Refund Support Vocations Program (RSVP)

Responding to Pope John Paul's appeal to all Catholics to celebrate the Third Millennium of Christianity in suitable ways, the Knights of Columbus has committed itself to provide financial and moral support to every seminarian in the United States and Canada, if possible. While the Order has a number of other programs of assistance to seminaries and seminarians (see below), RSVP is the primary program through which Knights of Columbus councils, assemblies and circles participate in an organized manner in the great enterprise. Every council, assembly and circle should take part.

Since the beginning of the program in 1981, the Knights of Columbus has given nearly $30 million to the support of seminarians through RSVP, with the Supreme Council refunding nearly $6 million to local units. Along with financial aid, the assistance through this program also involves prayer and moral support, including letters and visits (at least four letters and one personal contact per seminarian in every July-June fraternal year). In this way, besides providing financial assistance, RSVP creates bonds of friendship between Knights and future priests many of whom join the Order and become chaplains as a result.

Under this program, local K of C councils or assemblies agree to make an annual contribution of $500 or more to an individual seminarian to help with his personal expenses. Councils and assemblies can sponsor more than one seminarian if their resources permit. In each case, the minimum annual contribution is $500 to one seminarian.

**United States and Canada**
For every $500 given to an individual, the Supreme Council will refund the council or assembly $100. The maximum refund a council or assembly can receive is $400 per individual supported.

**Eligibility for RSVP**
The following persons are eligible to receive RSVP funds:
1. Seminarians attending college seminaries (sometimes called minor seminaries);
2. Seminarians who have been accepted by a diocese and are currently in their spirituality" year;
3. Seminarians attending major seminaries (usually, four years) in preparation for priestly ordination;
4. Seminarians in their "pastoral" year (most often, when they are deacons);
5. Seminarians who belong to a religious institute and are currently in formation for the priesthood (religious seminarians often are called "Brother" even though they will eventually be ordained as priests); and
6. Men and women who are novices or postulants in religious orders or religious communities.

Those eligible for assistance do include foreign seminarians studying in the United States or Canada; U.S. or Canadian seminarians studying overseas; seminarians from your home diocese currently attending seminaries in another diocese, state, or country; and seminarians from other states or dioceses attending a seminary located in your jurisdiction.

**Persons not eligible for RSVP funds are the following:**
1. Priests or religious seeking assistance for continuing education;
2. Religious brothers not currently studying for the priesthood; and
3. Candidates for the permanent diaconate.

Councils, assemblies, and circles are encouraged to assist in other ways worthy individuals who do not qualify for RSVP assistance, but such aid should not come from funds intended for RSVP.

**Forms**
A single application form (#2863) must be filled out and returned to the Supreme Office to qualify for a refund and for an award plaque. Form #2863 is on page 20 of the Council Report Forms.
All applications should be submitted - with copies of the canceled checks or other documentary evidence - between April 1 and June 30 in order to qualify during that fraternal year.

**Amount**
For councils and assemblies to qualify for a refund, they must give at least $500; circles must give at least $100. The rule is that the sum must go to a single qualified person; it may not be divided or apportioned to more than one recipient.

**Award Plaque**
To qualify for the RSVP Award Plaque, the council, assembly, or circle must:
1. Donate at least $500 ($100 for circles) to a qualifying seminarian;
2. Funds must be drawn against the council account.
3. Write at least four letters to the adopted seminarian within the July-June fraternal year;
4. Make at least one personal contact with the individual, if possible, during the fraternal year; and
5. Demonstrate some form of involvement in parish and/or diocesan vocation efforts.

RSVP is central to Knights of Columbus vocations efforts, but councils and assemblies should also take part in other parish and/or diocesan vocations efforts. These other vocations efforts, however, also do not qualify for a refund from the Supreme Council.