

Financial Resources Handbook

Abbreviated Edition

Revised November 2021

Capital Loans and Grants for

- Congregations
- Community Ministries
- Camps
- Education Centres



The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada



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The Financial Resources Handbook: Abbreviated Edition is intended only as a quick reference. For complete details of policies and guidelines, and application forms, please contact your Regional Mission Support Officer.

Information is also available at united-church.ca on the [Capital Assistance Programs](#) webpage. Capital Assistance forms can be downloaded from the [Forms](#) webpage.

**Mission
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Introduction

The General Council's Financial Services (FIN), Mission through Finance (MtF), embraces a vision: *Congregations and other ministries—the body of Christ—whole and sharing faithfully in God's mission for the healing and renewal of God's world.* In partnership with congregations, other mission units, and regional councils, MtF contributes to this vision by working toward four objectives:

- Foster the health and multi-dimensional growth of congregations and other ministries.
- Support the renewal of current ministries and the development of new ones.
- Provide financial support for congregations and other ministries.
- Faithfully accompany Indigenous congregations and other local ministries.

This *Financial Resources Handbook* provides a summary of the various ways the Capital Assistance Fund invests in the renewal and development of congregations, camps, education centres, community ministries, and chaplaincies. Through the generosity of many faithful members and adherents who give to Mission & Service and provide capital gifts and bequests, financial resources are available to assist with projects that will strengthen the ability of faith communities to participate in God's mission locally and globally.

A handbook, though, will never be able to keep up with the fast-changing world we now live in. Be sure to bookmark the main webpage for [Local Administration](#) for the most current information.

The Capital Assistance Fund remains strong, providing the revenue for loans for congregations, camps, and education centres. The interest income generated by this fund provides revenue for many of the Capital Assistance Grants that are available.

All applications for grants and loans require the approval of appropriate partners at regional council. When major projects such as substantial building renovations or new facilities are contemplated, it is wise to also consult in advance with both regional and Mission through Finance staff.

Low-interest loans are the main way the church invests in local projects. By this means, money is “recycled” for use in various ministry situations. Some grants are available, especially in financially limited situations. This handbook outlines the policies that govern the capital grant and loan support MtF is mandated by the General Council to make available to the whole church.

Any capital project is an opportunity to rethink ministry. It is also an opportunity to challenge dormant or inactive members to renew their participation in the life and ministry of the congregation and God's mission in the world.

The policies for these programs reflect a desire to share the resources of the church and to prevent the burden of excessive debt from stifling mission. Your feedback on this handbook and

the policies it describes is welcome so MtF can more effectively contribute to the health and mission of congregations and other ministries.

Blessings,

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Application and Eligibility Requirements

- **The maximum income** for a *congregation* seeking a Capital Assistance Congregational *Loan* is \$300,000 total income with the assumption that larger congregations can access commercial loans while smaller congregations cannot.
- The income ceiling for Capital Assistance *Grants* is \$150,000 for a congregation.
- There is no income ceiling for applications to the Congregational Development Fund or capital assistance for education centres, retreat centres, and camps.
- All United Church ministries requesting funds must have active charitable status. (See the Canada Revenue Agency website, cra-arc.gc.ca, for the charitable status number of your church/mission unit.)
- **Church grant applicants may have up to a maximum of \$37,500 of unrestricted investments.**
- **Any applicant can make only one application** for each specific kind of grant request in any calendar year (this includes Technology Support, Manse Modernization, and Church Modernization Grants).
- **Church/Manse Modernization Grants** are matching grants of up to \$5,000 in any six-year period for congregations with income of less than \$150,000. These grants are to assist with improving church buildings. The total amount of funds available for Church Modernization Grants is \$260,000.
- The maximum amount for a **Capital Assistance Loan** is the lesser of \$150,000 or 75% of the total capital project. The minimum loan amount is \$5,000.
- **Camp Loans** can be up to 50% of the total project cost, not to exceed \$50,000.
- Energy audits, building condition audits, and other greening initiatives are worthy parts of any capital program and are eligible under both church and manse funding. More attractive funding for energy conservation initiatives is potentially available at [Faithful Footprints](#).

Interest Rates

- Capital Assistance: 2.0%, with the first year interest-free
- Congregational Development Fund: 2.5%
- Bridge loans and special circumstances: Interest rate will vary.

Amounts of Funds

The target amount of funds allocated for grants are as follows:

Church Modernization	\$260,000
Manse Modernization.....	\$40,000
Technology.....	\$30,000
Camp	\$30,000

The amounts allocated are determined by interest income or other revenues available, and historical demand for each type of grant.

Audit or Independent Review

According to *The Manual* (G.4.2.2), independently reviewed financial statements must be presented to an annual meeting of the pastoral charge. The *Financial Handbook for Congregations*, available on the [Handbooks](#) page, describes in detail what is to be included, who may be engaged to do this work, and how and when the person to conduct the audit is elected.

Pastoral charges receiving Mission Support Grants are required to provide copies of the approved financial statements for the year in which the grants were received to the Regional Mission Support Convenor and the appropriate regional staff. In circumstances where it is not realistic to obtain a complete audit, an “independent review” as described in the *Financial Handbook for Congregations* may be the only option.

Processing Applications

The Financial Support Group (FSG) meets monthly at the General Council Office to receive and review all requests for Capital Assistance.

The FSG deals with complete applications. Incomplete applications are tabled, and the regional council is contacted to provide the missing information.

- To ease administration, we ask that supporting invoices be submitted all at once so a single cheque is issued.

If a request is unclear or is outside policy:

- FSG may request additional information.
- FSG may decline the request, stating a reason for refusal.

Factors in approvals/decisions include

- eligibility
- availability of funds
- completeness and perceived viability of the proposal

Application forms are available from your regional council or the [Forms](#) webpage.

Please note that applications must be approved by the regional council to be considered.

Mission Support Grants: \$3.84 Million Block Grant

Eligibility

- Pastoral charges
- Community ministries
- Other eligible ministries as determined by the regional council.

Application forms are available from your regional council.

Please note: Applications must be complete to be considered, and are to be approved by the regional council.

Salary

Refer to [Minimum Salary and Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel](#).

Proof of registered **charitable status** (a printout from Canada Revenue Agency) is required from all United Church ministries requesting a Mission Support Grant.

Audit or Independent Review

The *Financial Handbook for Congregations* on the [Handbooks](#) page describes in detail what is to be included in an audit, who may be engaged to do this work, and how and when the person to conduct the audit or review is selected.

Capital Assistance Fund

Loans and Grants

Eligibility

- Congregations/pastoral charges—for grant applications—with a modest financial base, a limited ability to borrow, and less than \$37,500 in unrestricted reserves
- Education centres, camps, and retreat centres

Congregations

- Loans of up to 75% of total cost of project, to a maximum of \$150,000 (if over 50%, there should be a solid repayment plan)
- For loan applications, consideration is given to congregations with income up to \$300,000
- Matching Grants up to \$5,000

Education Centres

- Loans of up to 50% of total cost, not to exceed \$50,000

Camps/Retreat Centres

- Loans of up to 50% of total cost, not to exceed \$50,000
- Matching Grants up to \$4,000

Capital Assistance Terms

- Three-year term, 2% interest (first year interest-free)
- Amortization to a maximum of 15 years, depending on loan amount
- Pre-authorized debit is the standard method, but in unusual circumstances post-dated cheques can be submitted
- No loan assistance for projects with less than \$10,000 total cost
- A registered mortgage on property may be required for loans of \$100,000 or more

Capital Assistance Loans

Purpose

To assist congregations and other mission units to enhance their mission capacity by improving facilities.

Required Documents (upon Approval)

Agreement to Repay

The Agreement to Repay outlines the conditions of the loan. It needs to be signed and returned

in a timely manner so funds can be released.

Certificate and Declaration of Trustees

This also needs to be signed and returned in a timely manner. This document includes

- title details
- agreement to insure against fire and accident
- agreement not to further encumber property
- agreement to follow codes and zoning regulations
- agreement to pay taxes

Mortgage

A registered mortgage may be required for any loans of \$100,000 or greater. Every effort is made to minimize legal and administrative costs.

Congregations: Required Documents

Key Points for an Application (Form CA 2A)

- Current statement of mission/purpose
- Site plan, floor plans, elevations, accessibility—if relevant
- Congregational description and statistics:
 - Households under care
 - Contributing households
 - Average worship attendance
- Financial strength
 - Intentional stewardship programs
 - Financial statement for previous year for the pastoral charge
 - a. Amount raised:
 - Mission & Service
 - All purposes
 - Debt retirement
 - b. Balance sheet and income statement (amount of unrestricted funds not to exceed \$37,500)
 - c. Financial plan:
 - Budget projections for three years
- Project starting date
- Total request
- Proof of charitable status

Application forms are available on the [Forms](#) webpage. Regional council–approved applications are reviewed monthly.

Education Centres, Camps, and Retreat Centres

Loans

Education Centres

To provide new space for program, services, or staff housing, or to purchase computer technology or other needed upgrades.

The maximum loan is 50% of the total capital cost, not to exceed \$50,000.

Camps

To upgrade, replace, or repair program areas, cabins, dining rooms, or washrooms, or to upgrade technology and other capital items. The maximum loan is 50% of the total cost, not to exceed \$50,000.

Loan applications must be supported by manageable financial plans and loan guarantees as well as financial statements, including balance sheets.

Grants

A camp or retreat centre may apply for a matching grant of up to \$4,000. A total amount up to \$30,000 is available to Camp Grants.

Regional council–approved applications from camps and retreat centres are reviewed monthly.

Grant applications must be supported by financial statements, including balance sheets, and an ability to provide the matching funds.

Application forms (CA 6A, 7A) are available on the [Forms](#) webpage. Regional council–approved applications are reviewed monthly.

Technology Grants

Purpose

To strengthen mission through acquiring or enhancing technological tools. You can apply for this grant each year. Technology grants are available to congregations with an annual income of \$150,000 or less, and less than \$37,500 in unrestricted reserves.

Congregations

The maximum amount for Technology Support Grant requests is \$1,500.

Application Requirements (Form CA 5A)

- Provide quotes for the cost of new technology.
- Supply the latest financial statements, including a balance sheet.
- Indicate whether a grant has been received in the past.

Community Ministries

These may apply for Matching Grants of up to \$1,500. Application dates and procedures are the same as for pastoral charges.

Requires regional council approval before or within three months of purchase. Proof of purchase must be provided to Finance before grant cheques will be processed.

Application forms are available on the [Forms](#) webpage Regional council–approved applications are reviewed monthly.

Church Modernization Grants

Church Modernization Matching Grants are available to congregations with an annual income of \$150,000 or less, and less than \$37,500 in unrestricted reserves.

- The grant should be approved before work commences, or project funds should not depend on the approval of this grant.
- Applications are received monthly until the annual budget is used up.
- Up to \$5,000 per congregation on a dollar-for-dollar basis within any six-year period.
- The maximum matching grant is \$5,000 for each congregation of a pastoral charge.

If total cost is in excess of \$10,000, you may wish to apply for a Capital Assistance loan.

Proof of Payment

Payment is provided based on receipt of invoices for the work completed.

Approved grants should be used within one year of the date of approval.

Application Requirements (Form CA 4A)

- Financial statement for latest year-end
- Budget for current year and year-to-date statement
- Balance sheet for latest year-end
- Estimate/quote and detailed description of work to be done
- Proof of charitable status

Application forms are available on the [Forms](#) webpage. Regional council–approved applications are reviewed monthly.

Manse Modernization Grants

Dollar-for-dollar matching grants are available to pastoral charges with an annual income of \$150,000 or less, and unrestricted reserves less than \$37,500.

- Manse must be occupied by the minister, or moving in must be imminent.
- Grant must be approved before work begins, or project funds should not depend on the approval of this grant.
- Up to \$5,000 on a dollar-for-dollar basis within any six-year period. If a project costs more than \$10,000, you may wish to apply for a Capital Assistance loan.

Proof of Payment

Payment is based on receipt of invoices for the work completed and/or the recommendation of the Regional Council Staff Officer.

Approved grants should be used within a one-year period of approval date.

Application Requirements (Form CA 4A)

- Financial statement for latest year-end
- Budget for current year
- Balance sheet for latest year-end
- Estimates and detailed description of work to be done
- Name of pastoral charge, building location, and address
- Title under which manse is registered
- Proof of charitable status

Application forms are available on the [Forms](#) webpage. Regional council–approved applications are reviewed monthly.

Congregational Development Fund (CDF)

The Congregational Development Fund assists congregations needing capital assistance to embark on church building projects. This fund is intended to provide the final financial component—the “gap-filling” or “top-up” funding—that will enable promising congregational development/redevelopment projects to be undertaken and completed.

In partnership with regional councils of the United Church, Finance staff work with the applicants to assist in new development or redevelopment projects. The goal is to ensure congregations/pastoral charges are ready in terms of finance, stewardship education, leadership, land acquisition, and architectural and mission design, and to ensure program supports for ministry are in place.

The Congregational Development Fund does not fund the purchase of land or the construction or acquisition of manses.

Each application (**Form CA 3A**) is considered on its own merits, taking into account local circumstances.

Loan Terms

- The funding is to be used for the costs of constructing, acquiring, or redeveloping a congregational facility (exclusive of the cost of land). The CDF loan does not exceed either \$500,000 or 50% of the building project.
- The loan is a mortgage and is the subject of a covenant (Agreement to Repay) among all the church parties to the development.
- A mortgage against title is required in the amount of the CDF loan. The cost of acquiring this mortgage is borne by the pastoral charge.
- Monthly payments are required.
- A 10- or 15-year amortization period is negotiated.
- The interest rate is 2.5%.

Loan Repayment

Additional Provisions for CDF

The Executive of the General Council approved the following new provisions for Congregational Development Fund (CDF) loans as a means of encouraging both congregational debt reduction and further church development in specific regional councils.

The following debt reduction and new loans are offered by Finance on the recommendation of the relevant regional council:

- The amount raised by a regional council may be lent to new church development/redevelopment applicants in their area.
- A regional council may apply to reduce the principal balance in CDF loans owed by current loan-receiving congregations in their area provided the regional council raises one “new dollar” for new church development/redevelopment loans for each dollar written down in congregational accounts. (“New dollars” are those that were not previously in the asset or income stream of any United Church organization.) The percentage of the writedown is negotiable, with the aim of ensuring that congregational debt will be discharged within a 15-year period.

Example: If a regional council raises \$2 million, it can apply to have some amount of the current congregational loan portfolio written down and that same amount made available for new national loans in the regional council. The remaining dollars that were raised would be available for regional council grants or loans per local discretion.

- Under this proposal, loans recommended to Finance by regional councils involve signing normal Finance documents and making payments to Finance so revolving funds continue to be available for new church development and redevelopment projects elsewhere in the country.
- Any “new dollars” raised that surpass amounts written down to congregations may be used as the regional council decides.
- Before approving loans, the partner regional council diligently inquires about the mission, financial, and architectural suitability of the project.

Other Financial Programs

The United Church Foundation Grant Program

See the [Seeds of Hope](#) page on the Foundation website for the most current information.

All applications must be submitted by the deadline, on the correct form, and completed in full to be considered by the Joint Grants Committee. Priority will be given to applications that

- benefit either The United Church of Canada as a whole, or a broad constituency within The United Church of Canada (or a partner organization)
- are innovative and encourage new expressions of ministry
- will continue to have an impact after the grant is expended
- strengthen the capacity of organizations that further the work of The United Church of Canada

Pilot or start-up projects should include provision for evaluation and a plan for financial viability beyond the pilot or start-up stage.

Matching grants may be made in appropriate circumstances to stimulate response from other sources.

Multi-year funding will be considered in appropriate circumstances, subject to regular progress reports and financial reports, but we do not normally fund regular core programs. Successful applicants will be notified at the time of initial funding if they are receiving multi-year funding.

Applicants who submit requests for funding for projects they previously received a grant for should be aware that they may not receive any funding in subsequent years or, if they do receive funding, that it will be at a reduced level.

For a full description of the granting guidelines and process, visit the [Grants](#) section of the United Church Foundation website.

Real Property Fund: Property Owned Directly by the National Church

The Real Property Fund provides for the upkeep, taxes, insurance, and so on of real properties of The United Church of Canada. The purpose of holding any piece of property is to enable church ministries in the particular local context where the property is situated. Should a property not be used for the ministries of the church, it may be sold. Proceeds from the sale of property are returned to the fund to maintain the existing portfolio.

“Real property” is real estate—basically, land and buildings—and does not include items such as airplanes, boats, buses, cars, snowmobiles, or vans that may be stored on the property.

Insurance costs have risen significantly in recent years, so **congregations and others occupying real properties are encouraged to provide as much toward maintenance, taxes, and insurance costs as they are able.**

Insurance and Taxes

The Real Property Fund pays for taxes and for fire and liability coverage for each real property, based on information provided by the Regional Council Officer. The insured values should be reviewed annually by the Regional Council Officer.

Mission units are asked to help with operating expenses.

Replacement Value

“Replacement value” is the cost of replacing a building in case of a total loss. For insurance purposes the following costs are excluded from the valuation:

- below-ground foundations
- drain tile
- water and sewer connections

Under Replacement Value Insurance, the full cost of repairs is covered in the case of a partial loss.

- Buildings are generally insured for 100% of replacement value.
- Buildings must be repaired or replaced, or a cash settlement will be made on the basis of depreciated value.
- Insurance for the actual value of contents should be purchased.
- Occupants must provide insurance for all personal property.
- Building plans must be approved within two years of a loss.

Vacant and Rented Properties

Insurance premiums for vacant or rented properties are higher because the risk is greater.

Whenever properties become vacant for more than 60 days, **the General Council Office must notify the insurance company immediately** for the insurance coverage to remain in effect.

When properties are rented, the insurance company must also be notified for the coverage to remain in effect.

Gradual Deterioration Exclusion

Another insurance exclusion falls under the regulation regarding “gradual deterioration, normal wear and tear.” If the cause of any loss or damage is improper maintenance of the property, such as a roof collapsing because it hasn’t been repaired for some time, the claim will not be covered.

Replacement Timeline

A mission unit that has lost a building due to fire or other circumstances must provide a plan for the rebuilding project within two years of the date of the incident, or the insurance funds will revert to the uncommitted balance of the Real Property Fund. The plan should include a mission statement, architectural drawings, and a financial plan.

Maintenance Requests

All regional councils forward to the Program Coordinator: Mission through Finance a list of maintenance budget requests for each real property in their jurisdiction.

Priority is given to requests that involve safety, heating, plumbing, structural integrity, and accessibility.

Congregations and others occupying real property are encouraged to contribute as much as possible toward maintenance. A **maintenance budget** includes labour and material costs for

- plumbing, electrical, and carpentry work
- paint and painting supplies
- drywall work
- carpets/floor covering
- counters, cupboards, closet construction, materials, and repairs
- drapes
- four basic major appliances and appliance repair costs
- roof repairs
- door locks
- replacement of doors and windows

- insulation
- fire safety equipment and maintenance (e.g., extinguishers)
- light fixtures
- heating system, installation, and repairs

The maintenance budget does not provide for day-to-day upkeep such as janitorial services, salaries, or supplies, all of which are operating expenses paid by the occupant.

Rental of a Manse

In the event that a manse is not used by the congregation to house its lay or ordered minister for any length of time over 30 days, the congregation notifies the regional council and the Financial Support Group of Financial Services (FIN) at General Council Office to jointly develop a plan for the maintenance and security of the property.

If the plan involves renting the property to tenants, the congregation directs the rent payments to the General Council's Real Property Fund to defray ongoing costs of taxes, insurance, and repairs. The insurance company must also be notified that the manse is occupied by a renter.

Sale of Real Property

If real property is to be sold to an occupant other than a mission unit of The United Church of Canada, sale prices and terms are negotiated with Finance on a case-by-case basis.

1. A motion is received from the regional council stating that the property no longer serves the ministry purpose for which it was intended.
2. The market value of the property is determined by obtaining two letters of opinion.
3. The appraised value is usually determined by averaging the two figures.
4. The sale price may further be reduced by special considerations such as historical involvement in and contributions to maintenance costs by the occupant, but in no case will the sale price be lower than the appraised value less 50%.
5. All annual maintenance costs, taxes, and insurance costs become the responsibility of the purchaser immediately upon transfer of title.

The sale is approved by the General Council Office and the Real Property Committee.

The legal costs for such a sale are normally the responsibility of the purchaser.

Further Resources

These resources are available at united-church.ca:

[Budgeting Tools for Treasurers](#)

[Capital Assistance Fund](#)

[Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook](#) (on the [Handbooks](#) page)

[Congregational Finance](#)

[Financial Handbook for Congregations](#) (on the [Handbooks](#) page)

[Group Insurance](#)

[Pastoral Charge Payroll Service](#)

Webinars

Recorded webinars are available at [United in Learning](#).

Reminder

Annual Information Returns (T3010) must be filed with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) within six months of a pastoral charge's fiscal year-end to avoid paying a penalty or risking loss of charitable status.

HST/GST rebates can be filed every six months and for a back period of up to four years.

Report any name or address change of a congregation or pastoral charge to the General Council Office and to CRA.

The CRA name and its website address, canada.ca/charities-giving, must be indicated on all income tax receipts.



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