

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply?

Any ministry leader or team serving within the Texas District LCMS is welcome to apply. We encourage pastors, DCEs, teachers, commissioned ministers, church staff, lay leaders, church planters, schools, and ministry teams with a Gospel-centered ministry initiative to apply.

What kinds of projects are you looking for?

We're looking for innovative ministry initiatives that help make disciples and multiply God's Church. Your project should address a real ministry challenge or opportunity and have the potential to inspire or equip other congregations across the Texas District.

What do you mean by "innovation"?

Innovation isn't about chasing trends or reinventing the Gospel. It's about prayerfully exploring creative ways to reach people with Christ, make disciples who make disciples, and remove barriers to the Church's mission. The best projects remain rooted in God's Word while seeking new ways to engage today's communities.

Do I need to have my project fully developed?

We don't expect a fully launched ministry or a completely polished idea, but we do expect each application to be thoughtful and well-developed. Your proposal should clearly articulate the ministry opportunity you've identified, your vision for addressing it, realistic goals, and a well-planned budget. The application helps us understand both your idea and its potential to make a lasting disciple-making impact.

What support is available for grant recipients?

Each grant recipient will be paired with a Lab Partner from the District who will walk alongside them throughout the innovation journey. Lab Partners provide support in a variety of ways, serving as a prayer partner, encourager, thought partner, or professional coach based on the needs of each innovator. Our goal is to ensure you don't walk this path alone. The district is committed to coming alongside you with encouragement, guidance, and support as you develop and bring your ministry idea to life.

How are projects selected?

After applications close, the Catalyst Innovation Lab panelists prayerfully evaluate each submission. A select number of applicants are invited to present their projects at the Catalyst Innovation Lab in January.

What happens at the Lab?

Selected innovators present their ministry initiative to a panel of judges and leaders from all over the district. Throughout the day, participants receive encouragement, thoughtful feedback, and the opportunity to be awarded grant funding. The event also includes time for networking, learning, and celebrating what God is doing across the Texas District.

How much funding is available?

Project leaders may request up to **\$50,000** in grant funding. Funding awards vary based on the project's goals, potential Kingdom impact, and available resources.

Is this just a grant competition?

No. While grant funding is an exciting part of the day, the Catalyst Innovation Lab is primarily about encouraging faithful innovation, sharing ideas, and learning together. Every project contributes valuable insights that can benefit ministries throughout the Texas District.

Can more than one person apply together?

Yes! In fact, we encourage ministry teams or partners from different ministries to apply when appropriate. Collaborative projects often bring diverse perspectives and strengthen implementation.

Can I submit more than one project?

Yes! While each idea will be considered individually and there is no guarantee that every submission will be selected, you are welcome to submit multiple applications to share the opportunities God has placed before you.

What if my project isn't selected?

Not every innovator is chosen to present, but every applicant is encouraged to continue developing faithful ministry ideas. We hope you'll apply again in the future as you prayerfully refine your initiative!

Can anyone attend the Lab?

Yes! The Catalyst Innovation Lab is open to ministry leaders, church members, and anyone interested in encouraging innovative disciple-making across the Texas District. Attending is a great opportunity to learn from others, be inspired, and discover new ministry ideas.

Do I have to apply to attend?

No. Applying is only required if you wish to present a project for grant consideration. Anyone may register to attend and experience the day.

What happens after the Lab?

Project leaders begin implementing their ministry initiative and share updates with the Texas District along the way. As projects develop, we document lessons learned so other congregations and ministries can benefit from their experience and continue multiplying Gospel impact.

Do I have to report on my project?

Yes. Because the Catalyst Innovation Lab exists to encourage learning across the district, funded projects are expected to provide updates and share both successes and challenges. These stories help equip and inspire future ministry leaders. More information is available on the Application.

When do applications open?

Applications open **August 1, 2026**.

When is the application deadline?

Applications must be submitted by **October 15, 2026**.

When is the Catalyst Innovation Lab?

The 2027 Catalyst Innovation Lab will take place on **January 13, 2027**, at the Texas District Office in Round Rock.