



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the goal of Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) church planting? The goal of MC USA church planting initiatives is to create and nurture missional peace churches — communities of people gathered together by Jesus whose life and witness reflects the gospel of peace and who are engaged in their local settings.

Do grant recipients have to be connected to MC USA? Mennonite Mission Network is the primary driver of church planting in MC USA including equipping, coaching and support for peace churches. They also engage church planters and plants outside of MC USA, in order to support peace church planting more broadly. The **Thrive: Church Planting Grant** is *only available for starting new MC USA congregations* that are connected to MC USA area conferences.

What are the minimum grant qualifications? Grant recipients need to meet these requirements:

- The church planter has completed a church planting assessment and has been in contact with Mennonite Mission Network's Facilitator for Emerging Faith Communities, Chris Scott (ChrisS@mennonitemission.net).
- Church planter is credentialed by an MC USA area conference. This includes licensed for specialized ministry, licensed towards ordination, or ordination.
- Church planter has completed the **Thrive: Church Planting Grant** application, including the submission of an MMN approved church planting proposal.

Other Considerations?

- When making grant decisions, we also consider the capacity of the church plant, other sources of support, and the overall financial viability of the church plant.
- If a church plant is already self-sustaining, or the church plant is sponsored by a mission agency other than MMN who provides material support – financial and non-financial – they are not eligible for this grant.
- Grant are limited based on the availability of funds.

- A primary value and purpose of the grant is to extend church planting
- This grant is not guaranteed for all SENT participants.

How are grants dispersed? Approved grant recipients will receive a check made out to the church plant's legal entity for the full amount of the grant after the grant is approved.

Are there restrictions on what the grant can be used for? There are no restrictions on what the grant funds can be used for. They can be used for any expense that moves the mission of the church plant forward including programming, resources, staff salary, facility costs, and so on.

What are the reporting requirements? Grant recipients are required to submit a 1-page report on the use of the funds by August 1 of the year the grant season expires. The annual report should include a narrative of how the funds were used and the ministry impact of those funds (i.e. what the plant was able to do as a result of the funds that otherwise might not have been possible)

When is the grant schedule? The grant "season" is September 1 – August 31. Applications can be submitted annually. If funds are not available for the current grant year, application will be considered for the next grant season. Potentially renewable up to three years (total of 15,000).

Is the grant renewable? Yes. Church plants that continue to be viable and demonstrate effective use of the funds through regular reporting are eligible for renewal for a total of three grants. (total of \$15,000 over three grant seasons).

How are church planters and plants held accountable? To get the Thrive: Church Planting Grant, the primary church planter must be credentialed by the area conference. The area conference will be informed when a grant is disbursed to a church plant in their process. Church planter accountability is a function of the credentialing process of the area conference. Church planters must maintain their credential in good standing in order to be eligible for grant renewal.

What is a new church plant? For the purpose of this grant, we consider a church a new church plant if it is 0 – 3 years old. We will receive applications for churches that are up to 5 years old, but priority will be given to church plants that are 0 – 3 years.

I am a church planter working through another mission agency like Virginia Mennonite Missions or Eastern Mennonite Missions, do I qualify for this grant? The Thrive Church plant grants are intended to extend the church planting capacity of MC USA conferences. If you are working in an area conference with its own mission agency, who already assists church planters with ministry support teams, etc., you are not eligible. We know that every dollar helps. We also want to make sure that these grants flow to areas where there is no or very little support going to church planting. This extends the capacity of the church overall.

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