

Proposed Framework for Mission Support Working Group

Origin: National Indigenous Council

Approved: July 2019

For transmission to the 2019 National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering

Background

Calls to the Church (#8) identifies the need for sustainable support for the Indigenous Church, and an equitable distribution of Mission and Service Funds that take into consideration the context the whole Indigenous church. The document also names Indigenous work, both rural and urban, as valuable and requiring an increase in level of support, (i.e.: financial, staff, and space).

The National Indigenous Council assumed oversight for the Mission Support Grants on January 1, 2019. In preparation for this transition, the following processes were undertaken:

- In April 2018, the All Native Circle Conference's Council on Sharing reviewed applications and allocated Mission Support Grants for its Communities of Faith for two years 2019 and 2020.
- In September 2018 the National Indigenous Council received, reviewed and allocated Mission Support Grants for Indigenous Communities of Faith in British Columbia Conference, Hamilton Conference, Toronto Conference, Bay of Quinte Conference, Montreal and Ottawa Conference, and London Conference.

Oversite of Mission Support Grants, at a national level, is a new file for the Indigenous Ministries staff and the National Indigenous Council. As the new National Indigenous Organization shapes an overall strategy, it will need to gain a fulsome understanding of historical principles and practices as it relates to Mission Support to Indigenous Communities of Faith.

Purpose

The Mission Support Working Group (Working Group) will assess applications from Indigenous communities of faith and apportion grant requests in accordance with the current strategy and budget.

The members of the Working Group will exercise the principles of this ministry of stewardship. The contributions of volunteers build up the Body of Christ. In this caring for the Body we care for our communities and for each other. We hold dear our core values

- i. The Seven Sacred Teachings of Love, Wisdom, Honesty, Respect, Courage, Humility, and Truth,
- ii. And our Christian Teachings from Scripture.

For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28

Jurisdiction, Scope, and Authority

The Working group makes recommendations to the National Indigenous Organization on strategy, decisions around the Mission Support Grant distribution and policy matters. In addition, they will collaborate (through the Community Capacity Development Coordinators) with the General Council Office Finance Unit who bring additional expertise and knowledge to the administration of Mission Support.

The Working Group is responsible for:

1. Making decisions around the Mission and Support Grants to communities.
2. Overseeing the work resulting from the financial changes to Pastoral Charge Totals
3. Preparation of the quarterly report narratives supported by Mission Support financial spreadsheets and submitted to the Executive Minister and the National Indigenous Organization.
4. Development of an effective communications strategy.

This work is supported by the Community Capacity Development Coordinators in consort with Communities of Faith and regions (where applicable).

The Working Group will:

1. Ensure that the Policy and Procedures related to Mission Support and Regional Council Grant align with the principles and values outlined on the Calls to the Church and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
2. Ensure continued efforts to work collaboratively across the church structures to decolonize, and to gain and share a deeper understanding of the history of allocations.
3. Practice regular reviews and evaluation of policies and process.
4. Commit to communicating the shared vision of the framework on Mission Support in meetings where communities of faith are called to gather when requested.
5. Advocate

The role of staff:

Each of the three Community Capacity Development Coordinators are responsible for supporting the communities of faith within their assigned geographical area. One Coordinator is assigned as staff lead to the Working Group and this portfolio. This staff person coordinates meetings, agenda, follow up tasks and communications. A program support person will provide support to the Coordinators.

The Community Capacity Development Coordinators will confirm receipt of a Mission Support application with the community of faith and will work collaboratively with them to complete applications prior to distribution to the Working Group.

The Community Capacity Development Coordinator will communicate with the community of faith when

- their application is approved;

- the Mission Support application requires further clarification
- the Mission Support application is denied (or reduced) in accordance with these terms of reference.
- The Mission Support is revoked

Working collaboratively with the General Council Office's Finance unit the Community Capacity Development Coordinator coordinate and track the disbursement of grants. (Is this the portfolio lead?)

Communications

With support from the Community Capacity Development Coordinator and in consort with their colleague Community Capacity Development Coordinators, the National Indigenous Organization liaison, the Working Group will provide a minimum of one (1) interim report and one (1) annual report to the National Indigenous Organization. The report will include a financial report, an anecdotal report on approvals and include any feedback from communities of faith, and new understandings of process or learnings which may be of interest to and/or impact other working groups, the report will also give recommendations for amendments to policy or process.

Governance

1. The National Indigenous Organization has responsibility for the oversight of the Indigenous church budget.
2. The Working Group reports to the National Indigenous Organization by providing financial information on how the Mission Support budget is being allocated
3. Decisions of the Working Group are made through a process of consensus-building.
4. A quorum of four (4) members can make decisions on behalf of the Working Group so long as there is consensus. An email poll will occur when a collective conference call is not possible.
5. A rotating chairperson is named by the Working Group. The chairperson will set the meeting date(s) and agenda with support of the lead Community Capacity Development Coordinator.

Membership and Terms of Service

The Working Group consists of seven (7) appointed members. The National Indigenous Organization will appoint one (1) from their membership to be a portfolio liaison.

Membership will include lay and order of ministry representatives, with broad national representation and knowledge of Indigenous community, culture and practices. Members will also possess these skills: knowledge of financial analysis and the United Church's personnel policy, creative thinking, the complex nature of community ministry and pastoral care, openness to diversity, good stewardship, and a thorough understanding of the Mission and Service Fund. Members will also have access to technology.

The Working Group members will serve a term of three (3) years with the possibility of serving a second term of three (3) years. Terms will begin at each National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering. Appointments will be staggered to ensure continuity of current membership and that the National Indigenous Organization have one (1) seat on the Working Group. If a member is

absent from two consecutive meetings that member will communicate with the Chair to determine whether that member will be able to fulfill these duties and expectations. Members must declare a conflict of interest should they be a member of a community of faith's application for funding.

Resources and Budget

The Executive of General Council sets the yearly budget for Mission Support. The National Indigenous Council has oversight and names the Mission Support Working Group as the Group that provides Council recommendations toward final decision making, reviewing, receiving requests for adjustments/consideration if funds come available, and redistribution of unspent dollars (near year end), and effective stewardship responsibilities.

Meetings

The Working Group will meet monthly by zoom or conference calls for the first three (3) months (September to November 2019.) This will allow time to gain understanding of their purpose and determine and exercise best practices. Beginning in January 2020 meetings will occur bimonthly to allow time for ongoing development. As the end of the year (2020) approaches the Working Group will have a good grasp of the scope of their work and be able to determine what is required for the future meeting schedule.

The Working Group will require one face-to-face meeting per year.

Whenever possible, they will invite an Elder from the Elder's Council to accompany their work during face-to-face meetings.