



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Office of Parish Development

OFFICE OF PARISH DEVELOPMENT REPORT TO THE 43ND BIENNIAL CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS

PURPOSE

The Office of Parish Development (OPD) was created in 2004, with generous assistance from the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Endowment Fund, to provide Greek Orthodox parishes with resources, information, and support in the area of parish development. Since that time, the OPD has assisted parishes throughout the Archdiocese with professional fundraising services tailored to the Greek Orthodox environment, including capital campaigns, strategic planning, stewardship, grants, endowments, and planned giving. The Office of Parish Development is especially grateful for Leadership 100 support not only for the seed grant to initiate the department, but also for other funding that allowed for the addition of grant services and targeted on-site assistance for parishes with unique challenges.

STAFF

Jerry Minetos, CPA, CFRM—Development Officer
Abby Vlahos—Grant Specialist

RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Over the past decade, the Office of Parish Development has reached hundreds of parishes through Metropolis and National Clergy Laity workshops, consultations, on-line resources, and on-site services. The fundraising approach of the Office of Parish Development is based on direct experience and personal involvement with Greek Orthodox parishes across the United States. The OPD aims to assist parishes using effective strategy that is rooted in sound fundraising principles. Even more importantly, we work to ensure that funds are raised in such a way as to glorify God and to enhance the spiritual life of all involved in the project.

The Office of Parish Development provides assistance in the following areas:

Multi-Year Campaigns: The primary focus of the Office of Parish is assisting parishes with major, long-term fundraising projects. It is a best practice in the nonprofit and church environment to use objective, third party fundraising counsel for campaign planning and fundraising. At any given time, the Office of Parish Development is working with 3 to 5 parishes that are in the midst of a planning study (to determine campaign scope and fundraising feasibility). These initiatives can include capital, debt retirement, staffing enhancements, ministry improvements, and building renovations. The OPD has assisted parishes throughout the Archdiocese with raising millions of dollars for these types of initiatives.

Strategic Planning Seminars: Strategic planning seminars are an effective way to gain parish consensus, plan outreach initiatives, identify parishioner hidden talents, and begin to move the parish toward a “preferred future.”

Stewardship Workshops: All parishes are at different points in growing toward stewardship. The Office of Parish Development works on-site with individual parishes to encourage individual stewards to stretch themselves further in giving back to God through the Church.

Other Fundraising Guidance: The Office of Parish Development staff has a broad background in all areas of parish development and is constantly responding to parish inquiries and developing resources based on common challenges. For example, the Office has helped secure over \$100,000 in grants for parishes and maintains a list of grants on its website.



EveryGoodandPerfectGift.org: In 2014, the Office of Parish Development launched a new blog which focuses on inspiring giving from an Orthodox Christian perspective. In our decade of assisting parishes with their development needs, we have become acutely aware of the dearth of resources to assist priests and parish leadership with their task of nurturing the call to be good stewards. In this blog, we seek to build a one-of-a-kind resource that will help individuals grow the spiritual practice of giving back in multiple ways and assist priests and parishes with spreading this message to our faithful. EveryGoodandPerfectGift.org complements our other online resources at www.development.goarch.org.



Orthodox Christians in Action:

This year, the Office of Parish Development, in collaboration with the Department of Outreach and Evangelism, is launching Orthodox Christians in Action. The mission of this initiative is to guide parishes in their efforts to provide charitable and caring ministries in their local community. In addition to developing resources to support this mission, Orthodox Christians in Action will be a network of Greek Orthodox churches who share information and best practices on almsgiving and outreach programs at their parishes. Our new banner is available to churches who wish to be a part of this network, and we will feature model programs on our website and blog.

ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL COMMITTEE AND NATIONAL MINISTRY COORDINATION

Office of Parish Development Staff have participated and contributed information and material to the National Finance Committee (George Vourvoulis, Jr, Chairman), the National Stewardship Committee (Fr. James Kordaris, Director) and the Planned Giving Subcommittee (Lou Kircos, Chairman). They have also assisted National Ministries (Hellenic College/Holy Cross, St. Basil, and National Philoptochos Society) with campaign assistance, planning workshops, and grants.