The United Reformed Church Northern Synod

Guidelines for Grants & Loans for MISSION

The Synod offers five categories of grant:

1. Church Property
2. Manse Property
3. Mission
4. Ministries & Training
5. Youth & Children's Work

Each category has its own guidelines and application form, which can be downloaded from https://www.urc-northernsynod.org/resources/grants/ or obtained from Synod Office. These guidelines relate only to grants for **mission**.

Note that projects which are largely concerned with improving property should come under property grants.

Mission Grants

The aim of the Mission Fund is to enable the churches of Northern Synod to be lively, informed and effective in being the church in their local setting in the light of the five marks of mission.

There are three categories of grants:

Tiny grants, up to £1,000

There is a separate simpler online application form for these, at https://www.urc-northernsynod.org/resources/tiny-grants/. These guidelines relate to the small and large grants, and loans.

Small grants, up to £10,000

These will usually be decided on the basis of the paper application by Synod Executive Committee, which meets five times a year.

Large grants, from £10,000 to £50,000

For these, a verbal presentation to Synod Executive Committee will also be required, as well as the paper application.

Loans

An interest-free loan, covering up to 100% of the cost, may be made available where a church has been awarded a grant, but lacks the financial resources realistically to proceed with the project.

A schedule of equal monthly, quarterly or annual repayments will be agreed at the time of the making of the loan, to commence at the first anniversary of the payment of the loan, generally to be repaid over five years. Loans should be affordable, and may be reviewed where a church finds it is struggling to keep up with repayments. No loan should be outstanding for more than ten years.

If your application for a grant and/or loan is successful, your church will be requested to send a representative to share information about your project at Synod meeting.

Notes and General Advice

The Synod Executive Committee usually meets five times a year to consider applications. The agenda is finalised two or three weeks before each meeting, and applicants are therefore advised to check with Synod Office what the deadline will be. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Synod Office if they have any questions.

In the case of local ecumenical partnerships, applicants should indicate in particular funding sought from the other ecumenical partners.

Applicants holding significant reserves should explain their purpose and whether these funds are restricted, designated, or available to support the proposed activity. Significant unrestricted reserves may affect both the decision to award a grant and the amount of grant offered.

Cover Sheet

Please also give the church's name and location.

Please tick the relevant boxes, indicating whether you are seeking a small or large grant, and which areas of mission are involved in your project.

Section 1

1.1 Please give enough information to explain the project, the reasons for it, the timescale, and resources required (other than financial resources, with come under section 4) and how it fits with your church's mission. You can describe your project on a separate paper if you prefer. You may find it helpful to refer to your Local Mission & Ministry Review (LMMR) or pastorate profile if you have done one recently.

For example, how will the project support your hopes for your church's mission and community? Who has been involved so far? How will you bring your proposal to life – have you any detailed plans, or someone to do

this for you? What obstacles or constraints might you encounter, and how could these be overcome? What are your timescales and is there anything else we could do to help you put your plans in to place?

1.2 If there are ecumenical or community partners in the project, please list them here.

1.3 Where your project would involve employing someone, Synod Executive Committee will ask the Human Resources Subcommittee to approve the employment documentation. This service is intended to ensure that churches have good systems in place so that the employment proceeds smoothly.

Section 2

Usually, the Synod will contact you by email if this method is available.

Section 3

3.1 The payee will usually be your church.

3.2 The addressee will usually be your church treasurer.

Section 4

4.1 Costs can be detailed on a separate sheet if easier.

4.3 This question aims to establish how much of your financial resources are set aside as reserves, and therefore how much you could realistically commit to this project. Total financial resources would include cash, bank accounts, investments and debtors, but not properties. Reserves should be the level of reserves referred to in your reserves policy.

4.4 The total in this section should equal that in section 4.1. Again, details can be given on a separate sheet if easier. The aim is to show how the project will be funded, and it will be helpful if you are able to indicate how definite each amount is. Churches should explain the reasons if they are not able to put significant funding into the project. (It is also expected that applicant churches should be up to date with their M&M payments.)

Section 5

The Trust supports the Synod's safeguarding policy, and asks the church to confirm that it is also taking seriously the care of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Section 6

The reason for a Church Meeting resolution is to ensure that the whole church is behind the project and is aware of the application for funding.

Additional Documentation

Please also enclose the following documents with your application:

- Copies of quotations or estimates
- Your church's most recent signed annual accounts (if not already sent)
- Your church's current reserves policy (if not part of the accounts)
- A job description and contract of employment (if relevant)

Guidance on drawing up a reserves policy is available on the Synod website: https://www.urc-northernsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Reserves-Policy-Guidance-170405.pdf.

Reporting Back

The Synod likes to encourage other churches in their mission, and in addition to sharing details of your project and progress at the Synod meeting, we will also request a short written report (with photographs where possible) for publicity purposes. You can read about what other churches have done with mission grants in the Synod's e-newsletter.

Do get in touch with Synod Office if you need help or have any questions.