



Growth Grants Handbook

This handbook will guide you through how to apply for funding, so that you can give new life to existing ideas about reinvigorating local ministries.

Step 1: Quadruple Bottom Line Resource Guide

Webinars are constantly being created to provide more support. Find recorded and live webinars at: <http://edge.united-church.ca/ideas/webinars/>

The Idea

- Will It Fly? Webinar: <https://youtu.be/LngiA057LWg>
- How to Come Up With an Idea? Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG7S2WJvZTc>

Strategic Fit and Market Potential

- Vision Day: <http://edge.united-church.ca/new-renew/vision-days/>
- Growth Strategies Webinar: <https://youtu.be/Ax-gBLQOoiY>
- Networking Best Practices Webinar: <https://youtu.be/bLIGCDZa7LA>
- One Page Business Plan Webinar: <https://youtu.be/SdorfO5TLjE>
- How to Scale a Small Business? Webinar: <https://youtu.be/xsiT2dPFxGO>

Leadership

- Leadership Cohorts: <http://edge.united-church.ca/ideas/cohorts/>
- Leadership Coaching: <http://edge.united-church.ca/new-renew/coaching/>
- EDGE Leadership Webinars: <http://edge.united-church.ca/e-commerce/store/products/category/leadership/>
- Action Planning Webinar: <https://youtu.be/X48a2QdOGZs>

Spiritual Impact

- Leadership Cohorts: <http://edge.united-church.ca/ideas/cohorts/>
- Vision Day: <http://edge.united-church.ca/new-renew/vision-days/>
- EDGE Fresh Expressions Webinars: <http://edge.united-church.ca/e-commerce/store/products/category/fresh-expressions/>
- Two Loop Theory of Change Webinar: <http://edge.united-church.ca/e-commerce/store/products/two-loop-theory-of-change/>
- How To Build Strategic Partnerships Webinar: <https://youtu.be/904jLGD-00>

Social Impact

- EDGE Community Webinars: <http://edge.united-church.ca/e-commerce/store/products/category/community/>

- Sales Storytelling Webinar: <https://youtu.be/jPuS1Uh072I>
- Benchmarking & Performance Measures Webinar: <https://youtu.be/niYhhUna5CU>

Ecological Impact

- UCC Stance on Climate Change: <http://www.united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/climate-change>
- UCC Call to Action on Climate Change and Clean Growth: <http://www.united-church.ca/news/national-call-ambitious-climate-framework-implementation>
- Greening Sacred Spaces Website: <http://greeningsacredspaces.net/>
- Green Awakening Network of TUCC: <http://www.tucc.ca/churchdevelopment/green-awakening-network.html>
- Example: http://www.ucc.org/the_ucc_s_first_creation_justice_church

Financial Sustainability

- Viability Assessment Tool: <http://edge.united-church.ca/crisis/viability-assessment/>
- EDGE Business Services: <http://edge.united-church.ca/crisis/business-services/>
- Community Round Table for partnership exploration: <http://edgenetwork.adobeconnect.com/p3kqap2oi6r/>
- Philanthropy's Stewardship Toolkit: <http://www.stewardshiptoolkit.ca/>
- EDGE Stewardship Webinars: <http://edge.united-church.ca/e-commerce/store/products/category/stewardship/>
- Revenue Generators Webinar: <https://youtu.be/01V2ZSoUxUM>
- Analyzing Your Numbers Webinar: <https://youtu.be/7DgZVCWLIHQ>
- Market Research Webinar: <https://youtu.be/WkqaURaG6SE>
- Finance 101 Webinar: <https://youtu.be/WOfxo-IUCkU>
- Proposal Writing Webinar: <https://youtu.be/sbDASy8IUrA>

Step 2: Proof of Concept

Prior to receiving funding, it is important to be able to prove your idea has merit. The simplest way to prove your concept? Tell us whom you are working with. “Proof of concept” is having others agree with your idea.

Get Volunteers

Getting volunteers is a great way to prove your concept. In fact, most non-profit ideas rely on a strong volunteer base. Examples:

- If you are creating a café church, you would want to have people make specific time commitments to volunteer.
- If you are starting up an open mic in a community centre, you would want to have volunteers signed up to bake cookies and make coffee for the first three months.

Get Partners

Having other organizations wanting to be part of your project proves that your idea will really fly. Examples:

1. If you are starting a new youth initiative and a local youth organization wants to help you market it.
2. If you are creating an event, and another organization wants to support it.

Get Donors

Is someone is willing to give money to support your idea, that is proof that your idea is viable. Examples:

- If you are doing a fundraising event, and another organization sponsors it.
- If you are putting on a musical theatre production, and someone donates towards a much needed audio system

Get Investors

The more organizations and people supporting your idea, the better. If you already have one organization investing in your idea, it is a good sign that it is viable. Examples:

- If you are doing a fresh expression (a new way of doing church) that is supported by the presbytery or another fund
- If you are doing a community outreach project that is sponsored by another foundation

Get Clients

The best way to prove your concept is to actually show that a product or service is marketable and that the idea works. Examples:

- If your idea is that you wish to sell a homemade apple pies, you would want an agreement in place with someone to distribute your apple pies.
- If you want to prove that yoga church works, you should pilot it for at least a month and see how many people attend.

Step 3: Questions to Ask Yourself

The interview is a chance to learn more about the leadership team and ask some questions regarding the adaptive nature of the initiative. The interview is before you write the application to help guide you in your submission. Below are a list of sample interview questions that could be asked.

The Opportunity

1. Will starting this initiative help your congregation's mission? Does it serve a real need in the community?
2. Is this a good fit with your current mission? Why?
3. Is there a better way to do this?
4. What is the community saying about your church?
5. How will this impact them?
6. How is this in line with the theological underpinnings of the United Church?

Market Analysis

1. How did you come up with this idea?
2. What is the biggest assumption that you are making?
3. How much networking have you done?
4. How open-minded are you to pivot? What will you do if some of the market research doesn't support your idea? Can you give an example of something that has surprised you so far where you have had to change direction?

Leadership/Management

1. Why are you excited about this idea?
2. Do you have formal relationships with any of your strategic partners?
3. How do you plan on building your team and/or volunteer base?
4. Are you open to mentoring? Do you have experience with a coach or mentor in the past?
5. If you could have support in one area, what would that be? How will you get that?
6. How much networking have you been doing?
7. What type of training is needed?
8. What are some cross currents and barriers to implementing or achieving the project?

Spiritual Impact

1. How has God led you and your community to do this?
2. In what ways does this initiative line up with Jesus' mission?
3. How are people's spiritual needs being addressed by this project?
4. How will the community grow together through this experience?
5. What spiritual practices or worship for leaders and/or participants will ground leaders and support the work?
6. How will this directly impact you spiritually? What biblical (or other) story or image relates to your motivation for this project?
7. How do you plan on measuring the spiritual impact?

Marketing

1. How many people know today what you are doing? How many are interested in helping?
2. Are you marketing this today? What is stopping you?
3. How are you integrating your proof of concept work into your marketing plan?
4. Do you plan to have an online presence?

Operations

1. Have you looked for partners or funders outside of the church?
2. Is this a project that could be successful across the country?
3. How does the project connect with the environment?

Financials

1. Are there ways to minimize your costs even further?
2. Which revenue models will you focus on and why?
3. What revenue is the best for the short term/long term?
4. Is there anything else that could help make your project sustainable?
5. Why is this project so important to transforming spiritual and church life, that Embracing the Spirit should take the financial risk? What will The United Church of Canada learn from any project failure that makes such failure a reasonable risk?

Step 4: Business Plan Application

Business Plan Guide: The Opportunity

What is the problem or opportunity that you are addressing?

- What is the big problem that you are addressing?
- Is there an opportunity that you are seeing?
- Is there a need in your neighbourhood that you are hearing about?
- Why is there a need for change?
- What makes this initiative urgent?

How big is this problem?

- How many people will this impact?
- How big of an area does this affect?
- Are there secondary stakeholders that will be impacted?

How are you going to solve this?

- What is the idea that will solve this problem or challenge?
- What is the idea that could take advantage of this opportunity?
- What are some of the key features of your solution or idea?
- What are some of the key benefits of your initiative?

What is the unique idea that you are proposing?

- How is this different from the competition?
- How is this different from similar existing ideas?
- Why is your organization, or why are you the right person to do this initiative?

Does this fully address all of the needs of the stakeholders? How?

- Are there primary stakeholder concerns that need addressing? How will you do this as well?
- Do the secondary stakeholders have concerns to address?

How will this make a difference in the neighbourhood?

- What is the social, financial, and spiritual impact?
- Are you helping make someone's life in the community better?
- What are the financial outcomes that you expect?
- Will this initiative be financially sustainable?
- What spiritual impact will this initiative make on the faith community?
- What spiritual impact will this make on individuals in the community?

Is this a good fit with your current mission?

- What is your faith organization's mission?
- Why is this a good fit with your mission?
- How will this initiative impact what the community is saying about your church?

Where do you see your idea in five years from now?

- What is your faith organization's vision?
- Where do you see this initiative in five years or 10 years from now?
- What would be the big goal that you could see?
- What is the dream?

What do the next three to six months look like?

- What would positive momentum look like in the next few months?
- What are the immediate next steps needed?
- What would it take to get your initiative "ramped up"?

Market Analysis

What were some initial indicators that this was a good idea for your neighbourhood?

- What made you come up with this idea?
- What reason do you have that this will be a good idea?
- What have to done to gather information on this initiative?
- What partners in the community or stakeholders have backed this idea?

Who are the people that need this? How many people need this?

- Who are the primary stakeholders for this initiative?
- How urgent is their need or want for this?
- How many people need or want this?
- Who are the secondary stakeholders?
- Will this impact anyone else?

Who are your competitors? Is anyone else doing this?

- Are there any other organizations doing something similar across the country?
- Are there other organizations in your community that are doing something similar?
- Are there organizations outside of Canada that you have heard of doing this?
- Is there another organization that is fulfilling the same need or want in a different way?
Note: Could you partner with any of these "competitors"?

What market research have you done in order to validate that this idea will work?

- How do you know that this is a great idea?
- Have you done some market research like a focus group, survey, or interviews?
- Who has told you that it is a great idea?
- How many people have told you?

What are some potential risks? And how would you mitigate or overcome these?

- What is the largest assumption that you are making?
- What could change that could negatively affect this initiative?
- Are there political, economic, social or technology changes that will affect this idea?

- How will you plan for these changes?
- How will you adapt if these changes happen?

Leadership & Management Team

Who is the manager?

- What is your background and experience?
- What is on your resumé that would be relevant for this initiative?
- What is your experience as a leadership team?
- What is your experience as a manager?

Who is part of the team?

- Who have you recruited onto the team?
- Do you have a partner(s)?
- Do you have professional service providers (accountants, lawyers, etc.)?
- Do you have employees or contractors?

Are there volunteers?

- Of the team members, who are volunteers?
- Do you have a board of advisors for this initiative?
- Do you have a volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition plan?

What other management/staff are required?

- Who are you missing?
- How do you plan to find them?
- How important are these gaps for this initiative?
- When are these people needed?

Who are your strategic partners?

- Who are the key strategic partners that this initiative needs?
- What type of relationship do you have with these organizations?
- Is the relationship formalized?
- What type of commitments do you have in place?

Spiritual Impact

How will this increase participants' ability to live out their faith in a meaningful way?

- How will this impact the individuals within the congregation or faith community in a meaningful way?
- How will this deepen the community's relationship with God?

How will this increase the engagement of the community?

- Will a new partnership form?
- Will more conversations start happening?

- Will there be more joint programming?
- Will the neighbourhood view the congregation or faith in a new way?

How many people will be impacted by this both within and outside the faith community?

- How many people within the faith community will engage with this initiative?
- How many people within the faith community will grow in faith?
- How many people outside of the faith community will engage with this initiative?
- How many people outside of faith community will be positively impacted?

How are the values of The United Church of Canada reflected in the project?

- How is this initiative grounded in a historical, living, and listening faith (open spirituality)?
- How is this initiative radically hospitable and honouring diversity?
- How is this initiative supporting justice, kindness, humility, and a preferential option for the marginalized?
- How is this initiative called into the world by being collaborative, contextual, while loving neighbour and neighbourhood?
- How does this initiative promote good environmental practices?

Marketing

How will you let people know about your organization?

- Who are you communicating with?
- What will be your message?
- What marketing tools will you be using?
- Will you have an online presence?
- How will you make people aware of your initiative?

How, when and where will it be delivered?

- Where will this initiative take place?
- Will it be accessible to your target stakeholder?
- How will you adapt your initiative to meet the needs of the stakeholder?
- What thought is put into the location?

Is there a price? What is it?

- Will there be a price for a product or service?
- How will donations be sought?
- How will sponsorships be sought?
- How will you seek other ways to become financially sustainable?

Operations

What do you need to get started?

- Do you need people?
- Do you need equipment?
- Do you need other resources?

What are you going to partner for?

- Is there a potential partner to help with finding people?
- Is there a potential partner to help with finding the necessary equipment?
- Is there a potential partner to help with finding other resources?

What else are you planning to do to get started?

- What other things can you do to access the people, equipment or resources needed?
- Are there ways to reduce what is needed at the start?
- Are there ways to test the concept prior to full investment?

How does the project connect with the environment?

- In what ways have you considered the environment when developing this initiative?
- How does it reduce environmental impacts?
- Are there ways to reduce, reuse, or recycle within the initiative?
- Are there future initiatives that this project could support that are linked to the environment?

Is this project scalable?

- How well can the venture sustain growth?
- Is this an initiative that could do well in other parts of the country?

Financial

What are some ways to generate revenue?

- Could you sell a product or service?
- Is this something that people will donate to?
- Could you sell a membership?
- Are there other ways that you could generate revenue?

What are your start-up costs?

- What equipment do you need to get started?
- What technology tools (website, licensing, other) do you need?
- Do you need to hire someone?
- Do you need space?
- Anything else that is an immediate cost?

What are your ongoing costs?

- Once you are started up, what are the ongoing expenses?
- Do you have rent? A car? A lease?
- Do you have utilities or telecommunications expenses?
- Are there marketing costs?
- Do you have employees or contractors?
- Are there any other regular or miscellaneous expenses you need to note?

How do you plan to become sustainable?

- How will you break even?
- How will you balance your budget?
- How will you ensure that your ongoing costs are lower than your income?
- How can this grow?

Measurement and Evaluation

How will you measure success?

- How will you measure environmental outcomes?
- How will you measure the spiritual outcomes?
- How will you measure the social outcomes?
- How will you measure the financial outcomes?

Have there been donations for this initiative?

- Has there been any external interest in your idea?
- Is your idea compelling enough that someone has made a personal donation or investment in it?

Are other organizations interested in this initiative?

- Has another organization already expressed interest in working with you?
- Has another funder already pledged support?

What do you need from Embracing the Spirit to get this off the ground financially?

- What exactly do you need to make this work?
- What exactly would the funding go toward?
- Why is this funding important?

Step 5: Mentor Matching

A mentor will be matched with you once you have received funding. It is possible to request a mentor in advance of receiving funding.

The best mentors are the ones that you select yourselves based on where you are and what you need. We are creating a [Social Mentor Network](#) of volunteer mentors across Canada who want to help these initiatives. To select your mentor, you need to follow these steps.

Mentee Training

To get the most out of your mentor relationship it is important to sign up for the training and join the network. Please contact the Social Mentor Network's Community Manager at socialmentornetwork@gmail.com.

What type of mentor do you need?

Next you need to think about what type of mentor you need.

- Where are the strengths in your team and where are the weaknesses?
- Do you need someone to help with a specific part of your initiative?
- Is there a part of your initiative that is so critical that you need more expertise?
- Do you need someone in a geographical location? With language or cultural understanding?

Set up your online profile

All of our mentors' and applicants' profiles are on the Social Mentor Network. To create a profile and match with a mentor, you can use your [LinkedIn](#) profile, or can manually input your profile information. It takes less than five minutes to populate your profile and get set up.

Mentor Selection

Now start looking. In The Social Mentor Network you will be able to search all of the mentor profiles and look for keywords. The Community Manager will help you by recommending mentors. It is up to you to have interviews with them and select the one that is the best fit.

Step 6: Grant Approval

Once the grant has been approved, there are three main covenants of receiving funding.

Covenants

Storytelling: Telling your story is very important to help the learning network grow. All grant recipients will be asked to share the story of their experiment.

Learning: What didn't work is as important as what did work. Recipients need to highlight best practices and things they wish they had known when they started out.

Mentoring: All grant recipients will be offered a mentor to help them with the initiative. Studies have shown that projects with a mentor are 80 percent more successful. We have volunteer mentors from across the country who will be matched with you and your idea.

Evaluation

This chart shows the evaluation criteria that will be used to judge your grant request submission.



Quadruple Bottom Line Assessment Tool

The Idea	Total / 5	Notes
How well the proposed idea addresses an identifiable social need?		
How well the proposed product/service serves the needs and wants of the identifiable target market?		
Differentiation - How well does the idea and organization have a competitive advantage in the market?		
The idea is novel		
Strategic Fit & Market Potential	Total / 5	Notes
The proposed idea aligns well with the organization's mission		
How large is the market for the proposed idea?		
How easy is it for the idea to enter the market?		
Others responding to the same need are in partnership. Is there community partnership beyond the church?		
How well does the proposed idea capitalize on some window of opportunity?		
Is the proposed project scalable? How well can the venture sustain growth?		

Leadership	Total / 5	Notes
Ability to implement		
Ability to listen		
Ability to build an effective team		
Leader's passion		
Ability to collaborate with prospective partners and allies		
Leadership team's access to management and/or technical expertise		
Spiritual Impact	Total / 5	Notes
Improved congregation/faith community/volunteer engagement		
Increased meaning, purpose, and a ground for living one's life in a new way?		
Number of people who are part of the faith community along with the number of seekers? Supporters? Volunteers?		
Will this deepen the relationships of community members with one another?		
Will this provide spiritual ground to the participants? Will it put individual spiritual growth at the centre, as distinct from the religious organization?		
Will this lead to increased community engagement?		
How will this help the faith community think in new ways about the meaning, purpose and nature of community?		

Social Impact	Total / 5	Notes
Is the social need addressed directly?		
Is the social mission of the project compelling?		
Is there an achievable and measurable social impact?		
Is there a social return on investment?		
Ecological Impact	Total / 5	Notes
Is the environment addressed directly?		
Does the project help people connect with the environment?		
Does the project help reduce the negative impact on the environment?		
How has the applicant thought about their project in relation to environmental health?		
Is there an achievable and measurable ecological impact?		
Financial Impact	Total / 5	Notes
How well can the proposed initiative generate earned revenue?		
What are the start-up costs and physical resources needed to launch the initiative?		
Do you have cost-control procedures?		
Is the initiative financially sustainable?		
Fundraising capacity and community support		
Financial partnership opportunities		