

|| THE RETIREMENT RESEARCH FOUNDATION ||

OPENING DOORS. CREATING COMMUNITY.



THE ACCESSIBLE FAITH GRANT PROGRAM

SMALL GRANTS MAKING A BIG IMPACT

BRIDGING A GAP FOR INCLUSION

Connecting older adults to their faith communities



It might be the blood pressure screening — or a bag of groceries — that drew them to a sacred space today. The seated exercise class or the stirring on-your-feet choir performance. Maybe they're tutoring school-aged children this afternoon — or sharpening their own minds in an adult day services program or a class focusing on new job skills.

These days, houses of worship have expanded well beyond shepherding the spiritual life of their congregants — they are stepping up to meet the pressing needs of entire communities with services and programs that help neighbors thrive and gain a better quality of life. Yet these efforts frequently exclude the most vulnerable — older adults and people with physical disabilities — for the simple reason that vintage buildings often lack basic accessibility features such as ramps, handrails, and elevators.

Outcomes that enrich multi-generational communities

For the past 13 years, The Retirement Research Foundation partnered with houses of worship to remove the physical barriers to accessibility that thwarted their social justice efforts. We learned that when a sacred space is made more accessible for older adults, the entire community benefits in countless ways. Though we are now turning our focus to funding new initiatives, we would like to share this program as a potential model for your organization — and invite you to consider adding it to your grant opportunities. *See how it worked and how we can help.* >>>

“A single grant award is a one-time expense, but its benefits will endure for decades.” — PARTNERS FOR SACRED PLACES



ACCESSIBILITY FUNDING: A SNAPSHOT

Improvements designed to help many generations



INCLUSIVE

An accessibility grants program provides much needed capital funding for new elevators, ramps, platform lifts, hearing loop systems, and accessible restrooms. **Renovating older facilities literally opens doors to older adults and people with disabilities.**

INSPIRING

The RRF accessibility grants, capped at \$30,000, served as project seed funding. With RRF contributions totaling \$3.8 million, **the grants inspired nearly \$19 million in additional funding** and gave 175 congregations a healthy jump-start to raise additional donations.

READY TO WORK

Our program is easily **replicable and scalable to accessibility projects in facilities that house programs your organization may already support** — such as food pantries, domestic violence and homeless shelters, health screenings, tutoring, job training, and counseling.

LASTING BENEFITS

Houses of worship are widely respected as places of hope, community connectors, and safe spaces. **For a modest investment, you can help open doors to a better quality of life and create stronger communities** through neighborhood-based programs and services that are accessible for all.

STEPS TO ACCESSIBILITY

Sharing our knowledge and resources



When you consider ways to support your community and the best means for distributing limited resources, we think funding accessibility has much to offer as a grantmaking priority. Along with houses of worship, this funding program could be readily applied to other types of facilities such as neighborhood schools, field houses, and community centers.

By adding accessibility funding to your grant opportunities, you can play a leading role in removing barriers for older adults and people with physical disabilities thus creating stronger, healthier, and more generationally blended communities.

A model for forward-thinking funders

After years of experience with this program, we have developed a time-tested approach that your organization can easily modify as needed to fit your priorities. We will gladly share our lessons and tools — and be your guide as you get started. We can offer specifics on setting up a program and provide materials and referrals to technical consultants versed in accessibility.

Please contact us at info@rrf.org.

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Prior to construction of the lift, ramp, and new entrance, the homeless or marginally housed neighbors who couldn't walk up steps had to eat or sit outside in the cold during the weekly outreach program. Now, they come in and eat and stay warm.” — ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CHICAGO