

TRANSFORMING MISSION GRANTS FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS



OUR STRATEGIC AIM: to encourage and equip innovators breaking new ground, joining in with moves of the Spirit

WHAT WE EXPECT TO SEE: increasing numbers of innovative forms of church visibly growing in depth and reach

PURPOSE OF TRANSFORMING MISSION GRANTS: to provide necessary financial support to new missional initiatives

PRIORITIES

Within the district budget we anticipate having relatively limited funds available for making grants so need to prioritise applications which have:

- a clear financial need (the work will struggle to be birthed or reach maturity without a district financial contribution); or
- demonstrate exceptional potential, but alongside this unusually high risk of bearing fruit only as an experiment for future projects to learn from.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, Transforming Mission grants will be no more than 25% of annual project costs over a period of up to 5 years, up to a maximum project grant of £20k

Where district finances permit, grants for up to five years will be awarded up front to give projects stability. However if applications exceed funds available, grants may be for shorter periods with an indication of intended future support. Multi-year grants will be contingent on satisfactory annual evaluations.

Grants will be made to circuits, churches and organisations affiliated with the life of our district.

Creating new Christian communities across the country is seen as priority within the Connexional God For All strategy. Our district has been allocated a fund of £156,385 to start New Places for New People across our circuits between now and 2026. Because this work has high potential impact but also carries a high risk of failure, grants of up to £60k are available for projects which meet Connexional NPNP criteria. This £60k comprises £20k of Connexional funding, £20k of initial district funding, with a further £20k of district funding contingent on satisfactory progress of the project and sufficient funds continuing to be available within the District Advance Fund. These grants carry additional explanation, discernment and evaluation requirements.

PROCESS

Grants will be considered and awarded by the District Leading Team (or a panel appointed by it). We are attempting to view Transforming Mission grants not as a competitive process, but a means of together discerning how to best use financial resources that God has provided, creating a permission-giving culture that takes holy risks. The District Leading Team may from time to time initiate conversations about where we together feel opportunities should be explored, such as through the Superintendents Forum or Mission Forum.

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Grant applications will usually follow a four stage process:

Stage 1 - Consult

If you are considering applying, contact our Mission Enabler or Children & Youth Co-ordinator as early as possible. Their role is to help you explore, develop and articulate your vision, so that your mission might flourish. They are not a “gatekeeper” for the District Leading Team.

The Mission Enabler will alert DLT to your plans, how much funding you will require (if known) and when you expect to request a grant.

Stage 2 - Explain

Provide a proposal document for DLT explaining clearly your vision, journey, team, markers of fruitfulness, finance, risks and other information. The questions below are intended to help you frame your proposal, rather than as a prescriptive list.

By this stage your project (including your financial contribution) must have been approved by your governing body, and by your circuit if the applicant is a church.

The Mission Enabler can help you articulate your plans and review drafts of this proposal for you, but it needs to be written in your own words.

You will then discuss your proposal with DLT, prior to DLT deciding on award of a grant.

Stage 3 - Discern

You are invited to speak with DLT by Zoom to answer any questions about your proposal. Where possible questions from DLT members will be relayed to you in advance of this meeting.

We will contact you as soon as possible after the meeting to inform you whether a grant has been awarded or declined, or explaining any matters which require further explanation or work before a grant can be awarded.

Stage 4 - Evaluate

Receipt of subsequent years funding will be conditional on receipt of a satisfactory annual evaluation. The purpose of this is to support you in reflecting on how your project is developing, what you need to adapt for it to continue to progress, and what you have learnt along the way that you and others should be mindful of for future initiatives.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR EXPLANATION:

VISION

- What are you planning to do?
- Who is it for?
- Where will it be centred?
- What will it be like?
- What will be its key activities?

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JOURNEY

- How have you arrived at this proposal?
- Why does it inspire hope in your context?
- Why is it priority of yours? Were other ideas considered? How does it relate to your overall mission strategy?
- Which stakeholders have you listened to? What did they tell you?
- What research and data have informed your planning?
- How have you tested your ideas? What have you learned from this?
- How have you gain insight from beyond your locality? What networks of expertise will you continue to connect with?

TEAM

- Who are the members of the team responsible for steering and directing this project to date (who are responsible for the contents of this proposal)? What skills and experience do they each bring?
- Will this team continue to have oversight of the project? If not who will this be transferred to and how?
- Who will lead and support the day to day activities of this project? How are you comfortable they will share the same vision as your steering team?
- Will your project employ staff? What will their role be?
- Who will the project be accountable to? When and how have they approved this proposal? (if the application is from a church, you also need the approval of your circuit)

MARKERS OF FRUITFULNESS

What will fruitfulness look like for your project?

Describe where you expect to be in 1 year, 3 years and 5 years for whichever of these markers are relevant (or your own equivalent framework). Be as specific as you can – these should become a key reference point for you to assess whether your approach needs to evolve over the coming years.

Growing disciples

- Fostering a culture of deepening discipleship and lives being shaped by relationship with Christ
- Nurturing new leaders emerging from within the project

Sharing stories

- Creating a culture of invitation to relationship with Christ
- People discovering or rediscovering faith, and where relevant being baptised and welcomed into membership
- Supporting or inspiring future transformative mission initiatives

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Passionate contextual worship

- Growing worshipping community deeply rooted in and continually informed by its context
- Expectation that lives will be changed by encountering the presence of God

Long term sustainability

- Financially sustainable after initial start up grants have ended
- New leaders and volunteers continue to emerge
- Self-governing? Or remaining under the direct supervision of your organisation?

Connexional

- Relating well to and in communion with wider Methodism
- Contributing to circuit and/or district (financially, people, expertise etc)

RISKS AND RESPONSES

- What are the main risks most likely to prevent the flourishing of your project?
- How are these being reduced to an acceptable level?

FINANCES

Provide an income and expenditure budget for your project for the duration of the grant you are seeking, and the year after the grant finishes (to show how the work will be financially sustainable).

Make clear what financial contribution you are requesting from the district.

Explain:

- Who else you are seeking funding from, and how certain this is funding?
- What level of available funds you hold (and your circuit holds if you are a church) and how this compares to your financial contribution to this work
- What will you do if the district is not able to provide a grant?

OTHER INFORMATION

Where relevant please provide:

- Your last annual accounts
- Details of the bank account into which a grant should be paid
- Job description and person specification for any staff to be employed (which should have been discussed with the district HR Officer)
- Your organisation's plan for mission, and when this was last updated (The Methodist [Mission Planning Toolkit](#) is an excellent resource for creating or updating your plan)

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