

August 11, 2022



Dear Friends,

Questions have been asked about the Department of Finance and Administration's Pregnancy Resource Center Grant Program.

It is good to be cautious about any government strings that may be attached to these tax-funded grants. I have been involved with this effort from the time that lawmakers began considering this program. At the top of my list was to do all I could do to ensure that no one who receives this money would have to change anything about the spreading of the gospel and the Christian ministry being done at these centers. I have discussed this with lawmakers who developed the program, with the governor's staff, and with individuals at the Department of Finance and Administration.

I believe everyone involved with this legislation and those who have written the rules for the grants understand that centers need the ability to continue their faith mission without interference from the State. I believe this grant program does that. I see no danger with a pregnancy center receiving and using these public funds.

As with all public funds, there is an understanding that none of these funds can be used for "religious" purposes. Centers in other states where similar state funding has been available for over 10 years divide how they use their money so none of the public funds are used to purchase Bibles or pay for the promotion of a particular faith or religion.

Since each center has to specify in their grant application how they plan to spend the money, it will be clear on the front end that the funds will not be used for any religious purpose. As long as a center spends the money as it has been approved to be spent there should be no problem.

Still some may ask if by simply receiving any public money that they might have to stop all Bible studies and other religious activities. Let me assure everyone that there is nothing in the legislation that approved these funds nor anything in the rules for these grants that even hints at this. In addition, I am not aware of any pregnancy center in any state anywhere over the past 10 years that was forced to stop religious activities, take down crosses, or in any way change their ministry because they received a publicly funded grant.

It is important to remember that this is a state grant. It is governed by the State of Arkansas, not the federal government. Governor Hutchinson, the Arkansas General Assembly, and those the governor has appointed to oversee this grant program are all Arkansans who answer to the Governor and your elected state lawmakers.

If I were in charge of a pregnancy center in Arkansas, I would not hesitate to apply for a grant under the Department of Finance and Administration's Pregnancy Resource Center Grant Program this year.

If you have any questions, please call me on my cell phone at (501) 912-6600

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Cox", is written over a light blue circular background.

Jerry Cox
President