



December 2018

Mission Grant Story

Education Loan Repayment - \$100,000

Did you know: Three of five trained and called LCMS workers have considered leaving the ministry during their first years of service for financial reasons? Those preparing for full time church work are assuming increasing levels of educational debt in order to prepare for ministry. Concern for this burdensome debt might discourage some young people from entering full time church work.

The Educational Loan Repayment Assistance Grant will help full time church workers to pursue their calling even in settings where their income is low by providing aid with loan repayments. This grant of \$100,000 will provide \$2500 toward educational debt loans for each qualified worker. Twenty called workers of the LCMS throughout the world will benefit from this grant each year of the biennium.

Preparing our church workers educationally is vital to LCMS, but personal economic challenges can create barriers that will affect the service and commitment of our workers. Managing a household on a low-level income has contributed to financial

anxiety, shame, chemical and spousal abuse issues, leaving the ministry, and for some children of called workers, leaving the church. Debt-to-income mismatch for church workers is more than a financial issue; it's a ministry issue, and is a mounting challenge in LCMS. Yet men and women make these time and financial commitments because they believe in themselves and want to serve their Lord in full time church work.

Statistically, one in four new pastors takes \$80,000 in educational debt to his first call. An average first-year salary for a pastor is \$44,000. This low income matched with financial debt matched can have frightening consequences for church workers, their families and congregations. The Educational Loan Repayment Assistance Grant will reduce their educational debt while encouraging and equipping these LCMS full time church workers to continue their service to God.