Grantees must refrain from using funds to advance any sectarian effort and ensure that any services to be provided with their state-funded grant will be secular in nature and scope. In no event shall there be any sectarian, partisan, or religious service, counseling, proselytizing, instruction or other sectarian, partisan or religious influence undertaken in connection with the provision of grant-funded services.

This means that:

Public funds cannot be used to support or further religious purposes. Grantee organizations that are sectarian in nature must ensure that they use grant funds to support only activities that are clearly non-sectarian in nature and purpose.

1. The services provided with grant funds must be non-religious. The programs and services must not include any religious activities, nor can participation in religious activities be a condition for receiving services or result in preferential treatment for receiving services.

2. The services provided under the grant must be made available to all older adults, aged 60 and older, not just members or individuals attending a particular house of worship.

3. Grant funds can be used for the renovation or restoration of a facility where sectarian activities are held; however, grant funded improvements are limited to an amount proportionate to the space utilized by non-sectarian older adult program(s). Refer to Grant Policy Memorandum on Cost Allocation for information on how to prorate costs.

Some examples of unallowable sectarian activities are:

- Religious classes or seminars, including classes on the history of a specific religion provided by a member of a religious organization;

- Religious camps, conferences, or seminars that are primarily for the purpose of teaching or promoting a specific religion, even if they include non-religious recreational activities or educational activities;

- Cultural activities or programs that are of a religious nature even though they may not directly promote or benefit a religion or set of religious beliefs. Some examples would be:
- Entertainment whether musical, theatrical or recreational, that is primarily geared to teach or further the religious principles of a religion or for which the content is religious in nature;

- Meals/refreshments/entertainment provided as a part of or in conjunction with a religious holiday (e.g., Christmas, Passover), ceremony or service.

If you have any questions concerning the non-sectarian requirement, please contact our office at (518) 473-4808. Please keep the above requirements in mind. We can only approve the use of grant funds for purposes that are unquestionably secular in nature.