

## Mission Partnership Grant (MPaG)

### C1: Guidelines and Process for an EMBA church-based ministry

The Mission Partnership Grant is provided to help a Baptist Church, pioneering ministry or ecumenical partnership including Baptists, to engage effectively in mission by supporting a minister, minister in training, or other worker. The main focus for this person will be to lead the church ministry forward in mission. Their priority must be helping the ministry to reach out to their local community in whatever way is most appropriate in their context.

At the heart of this mission partnership grant is a genuine partnership between each grant recipient and the EMBA, mainly expressed through a Mission Accompanier (MA) who will journey with the church throughout the grant period. The grant aims to encourage accountability and increase the likelihood of long-term financial sustainability.

#### Expectations of grant supported churches

Whilst we do not want to be legalistic, we would ask that as part of our partnering together, every EMBA church receiving a mission grant would be actively involved in Baptist family life.....

- All churches requesting a grant should already be meaningfully supporting Home Mission.
- Grants are dependent on churches developing and pursuing a missional action plan (MAP) in partnership with a Mission Accompanier (MA).
- Grant funded churches are expected to send representatives to EMBA Gatherings and the minister to attend the annual EMBA Ministers' Conference (*if funding is an issue, please speak to your Regional Minister*).
- The EMBA Grants Group strongly recommend that churches in receipt of a grant look to give no more than 15% of their income to other causes (5% HM, 5% BMS, 5% other); any surplus income going towards a church reducing their reliance on a grant and becoming self-funding at the end of the five-year grant period. (*The logic of this guidance is to avoid a situation where the wider Baptist family is effectively supporting the mission causes chosen by a local church, when these finances could be used to support its own minister and mission.*)

#### Eligibility Criteria

A church applying for a grant:

- must normally be in membership of the Association and of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.
- must demonstrate a proven track record of giving realistically to Home Mission

- must demonstrate a realistic possibility of becoming financially self-sustaining at the end of the five year grant period.
- would not normally be able to apply for a grant if the church or a member of the church is currently in receipt of either a Resourcing Grant or an MIT Training Grant, or has been in receipt of one of these grants within the last three years.

## Who makes the decisions on the awarding of grants?

Decisions on Mission Partnership Grant applications are made by the EMBA Grants Group. Becky Nicholls (EMBA Admin Lead) currently manages the administration of all Association Grants.

## General Principles and Guidance

The grant process is underpinned by a commitment between the church and the Association to listen to one another, to support each other and to be mutually open to challenge as the need for grant support is explored. It is hoped that this process will provide space for the church and the Association to listen to God together and hear His voice. This partnership is vital to ensure that the limited Baptist family funds are used effectively to support Kingdom work with a mission focus, and to enable the gospel to be shared with those who have not yet heard it.

A Mission Partnership Grant (MPaG) can be provided to support the stipend of a minister or other worker; the grant will usually be for a maximum of 50% of the Baptist Union standard stipend, excluding additional costs such as housing, pension, expenses, etc.

Mission Partnership Grants are normally awarded for a 5-year period with the clear expectation that the level of grant awarded will reduce by 20% of the initial grant each year with a church becoming self-financing after five years.

The key points and questions which will be considered when a grant decision is made include:

- Will the grant enable a church to grow and be more effective in mission?
- Is the wider church fully committed to supporting the mission plans long term?
- Does the application demonstrate financial sustainability long term with a reducing grant?
- Evidence of prayer, leadership and a hospitable attitude to the community.
- A clear and realistic mission plan.
- Evidence of activity or relationships which reach out to the community.
- An openness to change.
- A willingness to be guided by the Association Team and Association appointed Mission Accompanier. Positive and active engagement with the Mission Accompanier is essential.

## Grant Application Process

A church wishing to apply for a Mission Partnership Grant must first make contact with their Regional Minister (RM) for an initial discussion. The RM will then arrange for Becky to email an

application pack to the church. Exact requirements will be detailed in the application pack sent to the church but the following action will be needed:

The church will complete the required forms and provide the necessary supporting documents. These will need to be emailed to Becky Nicholls (EMBA Admin Lead) ahead of the deadline provided.

Upon receiving a completed application from a church, Becky will then notify the appropriate Regional Minister who will review the application paperwork received and the EMBA Treasurer will review the church finances. If the Regional Minister, the EMBA Treasurer and Grants Group are happy to commend the church for a grant, then an 'in-principle' decision is made and a Mission Accompanier (MA) will be appointed to journey with the church over the typical five year grant term.

The MA will receive a copy of the application paperwork, including the church's Fruitfulness Indicators Self Assessment form (FISAF). The MA will then arrange an initial visit to review the FISAF, explain the MAP process and begin work on the MAP. Two follow-up visits shortly after to develop the MAP will also be agreed.

Following the initial church visit, the MA will complete a Fruitfulness Report Form (FRF) and submit this to Becky.

Following the second and third visits, at which the foundational MAP is agreed, a copy of the MAP will be forwarded by the MA to Becky.\*

All of the application paperwork then goes to the November Grants Group who will review the applications received and together discern the level of grant to be awarded in each context.

Following the Grants Group meeting, all churches/ministries will be notified by email of the grant awarded for the following year.

**NB \* the implication of this process is that the church commits to a MAP even before a minister has been appointed.**

## How are grants calculated and paid?

When a Mission Partnership Grant is agreed this is calculated and expressed as a percentage of the Baptist Union Standard stipend; for example, a grant of 50% stipend in 2025 based on the BU HM stipend of £29,575 will equate to a grant payable during the year of £14,787.50. The amount paid will normally vary in line with yearly changes in the stipend; this is confirmed by BUGB in May for the following year. Grant payments are normally made monthly, around the 15th of each month.

### Please note:

- Grants will only be paid for those months when a church has a minister/worker in post.
- If a church changes the terms and conditions of appointment for its minister whilst in receipt of a grant, you must inform the EMBA, as this may affect the grant ongoing.

- If after a grant has been agreed, a church has not taken up the grant within a period of three years, having not called a minister, then a review will be undertaken and the grant may be withdrawn.

## What happens after a grant is awarded?

The church will continue to receive encouragement, guidance and support from the EMBA Regional Team and Mission Accompanier.

In subsequent years of a grant (years 2-5), new/updated financial information will be requested by the Association.

The continuing grant is conditional on the church's active co-operation with the Mission Accompanier (MA) who, ideally, will work with the church throughout the grant period. The MAP will have helped the church establish a missional direction appropriate for the context. It will be reviewed periodically with the accompanier to help the church adjust its plan and to monitor progress. The Accompanier may make recommendations to the church during the grant period.

The depth and regularity of the reviews might vary from church to church, depending on the Accompanier's assessment of the situation. Typically, though, reviews would happen once or twice each year of the grant.

A yearly report will be made to the Grants Group addressing

- Progress made towards goals
- Changes to the plan
- Encouragements to celebrate
- Recommendations to the church and/or EMBA, including a recommendation regarding ongoing funding.

***If you have any queries / questions relating to the grant process, please contact your Regional Minister or Becky Nicholls (EMBA Admin Lead):***

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