

Transformational Grants Guidelines and Application Procedures, Updated September 2006

Mission Support Funds are provided annually to each Conference for the financial support of pastoral charges and outreach ministries that need such support. Maritime Conference has had a policy for over a decade that the first priority for these funds is the support of pastoral charges.

The June 2002 Mission Support Consultation noted the financial pressure experienced by many pastoral charges and communicated this concern to Conference Executive. Presbyteries were consulted about their perception of the pastoral charges in their care and they indicated approximately 30% of the pastoral charges were at risk¹. After a period of research, study, and discernment the February 2004 Conference Executive meeting concluded that The United Church of Canada in the Maritime Conference is at a critical period in our history, and it identified several strategies to help Conference, presbyteries and pastoral charges address this situation.

In support of the Executive direction, the Financial Support Unit has examined its resources and approach to this challenge, and is making the lesser of 10% or \$40,000 of annual Mission Support allotments available for pastoral charges qualifying to participate in a transformation process. Setting funds aside for pastoral charges engaged in such a process should be viewed as a clear indication that Mission Support grants are not only for the maintenance of financially struggling pastoral charges. They are also available for pastoral charges that are interested in revisioning their mission and can successfully make a case for the need for such a new ministry within United Church parameters.

Transformational ministry encompasses all the new and emerging ways for people of God to live out their calling as disciples in a postmodern world. To engage in transformational ministry is to gaze in the mirror to see who you are now and to reflect on who God desires you to be. *I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.* Isaiah 43:19.

The Financial Support Unit, working in collaboration with the Church Revitalization Committee, has developed the following criteria and procedures for Transformational Grants.

Transformational Grants are in support of pastoral charges that:

1. Demonstrate a commitment to transformational ministry (e.g. the percentage of congregational support should be over 66% of members).
2. Show a capacity to vision and dream about new forms of ministry beyond that which they have been doing.
3. Indicate how they might reach out to the unchurched/seekers/the larger community.
4. Provide an assessment of the community and ministry opportunities and challenges that would need to be addressed.

¹ Oswald & Burkat define 'at risk' congregations as those which have "... such a low attendance that they are at risk of becoming crushed by overwhelming financial burdens. They risk losing their sense of mission. They risk becoming apathetic or angry. Often they cannot afford a full-time pastor or to finance missional outreach efforts. They risk closing their doors forever. "These 'at risk' congregations are in danger of descending into deep despair. At risk congregations don't plan to fail in their mission, they just fail to plan for mission Without a plan, at risk churches slowly, but surely die – often in areas where the population is actually growing." Transformational Regional Bodies P. 69 used with permission.

5. Provide an historical overview of their ministry and what has brought them to the place of considering transformation.
6. Provide a summary of what the transformational ministry would be in the succeeding 12 to 24 months.
7. Show a willingness to collaborate with their presbytery and Conference in developing and implementing their transformational plan.
8. Share their experience and reflections on transformational ministry with their presbytery conveners for Mission Support and Pastoral Oversight.
9. Fully share information about the financial needs and resources of the pastoral charge.
10. Demonstrate the existence of leadership to sustain the envisioned transformed ministry.
11. Be prepared to engage in a transformational ministry qualification process that may or may not result in the pastoral charge qualifying for further transformational assistance. Those who do not qualify will be referred for alternate counsel.

Procedures for Applications

1. Pastoral charge consults with Presbytery Mission Support, Pastoral Oversight and/or Pastoral Relations as to the wisdom of applying for a Transformational Grant. As the grant application includes expectations of presbyteries, this consultation, the development of the transformational ministry, and the application should be collaborative.
2. The pastoral charge formally agrees, by at least 66% of members, to submit an application for a Transformational Grant. The application forms for a Transformational Grant will also include a completed application for a Mission Support grant. Completed Mission Support grant forms and Transformational Grant forms are to be sent to the Presbytery Mission Support convener.
3. The presbytery considers the application within the committees who have responsibility for Mission Support, Pastoral Oversight and/or Pastoral Relations.
4. Upon recommendation of at least two of the committees named in #3, the applicant will identify the presbytery contact person for this application and the ministry which will be developed if it is approved. The application will then be sent to Financial Support Unit of Maritime Conference. Application deadline is April 30th of the year preceding that for which funding is requested.
5. The Mission Support consultation will review the applications in June and a tentative response will be given. It is possible that further information will be sought from the applicant and/or presbytery following this meeting.
6. Final review will be made in early November, and a letter indicating the Financial Support Unit's decision will be sent to the pastoral charge and presbytery. This letter may include concerns that need to be included in the implementation of the transformational ministry supported by this grant.
7. Transformational Grants will be available on a one-time basis to qualifying pastoral charges within Maritime Conference.
8. Transformational Grants funding will be given to a pastoral charge for a maximum of two years.

TRANSFORMATIONAL GRANTS APPLICATION

-----**(date)**
DD / MM / YYYY

Name of Pastoral Charge:

Contact Name in Pastoral Charge:

Postal Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email Address:

Name of Presbytery:

Contact Name in Presbytery:

Postal Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email Address:

In addition to your application and narrative overview of your plan and objective, please provide a

response to the following questions (If you require extra space, please attach a sheet stating the question number):

1. Over the next five years how do you see your pastoral charge moving from being a congregation at risk towards being a healthy congregation? ²

2. In the transformation that you foresee for your pastoral charge will there be forces/people/issues that create cohesion and fragmentation in the pastoral charge? What challenges do you foresee and how are you preparing to address these as you move through this transformation?

3. What collaboration have you had with presbytery and Conference in developing this application and how do you see those bodies of the church involved in and/or relating to this ministry?

4. Reporting regularly on the progress of this ministry is one part of this relationship with presbytery and Conference. How do you see carrying this function?

5. What financial, volunteer, staff resources and facilities do you have in place to carry out the plan, and by what means will you identify and secure them?

PASTORAL CHARGE ACTION

² Healthy United Church congregations would exhibit some of the following characteristics: joy in the worship; good working relationships within the congregations; staff and volunteer leadership; witness with justice and compassion to the issues facing the local and wider communities; spiritual care of congregational members and those who request from the local community; financially self-supporting; and active participation in the other courts of The United Church of Canada.

_____ requests a grant of
Name

_____ for 200_.

Signature

Date

PRESBYTERY ACTION

How has the Presbytery assisted the pastoral Charge in the preparation of this application?

Presbytery recommends that the above receive _____ for 200_.

Presbytery Secretary Signature

Date

Mission Support Convenor Signature

Date

CONFERENCE ACTION

Maritime Conference has assessed and found the application to meet the requirements in the Policy and Procedures related to Transformational Ministry Grants.

We recommend a grant of _____ for the year 200_.

Conference Staff Signature

Date