

CCVT News Release:

COVID-19 Financial Relief for CCVT Affiliates

21st April 2020

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit us all hard, impacting our lives, communities, and the economy in unprecedented ways. Nevertheless, with crisis comes an opportunity for furthering our desire to reach our neighbourhoods with the good news of Christ.

The CCVT Board and management have been hard at work in recent weeks, looking at ways that we can practically assist and work with our churches and agencies to support their ongoing ministry given the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis.

A framework for CCVT assistance with the associated financial hardship is now available to CCVT-affiliated churches and agencies which consists of the following four key components.

1. Financial relief for CCVT Ministry Contributions, CCFS loan repayments, and CCI insurance premiums.
2. Initiation of the 'Joseph Fund' to provide financial relief in supporting ministers' stipends where Affiliates face substantial reductions in giving due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Additional Community Care 'CareWorks' funding for the current community initiatives of affiliated churches or agencies.
4. Discounted pricing for 'ChurchWorx' accounting and payroll services to assist Affiliates with financial reporting, payroll and access to external relief such as government funding.

1. Financial Relief for CCVT, CCFS and CCI services

CCVT Ministry Contributions 2020

CCVT will provide a 25% discount on the Ministry Contribution of each affiliated church and agency for 2020. The 25% annual discount will be applied via the second quarterly instalment by way of an applied credit note rather than an invoice. Effectively this means that CCVT Affiliates will not be required to pay the second quarterly instalment for CCVT Ministry Contributions in 2020. The discount is not applied to earlier instalments that have not yet been paid.

Affiliates that have paid their Ministry Contribution in full for 2020 will be eligible, on request, to receive a 25% refund of their CCVT Ministry Contribution.

Subsequent third and fourth quarterly instalments will be issued and due for payment in September and December 2020 as usual. Affiliates that are impacted by a significant drop in giving due to the COVID-19 pandemic are invited to contact us to discuss how we might be able to assist further.

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Please feel free to email Kevin Pang (accounts@churchesofchrist.org.au) if you have queries regarding payment of the 2020 CCVT Ministry Contributions.

CCFS loan payment relief

With church services closed and the giving of some churches impacted, CCFS joins with *The Australian Banking Association* to offer similar relief on request to those churches who have borrowed from CCFS. We recognise that some Affiliates will have the financial capacity to continue to meet all of their obligations, whereas others may not.

CCFS encourages any church that may be experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 to contact the CCFS office to apply for a loan repayment review. This will help CCFS work in partnership with your church to ensure your funds can be used most effectively for the continued ministry of Churches of Christ churches in their communities.

The CCFS office can be contacted during business hours via the 'contact us' link on the CCFS website at www.ccfssaustralia.org.au/contact-us.

CCI instalment relief

CCI is offering payment of insurance invoices to be by instalments for the 2020 period for CCVT-affiliated churches and agencies. More information will be forwarded with CCI invoices being sent out to Affiliates later in April.

2. The Joseph Fund for Affiliate support

It is anticipated that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic fallout, the financial capacity of most, if not all, Affiliates will be impacted by the loss of employment and by the resulting loss in congregational giving.

CCVT has made provision for a new funding initiative to assist people in ministry whose stipends are under threat from reduced giving. We have named it the *Joseph Fund* inspired by Joseph in Genesis 41 who was used by God to make provision for 7 years of drought from the preceding bounty of 7 years of abundance. We are all praying that the current crisis will pass a lot sooner than 7 years! However, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be felt for many more months to come.

The overriding strategic imperative for the Joseph Fund initiative is to maintain Affiliates' mission and ministry engagement within the local church and community where it is under threat from reduced giving.

Affiliates applying for assistance from the Joseph Fund will be required to undergo an assessment process including a review of the Affiliate's finances.

To qualify for assistance from the Joseph Fund, an affiliated church or agency must fulfil the following minimum requirements:

1. Demonstrate that giving to the Affiliate has significantly dropped as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and that this will impact on the capacity of the Affiliate to maintain its stipend(s) for people in ministry within the next 3 months;

2. Application has been made by the Affiliate for the Government COVID-19 stimulus Cash Booster and Job Keeper packages if applicable; and
3. Appeals have been made by the Affiliate to its members, attendees, supporters, and stakeholders for financial support through online giving and other means.

Affiliates that have been blessed with financial and other resources are invited to prayerfully consider at this time how they might be able to assist other CCVT-affiliated churches and agencies. You are invited to discuss this with CCVT if your church or agency is in a position to help others.

Please feel free to email Michael Vanderree (mvanderree@churchesofchrist.org.au) to apply or to make an enquiry about Joseph Fund relief.

3. Community Care 'CareWorks' grants for COVID-19 related community initiatives

Community Care will extend its 2020 grant budget to consider requests for grants of up to \$10,000. This will be for the funding of community initiatives by Affiliates to assist people in need as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such initiatives would include foodbanks, essential provisions, and other related initiatives eligible for Community Care funding.

Eligibility for this grant campaign is for CCVT Affiliates who meet the ACNC benevolent criteria, which states funds need to be applied to an identifiable **target group which is recognisably in need of assistance** because of poverty, sickness, disability, destitution, suffering, misfortune, helplessness, or other kinds of distress (*as specified by the ACNC's PBI Interpretation Statement Item 5*).

Successful Affiliates with existing benevolent programs will need to provide evidence that these have been subject to financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 and that the identified benevolent service can be delivered to its community.

Please contact Jo Antoni (careworks@churchesofchrist.org.au) to make an enquiry about Community Care grants for COVID-19 pandemic community initiatives and to receive the guidelines and application form.

Please Note: Due to the unprecedented times we live in, this grant campaign replaces the annual standard May Grant campaign.

4. 'ChurchWorx' fees discounted to assist affiliated churches and agencies with accounting, payroll and related services

Not all Affiliates have access to financial advice or financial professionals who can assist them with sourcing financial relief provisions from the government or other potential sources.

ChurchWorx is a CCVT initiative launched in 2018 to provide accounting and payroll services to affiliated churches and agencies at a competitive price. The service is particularly aimed at medium to smaller churches who often struggle to maintain financial and payroll records and meet regulatory compliance reporting such as BAS, PAYG and Superannuation contributions. ChurchWorx is managed by CCFS finance professionals, experienced accountants, and bookkeepers who are familiar with the unique requirements of church finance and compliance.

CCVT has made provision to fund discounted ChurchWorx pricing to assist Affiliates that require accounting and payroll services, particularly where financial reports and guidance may be required, assisting with:

- Financial reports to apply for COVID-19 funding assistance;
- Accessing Government stimulus packages for COVID-19; or
- Employment contract and payroll matters arising from COVID-19.

Please contact Kevin Pang (admin@churchworx.org.au) to apply or to make an enquiry about ChurchWorx accounting and payroll services.

Other resources and assistance

CCVT may be able to help your church or agency in other ways. The following are some examples of resources we may be able to offer:

- Guidance and advice on how to encourage people to give online;
- Assistance with HR advice;
- Resources for streaming online worship services; and
- General resources for discipleship, leadership and ministry.

We trust that, in working together through this challenging season, we might emerge as better organisations who are more effective, innovative and fruitful in their mission.

Let's continue to be in prayer for those who have been most impacted by this virus, including people experiencing current health concerns, supporting family members, or managing financial repercussions. Please also remember those serving on the front lines in health or emergency services.

We are thinking of you all and continuing to pray for health, inspiration and strength in the days ahead.

Warm Regards,



Rob Nyhuis
CCVT Executive Officer