



**Baptist General Convention of Virginia, Inc.**  
**Lilly Endowment, Inc. Grant Initiative**  
**“Bringing, Growing, and Changing Congregations and Communities Together!”**

**Program Information**

**Grant Purpose**

The Baptist General Convention of Virginia’s (BGCVA) five-year grant of \$1,250,000 to begin a series of projects and initiatives is designed to help congregations grow spiritually, relationally, and socially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we aim to develop state-managed, regionally based Wraparound support to churches as they explore how Christian practices grounded in their traditions and appropriate to their contexts may provide both the framework and patterns of activity needed to revitalize and strengthen their ministries and help their congregational life to flourish and create change in their communities.

**Grant Curriculum**

The Convention will focus this work around helping churches develop ministries and expand practices that are relevant to the lives of the congregants, help congregants connect more closely to God and each other, and empower congregants to serve the relevant needs of their communities. This grant project will give attention to individual churches, to clusters of churches, and to the Convention’s 29 regional associations across the state.

**Church Commitment**

This grant period began in January 2024, with activities designed to be completed across five calendar years. Churches involved as *Cohort Churches* or *Recipients of Learning Grants* will participate in data gathering processes, attend training and capacity-building sessions organized around the grant objectives, and share their learnings with the larger BGC family.

**Church Involvement**

A. ***Cohort Churches*** (By Application)

Churches (50/year) will be selected with consideration to geographical location, size of membership, and church type (rural, suburban, or urban). The cohort churches will represent the Convention’s five geographical areas: Central Virginia, Northern Virginia, Southern Virginia, Eastern Virginia, and Western Virginia.

B. ***Church Learning Grants*** (By Application)

These grants (10/year) will allow churches to focus their energies on a particular community outreach program. Grants of \$1,500 per church will provide helpful support in both identifying and executing community programs.

**Cycle of Participation**

- Every year for 5 years, a new group of 50 churches will be selected from across the BGC areas to participate as *Cohort Churches*. Churches from the previous year will continue to share their experiences with the Convention.
- Every year for 5 years, a new group of 10 churches will be able to apply for *Church Learning Grants* of \$1,500 each.

**Opportunities for Participation**

While some member churches of the BGCVA will engage the grant through focused participation as a cohort congregation or recipient of a learning grant, all churches connected to the Convention will benefit from the training, resources and ministry building opportunities offered at the regional association and state levels. These opportunities will be responsive, specific, and collaborative in their aim of helping churches develop post-pandemic relevant ministries, connect more closely with God, and become empowered to serve their communities.

**Benefits of the Grant**

The work of the BGCVA has continually been attentive to helping churches and leaders build capacity for Christian Faith Formation ministries. The current structure of the Convention allows that work to be envisioned and experienced through the lenses of well-established life-cycle ministry offerings, groups of clergy, laymen, and women. Other social and cultural initiatives such as health awareness, social action, and finance and tax compliance help to make up the curriculum of training offered to member churches. This grant will, with the assistance of a team of experts and consultants, expand and enhance those efforts by allowing BGCVA to focus its energies and work directly with congregations in measuring the impact of that work at the local and communal levels.



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**Cohort Church Application Information**

The application to become a cohort church can found and submitted online by visiting [www.bgcva.org/lilly-grant.html](http://www.bgcva.org/lilly-grant.html). For those unable to apply online, please send your typed responses to the following questions to the BGCVA at 1214 West Graham Road, Suite 1, Richmond, Virginia 23220. **The application deadline is April 11, 2025.**

**Congregational Demographic Information**

What is the name of your church?  
What is your church's zip code?  
Application location of church: Rural, Suburban, Urban  
What is your church's phone number?  
What is your church's fax number? If none, please write "none."  
What is your church's email address? If none, please write "none."  
What is your church's website? If none, please write "none."  
How many members does your church have on its records?  
What is your church's weekly attendance in-person?  
What is your church's weekly attendance virtually (online services)?

**Pastor's Demographic Information**

What is your pastor's name?  
What is your pastor's gender?  
What is your pastor's highest level of academic achievement?  
What is your pastor's age?  
Does your pastor have military experience?  
Is your pastor employed outside of the church?  
How many years has your pastor served as the pastor of your congregation?  
How many years has your pastor served as a pastor in their pastoral career?  
In absence of pastor, name and contact information of Chair of Deacons or Diaconate Ministry

**Church Participation and Engagement**

Association affiliation  
How engaged is your congregation with the local association?  
BGCVA gathering attended in 2022 – 2024  
BGCVA priorities that your church has contributed any amount to in 2022 – 2024  
Please list other state denominational affiliations within the Baptist Church for your church other than BGC.  
National denominational affiliations within the Baptist Church  
International denominational affiliations within the Baptist

**Bringing, Growing, and Changing Congregations and Communities Together**

How does the vision of the congregation connect with the purposes of this grant?  
What about the grant's purposes ignites your church's interest?  
What has been your congregation's greatest success?  
What has been your congregation's greatest challenge?  
What is your congregation's most urgent need?  
If selected, is your congregation willing to be engaged with the process?  
If selected, is your congregation willing to send representatives, including individuals who may serve as teachers, to a regional one-day conference and a state-wide conference for the cohort work?  
Has your congregation ever participated in a Lilly Endowment, Inc. grant before? If so, please provide the project title and timeframe.

**Application Contact Information**

Primary Contact – Name, Position, Phone Number, and Email Address  
Secondary Contact – Name, Position, Phone Number, and Email Address  
Applicant Contact – Name, Position, Phone Number, and Email Address

For more information, please email [info@bgcva.org](mailto:info@bgcva.org) or call (804) 228-2421