



**SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL OF ST. LOUIS**

... HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME ...

## **COUNCIL PROGRAM HANDBOOK OVERVIEW**

The Rule of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul calls us to follow Christ through service to those in need. Programs offered by the Council Office are created to meet specific needs identified by Vincentians during home visits.

Council programs:

- *Allow Vincentians to serve those in need and so bear witness to Christ's compassionate and liberating love (Rule, 1.2);*
- *Alleviate suffering and promote human dignity (Rule, 1.3);*
- *Promote self-sufficiency, encouraging the poor to help themselves whenever possible, and recognizing that they can forge and change their own destinies (Rule, 1.10).*

This Handbook is designed to help Vincentians access St. Louis Archdiocesan Council programs.

### **Home Visits**

*From the Society's beginning, the central and most basic activity of Conferences has been the visitation of the needy in their homes. This is the clearest symbol of our Vincentian charism, which dictates the highest respect for the dignity of the poor. (Manual, 2.1). When a Neighbor needs help, two Vincentians should visit the neighbor to listen, offer humble advice, and render assistance (Manual, 2.1).*

### **Subsidiarity**

The Rule embraces subsidiarity as its basic standard of operation. Decisions are made as close as possible to the area of activity to ensure that the local environment and circumstances (cultural, social, political, etc.) are taken into consideration. In this way, the Society promotes local initiatives within its spirit. This freedom of action enables them to help the poor spontaneously and more effectively, free from excessive bureaucracy (Rule, 3.9).

Council Programs are meant to supplement the work of the Conference by closing the funding gap between what the Conference can afford and the Neighbor's need. Here are the recommended steps:

1. Decide how far your Conference can stretch financially to help your Neighbor in need.
2. Determine if twinning with other Conferences is an option.
3. Contact your District President for help with funding.
4. Submit a Council Program Form to the St. Louis Council to close the gap.

### How the Council Office Helps Financially

For most programs, the Council Office **can match** the combined amount of your Conference, Twinning and District contributions. If you decide to access a Council Program to help your Neighbor, you must:

- [Complete in full a Council Program Form](#). Some programs also require additional documentation, and those requirements are listed under each specific Council Program.
- Verify the Neighbor's identity by asking for the Neighbor's date of birth and expiration date on their photo ID. (Please do NOT make or keep copies. Simply check the ID to confirm identity.)
- Confirm the Neighbor's monthly income. If the Neighbor has none, [please complete a zero-income form](#).
- Share the Neighbor's story and explain the reason for requesting help.
- On the Council Program Form, include the funding stream and the exact amount being requested from the Council. The flow would be:

<b>Total Amount Needed</b>	\$_____
<b>Conference Pledge</b>	\$_____
<b>Twinning Pledge</b>	\$_____
<b>District Pledge</b>	\$_____
<b>Council Request</b>	\$_____

All requests for Council Programs should be emailed to [programs@svdpstl.org](mailto:programs@svdpstl.org). You can scan and email the documents, or you may take pictures with your mobile device and email them. Please make sure the documents are clear and easy to read.

The St. Louis Archdiocesan Council reviews each request to ensure all required documentation has been submitted. This follows best accounting practices and is required by our auditors. Once approved, the Conference is notified, and the request is sent to our accounting department for payment. Generally, requests approved by Tuesday will be included in that Thursday's check run and mailed on Friday.

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