

# The Vision Fund Handbook

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*The 35th General Council of The United Church of Canada, (1994) established a “youth and young adult fund to which congregations could apply for partial financial support for locally-generated youth and young adult ministries and programs.” (Record of Proceedings 1994)*

The purpose of this document is to help you navigate the process toward a successful application to the Vision Fund. This document will explain in detail why the various questions on the application form are asked, and what kind of information is hoped to be gleaned from your answers.

The first step in the application process is to make sure you are using the current application form. The easiest way to do this is to download a copy of the form from the website. You can find both the application form and the matching grant application form on the United Church website: [www.united-church.ca/en/local/loans/vision](http://www.united-church.ca/en/local/loans/vision).

The application form is reviewed every year, and each question on the form is there for a reason. Most of the reasons are fairly obvious; however, some of them may not seem to make sense. Please answer them anyway, as it helps the committee tremendously to have a full application when making a decision.

## Part I

**Project name:** This helps in sorting the various applications.

**Presbytery/district:** In years when money is tight, the committee tries to allow for an even geographic distribution of grants. If near the limit of the budget, an application is more likely to be considered from a region that is underrepresented.

**Conference:** See above.

**Contact person:** It is necessary to have a contact person for the committee to communicate with if there are questions concerning the application. Also, if the application is granted, it is necessary to have someone to send the funds to.

**Name and address of pastoral charge(s) or equivalent:** There are several reasons why this is important. Part of the reason is the same as stated under “Presbytery/district,” but further to that, one of the stated purposes of the fund is “*to provide financial support for Youth and Young Adult Ministries and programs in pastoral charges or groups of pastoral charges of The United Church of Canada.*” For this reason, it is necessary to know the name of the pastoral charge. Also, cheques are written to pastoral charges, not individuals.

**Has this project received Vision Fund money in the past?** It is the policy of the fund that the money granted through the fund be treated as seed money. The idea is that the money may be used to kick off a program that, once underway, will be able to sustain itself. For this reason the

committee usually tries to give out the money to new projects first, and then if there is any left in the budget they consider funding ongoing projects second. The committee very rarely gives funds to a project a third time.

It should be noted that, for the purposes of this grant, an “annual event” is considered a recurrence of the same project. For example, if your organization took a mission trip to Guatemala one year and called the trip the Guatemalan Adventurers, and then the next year the same organization took a mission trip to Cuba and called yourselves the Cuban Cuticles, the two events would be considered one project. Even if different participants were involved and the name of the trip was different, it is still a mission trip from the same place.

**Amount requested:** By policy, the Vision Fund can give grants of up to \$2,500 to successful applications. In addition, the fund can give an additional grant up to \$2,500 under the Matching Grant application. (To qualify for a matching grant, the applying organization has to show evidence of their fundraising an amount equal to or greater than their request of up to \$2,500.)

**Project/program timeline:** It is helpful when deciding to grant an application to know when the event is going to happen. It helps in the budgeting process to know when the money should be granted.

**Name and phone number of a member of your congregation and/or local community not directly connected to the project:** The vast majority of applications reviewed by the committee are for legitimate projects from legitimate sources. However, occasionally an application is received that seems a little off for one reason or another. For this reason, it is helpful to be able to speak with someone not directly involved in the project who knows about it and is able to confirm its validity.

## Part II

The purpose of the second part of the application is to provide a detailed description of your project so the committee can make an informed decision. Remember that the only thing the committee knows about your undertaking is what you put in this application. It is also important to remember that the committee typically has several of these applications to review. Therefore it is necessary to be clear and concise when answering the questions.

Please answer the questions asked in the order they are asked, and include the question as the heading for your answer.

### 1. Please describe the project/program, including your purpose and goals (what do you hope to accomplish?).

The committee is looking for a brief description of the event, including the reason you believe your project is necessary. A single statement that describes the project without giving too much detail is ideal. For example, you might say something like “We are putting together a wilderness retreat. We hope that by surrounding ourselves with nature we will be better able to understand God’s world and our role in it.” Or “We are raising funds to go on a mission trip to Bolivia because we feel it is important to share our strengths with people who can benefit from them, and at the same time we hope to learn from the Bolivians.” Or “We

are attempting to start a youth band at our church to help bring the energy and power of contemporary music to our Sunday morning services.” These statements are not meant to limit the type of application submitted, as we fund many other types of projects. The idea behind the first question is to give the committee an idea of what you want the money for and why you think it is a good idea.

**2. How do these goals relate to the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Vision?**

The Youth and Young Adult Ministry Vision is printed on the application form. It was from this vision that the 35th General Council established the Vision Fund in the first place. The more your application relates to this vision, the more likely it will be successful.

**3. Who will benefit, and how will they benefit?**

The Vision Fund Committee has a duty to make sure the fund is dispersed in such a way as to further the goals of the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Vision. Because of this duty it is necessary to ensure the funds are used in an appropriate manner. One of the tests used to gauge the success of the program is to determine whom it benefits. When answering this question it is helpful to be fairly specific. For example, an answer of “all of God’s creatures” is not particularly helpful to the committee, even if it is true. Something like “the 15 members of the youth group of our charge” or “the participants of the program and the new owners of the house that we built” is a much more helpful answer.

**4. How have youth and young adults been involved in the planning and decision making?**

All else being equal, the committee is much more likely to look favourably on an application that comes from youth for youth, as opposed to an application that comes from an adult for youth. That is not to say an adult can’t be involved; however, it is preferred that the youth have a large role in planning the event. Ideally the application will be submitted by a youth. This shows the commitment of the youth to the project.

**5. What environmental implications have you considered for this program/project?**

Care for the earth requires active efforts. The Vision Fund takes this principle very seriously and will be considering all aspects of the project that show concern for the environment. Please see [www.united-church.ca/ecology](http://www.united-church.ca/ecology) for more on the United Church’s history of actively caring for the earth.

**6. How will you evaluate the project/program and report back to the Vision Fund Committee within three months of the completion of the project/program?**

In the interests of good stewardship, the Vision Fund Committee needs to know what its money is being used for and how the event is received.

**7. Please provide a complete budget for the project.**

In some ways this is the most important question on the application. It is also the question that is most often not answered or not answered in an appropriate manner. **Failure to attach an appropriate budget may result in a delayed or denied application.**

A properly prepared budget shows the committee that the applicants have put a lot of thought and effort into their project. It shows they have considered in detail the variables that affect their event. It also shows at a glance what the money is being spent on and where it is coming from.

The committee basically looks for two things in a budget. They expect to find a list of income and a list of expenses. Usually the income is listed first and the expenses second.

For example, a sample budget for a mission trip may look something like this:

### **Budget for Mission Trip to Washington, DC**

#### **Income**

Gift from congregation	\$	250.00	
Grant from Vision Fund		2,500.00	
Proceeds from sale of cookies		10,000.00	
Proceeds from cotton ball sales		<u>25,000.00</u>	
Total income			\$37,750.00

#### **Expenses**

Plane fare	\$	500.00	
Room and board		500.00	
Talent show		<u>75.00</u>	
Per-participant total		1,075.00	
15 Participants			16,125.00
Bus tour			175.00
Host gifts			1,000.00
New well to be donated to hosts			10,000.00
Leaders' travel expenses			<u>10,450.00</u>
Total expense			<u>37,750.00</u>
Net income/expense			\$0.00