

UNITING CHURCH NSW & ACT SYNOD FUNDING POLICY

New Missional Gatherings Seed Fund

1. Overview

This policy was approved by the SMRF Committee on 22/8/01 (MRF 01.82). Revisions to the policy were approved by the SMRF Committee on 24/4/02, 8/8/02, 20/2/07, 20/11/07 and amended by Mission Resource Consultants 20/2/2014, and 05/2015.

The source of funds will initially be from the tithe received from the sales proceeds of the Chatswood-Willoughby property at Help St Chatswood. Grants are made for mission resource funding to enable the Uniting Church to be at mission in given specific contexts and settings primarily through the support and establishment of new congregations and faith communities. It will be possible to apply for funds annually. Projects will be prioritised on the basis of mission potential and feasibility. Available funds will be distributed in order of priority.

2. Who can apply?

A Presbytery, Congregation, recognised Faith Community or any representative of an;

- existing mission team, or
- emerging Faith Community,

may apply for funding for any purpose that falls within the criteria outlined in this policy document (sections 3.1 to 3.5) and which furthers the mission of the team or faith community if they:

- are formally endorsed by a Presbytery or Congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia; and
- agree to be accountable for the financial expenditure to the endorsing body.

3. Purpose of Fund

A Presbytery, Congregation, recognised Faith Community or a mission team that is formally endorsed by a Congregation or Presbytery may apply for funding in order to:

- 3.1 assist in starting or developing a new faith community or congregation
- 3.2 assist in starting or developing a new 'missional gathering'
- 3.3 develop an existing missional gathering that is recognised as a 'new' initiative still in the development phase by the Presbytery (normally mission and strategy committee) or the Uniting Mission & Education Board (UME).
- 3.4 develop a resource – intended to make a significant contribution to one or more new missional gatherings
- 3.5 develop appropriate leadership for new missional gatherings.

Definition of Missional Gathering

By ‘missional gathering’, we mean a gathering that typically includes the following elements:

- a new gathering that has been established less than five years (or other at the discretion of the Mission Resource Consultant)
- intends to include people from beyond any previously existing church
- will seek to have some capacity to sustain itself
- seeks to develop
 - a shared sense of purpose (common vision)
 - a growing sense of belonging that will encourage longevity and the development of ‘social capital’ or infrastructure
- includes strategies to actively assist people in growing their faith or growing toward faith through fellowship &/or worship &/or witness &/or service
- includes appropriate strategies for:
 - encouraging local people to become passionately engaged in the life and mission of the gathering
 - developing a shared vision or understanding of the purpose for the gathering (amongst all stakeholders – including the wider church etc.)
 - growing local people’s leadership gifts so that a capacity for multiplication can be developed.

A missional gathering could be a small group, intentional network, mission team or new worship gathering that includes the aspects noted above. Note that in the case of small groups the funding should normally be in proportion to the expected size or mission potential of the gathering – it is unlikely that a \$5000 grant to establish a small group of five people would be supported.

Applications for a course, program or event will need to demonstrate that a new missional gathering, with some capacity to sustain itself, is intended to emerge that includes the elements noted above. Innovative forms of gathering are encouraged, but some sense of longevity or ‘social capital’ is highly desirable.

Where an existing congregation seeks New Missional Gatherings Seed Funding, this will normally be for a new gathering that will have a degree of autonomy. The funds would normally be under control of the new gathering, but they would be accountable to the Church Council of the congregation.

In general, the funds are to be under the control of the new body, under the oversight of the Presbytery which will ensure acceptable structures and Synod and Presbytery accounting and reporting procedures are in place. The Presbytery will undertake to review the use of these funds and report to the Mission Resource Consultant.

4. Criteria

Applications are made to the Mission Resource Consultant, who then, in consultation with Presbytery, makes recommendations to the Synod Fund Management Sub-Committee. In determining applications, the committee will give due consideration to:

- the potential mission impact of the applicants making the proposal
- ways the proposal will support the wider mission of the church
- the accountability processes built into the application
- the recommendation of the relevant Presbytery (or Presbyteries).

5. Grant types

It is envisioned that the most common form of grant will be 'seed funding' for any worthwhile reason, for amounts typically between \$500 and \$5000.

- 5.1 A cash grant to a fixed maximum set by the Mission Resource Consultants and Synod Fund Management Sub-Committee from time to time (initially to be \$5 000).
- 5.2 Interest free loans to an amount determined by the Mission Resource Consultant and Synod Fund Management Sub-Committee to be paid back by a specified future date.
- 5.3 A cash grant on a dollar for dollar basis to a fixed maximum set by the Mission Resource Consultant and Synod Fund Management Sub-Committee from time to time (currently \$10 000) where the seed fund will match (or supplement) funding raised wholly by the new initiative and/or its supporting body through support from members via specific fund raising activities. Seed funding can be applied for and approved before fundraising is complete, but funds will not be released until the raised funds are available.
- 5.4 Other arrangements as may be stipulated from time to time by the Mission Resource Consultant and Synod Fund Management Sub-Committee
- 5.5 Applications for interest free loans, or dollar for dollar grants where local fundraising has occurred, receive greater weight in the prioritisation process than straight cash grants. This is in order to encourage local commitment to the project.

(Where grants are used to purchase equipment for use in a mission project, equipment is maintained and repaired by the mission team but remains the property of the Uniting Mission & Education Board or supporting Presbytery and reverts to the Board / Presbytery at the close of the agreement for redeployment in mission.)

6. Necessary conditions

- 6.1 Must contribute to the development of a new missional gathering within NSW & ACT.
- 6.2 Must have an intentional and explicit connection to the Uniting Church in Australia.

7. Desirable characteristics for applications

- 7.1 Returns a useful resource to the wider church, especially those that are relevant to other new congregation's activities.
- 7.2 Shows evidence of potential to contribute to new congregations work in the Synod through vision sharing.
- 7.3 Assists in the identification, development or support of leaders working with new initiatives in the NSW/ACT Synod. For example:

- a manual/mission plan template outlining the method used to achieve a mission outcome
- the art and concepts for an advertising campaign, along with budgets, information about how it was actioned and information about the effectiveness/response
- a website with links to other new congregations activities; a significant learning or insight applicable in other situations; creation of a revenue-raising technique
- assistance with conference or course fees for leadership development, resulting in a report detailing the main learnings presented/developed at the event. (Funding for courses/conferences offered by non-UCA organisations will not be supported if an equivalent UCA option is available.)

8. Desirable outcomes

- 8.1 To support mission teams with clear objectives & energy who can achieve results
- 8.2 To provide encouragement and hope by being an expression of support from the wider church toward mission teams that have enthusiasm and ability.

In assessing specific applications, the Committee is to bear in mind the following strategic considerations:

- 8.3 To return value - in terms of mission and sustainability - to the wider church
- 8.4 To further the work of growing new initiatives within the UCA across NSW
- 8.5 To make funding available across a wide selection of Presbyteries.

9. Process

9.1 Application forms are available from the Uniting Mission and Education website <http://ume.nsw.uca.org.au/resource/new-missional-gatherings-seed-fund/> or, via email: umeinfo@nswact.uca.org.au. Prepare the application on the form provided, with any required supporting material that:

- addresses the above criteria.
- demonstrates how the funding will be used to support activities that contribute to an appropriate mission (as outlined in a plan or summary prepared by the submitting body), and
- includes an affirmation of Presbytery's endorsement of the proposed project in accordance with strategic priorities, in answer to the following questions:
 - a) What strategic priority does this applying body have within the overall mission strategy of your Presbytery?
 - b) How confident is Presbytery that the project will be successful?
 - c) In Presbytery's opinion how important is this grant to the project?

Maximum amount of supporting material to be 2-3 A4 pages.

9.2 The application is initially submitted to the Synod Fund Management Committee, via the UME Administration Assistant either directly or via the Presbytery. The Mission Consultant then:

- reviews the application with respect to criteria,
- informs the relevant Presbytery where appropriate,
- The application is then forwarded by the Mission Resource Consultant for consideration with recommendations to the Synod Fund Management Sub-Committee,
- To enable applications to proceed to this stage with the minimum delay, it is hoped that Presbyteries will be able to establish a quick responsive process and delegate a small sub committee / executive group to make recommendations and comment on strategic priority of applications (addressed in 8.3).

9.3 If the application is supported, projects are then prioritised on the basis of mission potential and feasibility by both Presbytery and the Mission Resource Consultant. Funds are then allocated to projects in order of priority.

9.4 Funds are approved subject to accountability processes as determined by the Mission Resource Consultant and Synod Fund Management Sub-Committee and Presbyteries (to be a 6 monthly or annual review).

9.5 Funds forwarded by the Mission Resource Consultant to Uniting Resources to process to the submitting body.

9.6 Review process overseen by the Mission Resource Consultant in consultation with Presbytery.

10. Further Information

For further information contact:

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