



Ways Congregations Have Funded Their Participation in Stephen Ministry®

Over the years, Stephen Ministry congregations have found many ways to fund their Stephen Ministry—in addition to putting it in their regular budget. Here's what a number of people have shared about how they raised the funds to get their Stephen Ministry started.

Stephen Ministry Fund

"Our church council set up a **Stephen Ministry Fund**, which we publicized in the local newspaper, church newsletter, and worship bulletin, and in verbal announcements at worship services, committee meetings, and other gatherings. We made special Stephen Ministry envelopes too. More than 50% of our money came from those who were not members of the church."

Wisconsin

Faith Funding

"Our congregational enrollment fee was deficit-funded on faith. We just announced that we needed the funds—**faith funding**—because beginning this ministry was so important and urgent. The congregation responded generously and faithfully."

Kansas

Individual Gifts

"Our pastor explained our need for Stephen Ministry at a congregation voters' meeting. He suggested a number of **individual gifts of \$50 to \$100** would finance the enrollment fee. Right away, \$1,200 was pledged, and subsequent contributors made a commitment that covered the enrollment fee and the expenses for those who attended the training course."

Florida

Building Restoration Fund

"The idea spread among our boards and excitement grew—but there was no money in the budget! With congregation approval, the funds were taken out of our **Building Restoration Fund**. It showed remarkable growth in our congregation to allow capital funds to be used for ministry."

California

Help from Our Denomination

"Our church **approached our denomination for help** getting Stephen Ministry started in our church. They showed their support for us by writing a check for start-up costs!"

Wyoming

A Surprise Gift

"We became familiar with Stephen Ministry early in our budget year, and various boards began discussing how we could become involved. Because our budget for the year was already set, it looked like we would have to wait until the next year. But two weeks later, I was visiting a shut-in member who handed me a **surprise gift**—a check that covered three-fourths of our costs."

Indiana

Personal Requests

"I made a **personal request** to a member who knows the value of receiving care. I showed him the list of Stephen Minister training topics, and he was sold immediately on the quality of the program, so he made a substantial gift to help get the ministry started."

New York

Substantial Contributions

"I asked four people who are blessed with ample financial resources to make a **contribution** to cover the enrollment fee and the cost of sending two representatives to a Leader's Training Course. Two persons immediately responded with gifts that covered the amount we needed. Shortly after, the other two made sizeable contributions, which they gladly designated for ongoing Stephen Ministry needs."

Minnesota

Men's Ministry Gathers Funds

"We talked to various groups in the church about the impact Stephen Ministry could have on our congregation and community. The **men's ministry** decided to pull together the funds to contribute \$1,000 toward the enrollment fee. A small donation from each member of the men's ministry added up to make a huge difference."

Ohio

Funds from Reserves

"We paid for enrollment in Stephen Ministry with **reserve funds** authorized by a special congregational meeting."

Virginia

Grieving Widow Sees the Need

"A woman whose husband died of cancer had several people visit her and her dying husband during the final months. On one visit, someone really put his foot in his mouth. The widow would not tell me who it was or what was said—only that it was hurtful. The widow's daughter is a Stephen Minister in another city and told her about Stephen Ministry. The **widow saw the need** and made a donation to begin Stephen Ministry in memory of her husband."

Texas

Grant from a Foundation

"We applied for a **grant from a foundation** that focuses on enhancing and sustaining the quality of ministry in congregations. Stephen Ministry was right in line with the purpose and focus of this foundation. Our grant proposal was approved and covered the costs of enrollment and the sending of several leaders for training!"

Indiana

Lenten Offering

"We designated the **Lenten offerings** from our Wednesday evening worship services for Stephen Ministry enrollment."

Minnesota

Lay Training Memorial Fund

"We established a **Lay Training Memorial Fund**. The initial contribution came from another fund that was closed out. Other contributions came from memorials, evangelism funds, receipts from a church rummage sale, and other gifts from individuals. By July, the fund had received more than enough and was still growing."

Michigan

District's Social Ministry Board

"The enrollment fee was paid for by the congregation's annual budget, agreed upon at the beginning of the year. The conference fee and transportation were funded by our **District's Social Ministry Board**."

British Columbia

Savings Account

"Our Church Council funded the Stephen Ministry training by tapping into a church **savings account**. They had been very zealous to keep that money 'intact' without designating it to any purpose. But they saw the need for Stephen Ministry and freed up the funds."

Wisconsin

Special Offering

"After our pastor explained the many benefits of Stephen Ministry, we were able to find much of the funding from different places in the existing budget. But because we made the decision to enroll mid-year, we held a **special offering** over a four-week period to cover the rest."

Kansas

Special Fundraising Events

"The largest part—the one-time enrollment fee—was budgeted. But our conference fees and travel costs were raised by **special events**—a bake sale and door offering, a pizza dinner, and a white elephant sale."

Florida

Contingency Fund

"When the budget was established, a **contingency fund** was built into it to cover the costs of unexpected opportunities that might come up during the year. We drew on this fund for Stephen Ministry enrollment."

California

Anonymous Gift

"A committed church member contributed funds for the establishment of Stephen Ministry in our church. This was an **anonymous gift**—the minister had evidently discussed the need for care with some members."

Illinois

Generous Outside Contributor

We were partially funded by a **generous outside contributor** from another Stephen Ministry congregation in town."

Colorado