areas: 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, and/or 2.5.
- 7) **Length of Application and submittal process:** Maximum application length, excluding the four required attachments, is 10 pages, single-spaced, with 1" margins and 12-point font, in one pdf file. Applications should be emailed to Dennis@CatholicMarriageFund.org. Applications submitted past the deadlines listed above will be considered with the following round of applicants.
- 8) **Four Required Attachments** (mentioned in #7, above), and their reference locations in the following sections
 - Relevant sections of the *Diocesan-Eparchial Inventory for Marriage and Family Life Ministry* (Item 3B-1)
 - Signed Letter of Support for this project from your Bishop (Item 4B)
 - 1 Page Diocesan Needs Assessment (Item 5A), a sample of which is provided as page 7 of this RFP.
 - Signed Certifications sheet – mentioned (#10) below and provided as page 8 of this RFP.
- 9) **Selection Process:** Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, when scored against the criteria described in the following pages. Dioceses who apply but are not selected for funding in one round will receive feedback on their applications and will be encouraged to reapply in a subsequent round.
- 10) **Certifications:** All applicants must agree with and sign the 1-page Certifications sheet provided as page 8 of this RFP.

² As stated on page 1, the term "diocese" in this document refers to both dioceses and archdioceses

³ This RFP was prepared for Round 1 applicants and may be revised for subsequent rounds.

Application Contents and Scoring Criteria. Specific questions to answer and information to include in your grant application – along with their respective score weighting are as follows:

1) Description of your diocese (5 points).

In order to assist the grant application reviewers to understand the environment in which your project will be operating, please provide a short (less than ½ page) description of your diocese. This may include some of the following items: geography your diocese covers, information about the size and make-up of your diocese – such as number of parishes and number of registered Catholics (both in terms of numbers and as a percentage of the total population that your diocese covers), and anything else that you think will help the application reviewers understand your diocese.

2) Overview of the project (10 points)

A) Project period and budget amounts:

1. Over how many years will you be implementing this project? (Your three choices are 2, 3 or 4 years).
2. Do you think it is likely that you will be applying for the full \$50,000? If so, what is your anticipated budget request by year? (For 3-year projects, we believe the two most common scenarios will be \$10,000 in year 1 and \$20,000 in years 2 and 3 or \$16,667 in each of the 3 years.)

B) Project Scope: (Please refer to #6 “Scope of Project” on the previous page when preparing this.)

1. Which three or more of the 27 Named Ministry Areas are you choosing to implement?
2. Why have you chosen these particular Ministry Areas? In answering this question, you may want to refer to the Diocesan Needs Assessment performed in Section 5A, described on the next page.
3. Which of these Ministry Areas will you be placing the most emphasis on in the first year – and why?

3) First Year Project Description (20 points)

A) Planning Period. The first 90 days of the project period is designated as the Planning Period, during which it is expected that you will review and revise your grant application based upon work you will perform and things you will learn during that period of time. As such, please feel free to answer “this will be determined during the Planning Period” in response to any questions for which that will be an appropriate response within this category of “First Year Project Description”. With that in mind, please list and/or describe the activities you plan to take during the January 1 to March 31st planning period (for Round 1 applicants) to solidify your project plan.

B) For each of the Named Ministry Areas you will be implementing during Year 1, please provide as much information as you can about the following topics:

1. Please describe your assessment of the current availability, levels of participation in, and quality of any existing ministry offerings which are currently available to your constituents in each of those Ministry Areas. Included in this, please describe how they are currently balanced across the three dimensions of Vision, Skills, and Support described in Item #5 on the following page. As part of the process of answering this question, please complete (and attach to your application) the relevant sections (for your selected Named Ministry Areas) of the “Diocesan-Eparchial Inventory for Marriage and Family Life Ministry” emailed to each of the dioceses by Julia Dezelski on July 22, 2021.
2. Have you decided which program(s) you would like to offer in Year 1? If so, which one(s)? If not, please describe the process you will follow to choose the program(s) by March 31.
3. Please describe which delivery system(s) you will be using: Parish, Parish Cluster, Deanery / Vicariate, Region, Diocesan and/or online – and if more than one, how they will work together.
4. How will each Ministry Area be rolled out? Will it be diocesan-wide? A phased approach? If a phased approach, what methodology will be used to determine the sequences?

- C) How will this project be staffed during its first year? Has a project leader been selected? If so, what is that person's main qualifications? If not, what will be the primary qualifications you will be looking for in this person? What level of time commitment will each person assigned to this project be expected to dedicate to this project?
- D) Please provide a high-level timeline or listing of major activities or objectives you plan to complete or achieve in each of the first four quarters of this grant project.
- 4) Alignment with other goals and/or priorities of your Bishop and/or Diocese (15 points)
- A) Please describe how the proposed project would tie into or be directly aligned with other priorities, projects or initiatives that are occurring in your diocese. Rationale: Every Bishop and/or Diocese has their own set of priorities. We have found that when a Diocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life attempts to implement a project that is directly aligned with what else their Bishop and/or Diocese is trying to do, that office is typically more successful with their projects than an Office that operates disconnected from those priorities.
- B) Please provide a signed Letter of Support from your Bishop that communicates the level of support, commitment, and ownership he would have towards this proposed project.
- 5) Alignment with the 3-part Model of Vision, Skills, and Support promoted by the CMI Fund (20 points). During the 2019 NACFLM Conference, Dennis Stoica, the Founder of the CMI Fund, delivered a keynote presentation titled "Marriage Ministries – The Best Way to Operationalize the Gospel!" – in which he described his vision for Marriage and Family Life Ministries at both the Diocesan and Parish levels, which is summarized in the Purpose Statement for the CMI Fund provided on the first page of this RFP. Before completing this section of the grant application, we recommend applicants view the edited and enhanced version of that presentation which can be found by googling the terms "Dennis Stoica NACFLM Youtube".
- A) Diocesan Needs Assessment (DNA). Please complete the 1-page Excel spreadsheet "Diocesan Needs Assessment" which will report on the current presence of programs and resources for each of the 27 Named Ministry Areas, rated on a scale of one to ten in each of the three categories of Vision, Skills, and Support.⁴ Please include a pdf of your completed spreadsheet as an attachment to your application.
- B) Vision: How will you incorporate the category of VISION into your project?⁵ Which core Catholic or Christian teachings will be taught and/or emphasized? How will they be taught? (Video? Lecture? Readings? Small group discussion? Other?)
- C) Skills: Which SKILLS will be taught?⁶ Please describe your proposed approach to teaching these skills. Will you be following the 6-step approach to teaching skills described in the NACFLM keynote – or will you be using a different approach. Please be specific.
- D) Support: How will SUPPORT be provided to program participants?⁷
- E) Balance: ⁸ As explained in the keynote, it is not practical to expect that every ministry program will be equally balanced between the three categories of Vision, Skills and Support. Nor is that necessary as long as a balanced approach is available to and encouraged for participants within each Ministry Area. How well balanced is your proposed intervention? Are there opportunities for participants to receive balance in other ministry offerings within the Ministry Areas you will be implementing in this project?

⁴ This DNA is a modified version of the exercise performed between time marks 59:25 and 1:01:27 in the NACFLM keynote.

⁵ Vision is discussed between time marks 7:33 and 17:45 in the NACFLM keynote.

⁶ Skills is discussed between time marks 17:45 and 56:54 in the NACFLM keynote.

⁷ Support is discussed between time marks 56:54 and 59:25 in the NACFLM keynote.

⁸ Balance is discussed between time marks 1:01:27 and 1:08:55 in the NACFLM keynote.

6) Budget/Match (10 points)

A) Match. This grant requires a one-to-one match for all moneys provided by the CMI Fund for this project, within the following guidelines:

1. The funds for the match must be new funds into the Office of Marriage and Family Life (or equivalent).
2. They cannot come from reducing budgets in some other area of the Office of Marriage and Family Life or another department within the diocese.
3. Examples of allowable sources for the match would include:
 - New donation(s) from an outside source
 - Diocesan reserves
 - Unallocated funds within the diocese
4. At all times, funding from the CMI Fund will be provided AFTER funding from the match arrives.

Please describe the likely sources for this match and/or how you anticipate raising these first-year funds. Please describe your level of confidence in your (or your diocese's) likely success in raising or otherwise providing the funds you will need to provide the dollar-for-dollar match for the first year of this project.

B) Budget: In approximately ½ page, provide a breakout and description of how the total funds for this project, including both the funds provided by the CMI Fund and the match, would be spent.

7) Sustainability (10 points)

What is your plan for sustainability? How will the programs or activities funded by this grant be continued once this grant project period is over? Why should the CMI Fund feel confident that the strategies and tactics you describe for sustainability will be successful for ensuring that these activities and services will continue after funding from the CMI Fund ends? Rationale: The CMI Fund is not interested in funding projects or activities that end once its funding ends. Therefore, grantees need to build into their project ways that the activities funded in these projects will continue once the funding from the CMI Fund ends. Examples of ways this sustainability could be built in include such things as embedding programs at a parish level and/or charging fees to participants for the programs.

8) Expected impact and potential replicability of this project. (10 points)

A) Impact: Please provide a description of your estimate of the total impact of your proposed project within your diocese – assuming that it is funded and successfully implemented for the full two-to-four-year project period specified in your answer to Item 2A-1. Rationale: The donors behind the Catholic Marriage Initiatives Fund are what is known as “Impact Investors”, meaning that they like to make philanthropic investments into projects that are expected to have a major impact in the world. As such, you are encouraged to describe for these Donors (who will be some of the Reviewers of the grant applications) what kind of an impact you anticipate your project will make.

B) Replicability: One way to increase a project's impact is for it to be replicated in other locations / dioceses. Do you believe that, if successful, parts of your project would be likely to be replicated in other dioceses? If so, what parts and why – and what steps would you take to encourage that replication?

9) Optional 5-point Bonus Section. In addition to this Grant Opportunity, the CMI Fund is also making separate \$5,000 grants available to dioceses to provide Leadership Training to between 12 and 30 key couples in one of three pre-approved families of skills-based relationship and marriage education curricula (RE/MML, PREP, and AIM). While it is NOT required to specify in this grant application which of the three curricula a diocese would like to provide that training in, up to five bonus points will be awarded to dioceses whose applications indicate their intention to access this additional funding opportunity in order to provide this Leadership Training in conjunction with their approved grant project.

