

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Continuing Education Grant Guidelines

I. THE BUDGET

- A. Income from the Elbert Koontz Memorial Fund makes it possible for the Leadership Commission to award an annual continuing education grant of \$125 to each credentialed pastor who serves a congregation in the Western District Conference. Persons serving dually affiliated congregations will be awarded one-half the grant for which they are eligible.
- B. Qualification for eligibility
 - 1. Any currently licensed or ordained pastor (including chaplains, youth pastors, and denominational staff) currently serving the church would be eligible to receive a grant from the date that the pastor begins to serve in a pastoral role in a Western District Conference congregation or, if not ordained, from the date of licensing.
 - 2. Transition (interim) pastors service for one year or more shall be eligible to receive a grant.
- C. Additional funds for continuing education
 - 1. Each congregation in the Western District Conference is encouraged to provide funds of \$125/annum or more for their ministers who may wish to avail themselves of continuing education opportunities. The Western District Conference Leadership Commission suggests that this be an annual budget item in each congregation.
 - 2. The Conference Minister/Leadership Commission should work with ministers and congregations in encouraging both the budgeting of these funds and the use of these funds for pastors in the area conference.

II. CONSIDERATION FOR USE OF THE GRANTS

- A. The Conference Ministers will work with both ministers and congregations in arranging and encouraging continuing education programs for ministers.
- B. Items to be considered in grants for continuing education:
 - 1. Ministers who have not received their Master of Divinity degree are encouraged to take work toward completing that degree.
 - 2. Programs of study in personal growth and enrichment are eligible for grants (credit or audit).
 - 3. Programs of study in providing opportunity for sharpening of skills for church work are eligible for grants.
 - 4. Doctoral programs and theological education are eligible for grants within the amounts specified by this program.
 - 5. Spiritual direction, workshops, seminars, AMBS/EMS Pastors' week, are examples of non-credit options for grants

- C. While the Leadership Commission is flexible and open about awarding these grants, they are not to be used for non-study purposes such as district conference travel, reference books, medical therapeutic expenses, nor study unrelated to pastoral ministry. However, expenses such as travel, lodging, registration fees may be included in the request for a grant.

III. APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION STUDIES

- A. All applications are to be made through the office of the Western District Conference Minister and are subject to approval by the Western District Conference Leadership Commission. Applications should be received before an event but in no case will be considered if the request is received more than ten days after the event. The event must occur in the same year as the scholarship money is available.
 - B. Any licensed or ordained minister in the Western District Conference is eligible to apply for a grant of \$125 (or amount of eligibility) annually. On January 1 of each year, no more than \$125 of unused grant money may be carried over in to the new year, for a total accumulation up to but not to exceed \$250.
 - C. Special consideration over and above these grants may be given for special needs for personal evaluation or similar situation.
 - D. A brief report from recipients about the experience is requested.
- IV. The Western District Conference Leadership Commission will work with Mennonite Church USA leadership services to provide information for other grants which might be available for continuing education in addition to this fund.
- V. The Western District Leadership Commission shall try to provide for ministers information on programs of study available at various times and places. This should not limit ministers in placing their own suggested programs of study for consideration.
- VI. The amount to be awarded to pastors for Continuing Education (\$125 per pastor) will be reviewed on an annual basis. The Leadership Commission reserves the right to raise or lower the grant amount based on the interest income of the fund.
- VII. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made by the Leadership Commission for unusual circumstances.

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