



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES
SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, INC.



Questions & Answers

The narrative below explains the Friends of the Poor® National office initiative and how the Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run will contribute to its success.

FRIENDS OF THE POOR® Initiative

What is Friends of the Poor®?

Friends of the Poor® is a special restricted fund initiated by the National Council's Development Department in 2006. The Fund's name is trademarked and registered with the U.S. Patent office. Friends of the Poor® is the first-ever coordinated effort by the National Council to raise funds — from the general public, primarily, and secondarily from the Society's national membership. The funds are used to provide grants to the conferences and councils for use in their programs and services to the poor.

How does the Friends of the Poor® initiative work?

The grant program rolled out in 2008. U.S. Conferences are eligible to apply for grants (up to \$5,000) for their programs that provide service to the poor. Generally, Conferences will complete a one-page application form, with a few required attachments and with the signature of their respective Council President, will then submit it to the National Council (during an announced time frame). There is a quarterly schedule of application, review and awards, based on a regional calendar (2 regions per quarter are eligible to apply at any one time). Application reviews are conducted by a volunteer committee. There is an annual ceiling on the size of every award, based upon how much money is currently in the Fund and related considerations.

Why is the Friends of the Poor® initiative necessary? What does it offer the Society that it didn't already have?

There are lots of good reasons that the National Council has embarked on the Friends of the Poor® initiative: to increase the Society's national visibility, to develop significant public donor participation nationally, to encourage major donor participation, to help the many, many Conferences that need more funds to help the poor, etc.

What sorts of projects and programs will be funded by the Friends of the Poor® initiative?

The process is open to Conferences to apply for a grant to enhance a wide variety of programs and services to the poor.

How will recipients of the Friends of the Poor® grants be chosen?

There is a task force in place, composed of National SVdP Leadership who review and award the grants.

FRIENDS OF THE POOR® WALK/RUN

How does the Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run tie in?

The nationwide Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run is a response to the same needs that inspired the Friends of the Poor® Fund — the Society's need for greater visibility and greater donor participation across the board, and the need of local Conferences (and Councils) for more resources to help the poor.

Walkers/Runners themselves will choose the Conference or Council they want their pledges to go to. In other words, all revenue generated by the Walk/Run is targeted to programs of service to the poor and stays in the local communities.

What tools has the National Council developed to aid the Conferences and Councils in hosting a Walk/Run?

The National Council Development Team provides all the tools needed to host a successful Walk/Run: a website (www.svdpfriendsofthepoorwalk.org) with online Walker/Runner registration, credit card processing, downloadable resources (event hosting instructions, sample press releases, graphics, registration and operational forms, marketing tools and much more).

Who determines the logistics (location, length, etc.) of each Walk/Run?

The Conference and/or Council participating will be responsible for Walk/Run logistics on the ground — but, again, a lot of guidance and practical help are available on the SVdP Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run website.

How will you ensure that funds raised by the Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run stay in the communities they come from?

The online (credit card) pledge system on the website requires Walkers/Runners to first identify where they want their pledges to go. The National Council will process these credit card transactions and issue checks to the designees. There is an electronic audit trail on all pledges. Conferences and Councils have the added option of collecting hardcopy pledges locally, with Walkers/Runners turning in pledged donations to their local Walk/Run treasurer. (Conferences and Councils should report such receipts to the appropriate higher level Council for tracking purposes.)

How can Conferences and Councils ensure that their contact information is correct in the national database?

This is very important. The National Council must have correct contact information in order to mail checks to participating Conferences and Councils. Because many do not have physical locations of their own and use parish addresses or the personal addresses of their presidents to receive mail, Conferences and Councils should encourage the appropriate higher level Council to update their portions of the national membership database. (For access, Council presidents should email mschottenhaml@svdpusa.org.)

The Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run is an ambitious undertaking. Has it been successful?

As with all development work, it takes time, commitment, and hard work to build a successful event. Each year the event has grown in the amount raised nationally, the number of walkers, and the number of host sites. By every measure it is successful, but each year we have more and more need for funds for services to the poor. This event equips local Conferences and Councils so that they may better address these needs.

If You Talk the Talk, You Need to Walk the Walk!
www.svdpfriendsofthepoorwalk.org