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Dear Pastors and School Administrators,

The Pacific Southwest District is partnering with LCMS Office of National Mission, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund and a multitude of generous donors to support our church workers by providing Soldiers of the Cross (SOC)—Amplified grants to individuals who are experiencing financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For this “amplified” version of the longstanding SOC program, the definition of “church workers” has been expanded to include not only rostered church workers (DCEs, DCOs, educators, pastors, deaconesses, etc.), but also lay workers (teacher assistants, secretaries, maintenance, etc.) who are currently working for an LCMS entity or who recently worked for an LCMS entity and were furloughed due to the pandemic.

Any worker impacted by the pandemic who is experiencing financial hardship can apply for a SOC—Amplified grant. These grants are not intended to replace governmental programs such as unemployment benefits, Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid. But our hope is that we can provide a leg up to those who need some assistance to overcome or ease a critical hardship, which can come in many different forms.

If you or a church worker you know might benefit from this program, please contact Barbara Farley, Administrative Assistant to the District President at the PSD office at barbara.farley@psd-lcms.org for more information.

In addition to these SOC—Amplified grants, it is important to refer workers to brothers and sisters in the faith who are trained to assist with the stress and anxiety associated with experiencing hardships. The combination of numerous strains can isolate workers who serve God’s people. We encourage you to take the initiative to make appropriate help available to all church workers in your midst. If you have any questions about this or to inquire about referrals or other specific resources, please contact Barbara Farley at the email address above.

We are here to walk alongside you and all servants throughout the Pacific Southwest District. It is my prayer that God will continue to preserve us by His grace during this difficult time.

Peace in Christ,

Dr. Mike Gibson
President