

Leadership Development Partnership Grant (LDPG)

Overview and Application Instructions

INTRODUCTION

Leadership development is one of four priorities identified in the Collaborative Unified Strategic Plan (CUSP) of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (CCMBC). The Leadership Development Partnership Grant (LDPG) is a coordinated approach of streamlining national and provincial assets to strengthen the development of leaders called into ministry-related work.

God is the one who calls and ultimately equips people to the work of ministry. We also believe that churches participate in the calling process by affirming, encouraging, and resourcing those being called. The LDPG is a collaborative effort by multiple organizations to release financial resources that will provide current and emerging leaders with the means to develop further ministry knowledge, experience, and skills. The LDPG comes alongside the local church in several significant ways by

- providing avenues of connectivity between a local church and programs that deliver leadership development resources,
- leveraging the partnerships of national/provincial conferences, agencies, and churches to provide aid and resources to ministry leaders, and
- identifying, highlighting, and supporting new leaders within our denomination.

PURPOSE

Qualified students seeking education and training in ministry-related fields are eligible to receive LDPG funding toward course tuition that matches their own financial contribution. The LDPG is anchored in the following five values:

- **Church Centered:** The LDPG will be granted at the request of local churches who have identified current and emerging leaders and are committed to supporting their development and education. The expectation is for each local church to initiate the process and for the LDPG recipient to provide ongoing ministry service within that same MB church as they benefit from the LDPG.
- **Denominationally Directed:** The LDPG is meant to be a coordinated denominational approach to support leadership development. This effort mobilizes all members of the CUSP as partners in leadership development.

- **Pathway Oriented:** The LDPG is more than a funding strategy for students; it is designed to support the ongoing growth of leaders. To do this best, relational and organizational efforts must be established to provide healthy and intentional opportunities for future development.
- **Lifelong Commitment:** As part of an integrated leadership development strategy, the LDPG anticipates continued support throughout the ministry life of a leader. Continued education, skill-developing courses, and other forms of ministry training are included within the goal of this program.
- **Anchored in Disciple-Making:** CCMBC's mission is "to cultivate a community and culture of healthy disciple-making churches and ministries, faithfully joining Jesus in his mission." In keeping with our mission, we will only fund courses or programs that further propel this mission. Careful analysis and qualification are needed to vet programs and courses for LDPG funding.

ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS

MB Seminary, the national seminary of the CCMBC, is the only eligible educational institution where LDPG recipients can enrol in courses and receive LDPG funding.

- MB Seminary offers graduate courses, certificates, and degree options. Some offerings are made possible through partnerships with churches or other academic institutions.
- LDPG recipients will not be eligible to receive any other financial aid award at MB Seminary for courses in which they are using LDPG funding. (They may, however, apply for other endowed bursaries and/or awards not classified as financial aid).

ELIGIBILITY FOR MB STUDENTS IN CANADA

To be eligible for the LDPG, an individual must

- be accepted and enrolled in a graduate degree program through MB Seminary.
- be a member in good standing at an MB church in Canada for at least six months prior to the date of their LDPG application. This MB church must be a member church that is in good standing within its provincial conference.
- be active in volunteer or paid ministry at their church.
- complete a discernment process with representatives from their church's leadership team (including at least one pastor).
- intend to pursue pastoral ministry, cross-cultural ministry, or professional Christian service with the Mennonite Brethren upon graduation.
- achieve a passing grade in all courses funded by the LDPG and must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50.

The applicant's eligibility for the LDPG will be determined by the collective discernment process of their local MB church and MB Seminary's confirmation of the applicant's academic eligibility. Please note that priority will be given to applicants who are serving in or pursuing vocational ministry.

FUNDING PROCEDURES

Upon approval, the LDPG applicant will be eligible to receive partnership funding toward any future eligible course, provided the following conditions are met:

- The student must complete and submit a **Tuition Funding Request Form** at least 30-days before the starting date of their course(s) to be eligible to receive partnership funding.
 - Meeting this deadline will ensure enough processing time so that partnership funding can be requested, received, and applied to a student's account to avoid potential late payment penalties from the institution.
 - Tuition Funding Request Forms will be processed on a first come, first served basis. Partnership funding is contingent upon a student successfully meeting the course eligibility requirements (see below) and having access to sufficient partnership funds for the calendar year (details below).
- The student is eligible to receive partnership funding for course tuition up to a maximum of two courses per calendar year (student fees and other academic charges are not eligible).
 - A student may choose to enrol in additional courses, but partnership funding will not be granted above the maximum course threshold.
- The student must earn a passing grade for any course in which they receive LDPG funding. If a student does not pass their LDPG course, they will not be eligible to use LDPG funds toward a future course until they have successfully earned a passing grade in a subsequent course.
- The student must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50. If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.50, they will not be eligible to use LDPG funds toward a future course until their cumulative GPA has reached 2.50 or above.
- LDPG funding toward course tuition will be paid by the student (40%), their supporting MB church (20%), CCMBC (20%), and MB Seminary (20%).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step 1 – Ensure Eligibility

- The LDPG applicant and the supporting church must review the LDPG application overview and instructions to confirm that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements and that the church is capable and willing to provide ongoing support.

Step 2 – Discernment Process

- **LDPG Applicant**
 - Write a personal profile ([Appendix 1](#)) and share this with the group tasked with meeting for your discernment process.
 - Prepare for and participate in the discernment process with your church (see [Appendix 1](#)).
- **Supporting Church**
 - Assemble representatives from your church's leadership team (including at least one pastor) to meet with the applicant for a discernment process meeting.
 - Follow the guidelines outlined in [Appendix 2 – LDPG Discernment Process for the Supporting Church](#).
 - Provide the applicant with feedback and recommendations on their ministry goals, academic ambitions, and sense of calling to ministry.

If the supporting church discerns the call of the applicant to ministry and wishes to support their leadership development through the LDPG, proceed to Steps 3-4.

Step 3 – Application

The LDPG application can be submitted before a student is admitted to MB Seminary, but approval will be contingent upon their admittance.

- **LDPG Applicant**
 - Complete and submit the LDPG application form to CCMBC (including your personal profile).

- **Supporting Church**
 - Task a representative from the discernment team to complete a letter of affirmation that summarizes their meeting with the applicant and expresses their support for their LDPG application. This should be submitted to CCMBC.
- **CCMBC**
 - LDPG applications will be reviewed after all required documentation has been received. Applications will be considered in the order in which they were received. LDPG applications can be submitted to CCMBC at any time but there is no guarantee that they will be processed before the applicant's next course. Meeting the deadlines listed below will ensure adequate processing time so that approved applicants can receive partnership funding for courses offered in the next term.
 - **June 30** (for courses beginning on or after September 1)
 - **October 31** (for courses beginning on or after January 1)
 - **March 31** (for courses beginning on or after June 1)

Step 4 – Approval and Next Steps

- **CCMBC**
 - CCMBC will confirm LDPG approval by sending acceptance letters to the student and their supporting church. LDPG approval is conditional to the stipulations outlined in the Funding Procedures and in the acceptance letters.
 - LDPG funding (up to a maximum of two courses per calendar year) is guaranteed for one-year. Subsequent approval requires the submission of an LDPG Annual Renewal Form which is completed by the student and their supporting church (see Step 5).
- **LDPG Student**
 - Complete and submit a **Tuition Funding Request Form** at least 30-days before the starting date of your eligible course(s) to receive partnership funding (refer to the Funding Procedures).
 - Ensure that your portion of course tuition (40%) is paid before the payment deadline at your institution.

- **Supporting Church**

- Celebrate with your student and congregation!
- If appropriate, affirm the student's call to ministry and their LDPG approval publicly to your congregation (e.g., announcement, newsletter, website, etc.).
- Ensure that you provide payment to MB Seminary by the requested deadline to fulfill your financial support of the student's tuition.

Step 5 – Ongoing LDPG Support

- **LDPG Student**

- LDPG funding (up to a maximum of two courses per year from the supporting partners) is guaranteed for one-year (provided the other LDPG provisions are met). You must complete and submit an LDPG Annual Renewal Form (available on MB Seminary's [LDPG page](#)) to continue in the LDPG program for subsequent years. The submission deadline is at least 30-days before the starting date of your next eligible course(s).

- **Supporting Church**

- Include ongoing LDPG financial support in your church's annual budget.
- Work with the student to complete the LDPG Annual Renewal Form each year.
- Collaborate with the student on their academic requirements and learnings to position them well for ongoing growth and ministry experience (e.g., offering ministry opportunities to integrate their learning). Refer to the section called [Next Steps for the Supporting Church](#) in **Appendix 2** for additional ideas.

Appendix 1 – LDPG Applicant’s Personal Profile

Prepare a personal profile of approximately 500-750 words. This document will be shared with those at your church who will participate in the discernment process meeting with you, and you will also submit it with your LDPG application.

Your personal profile should include the following:

- A description of significant transition points in your life and how they shaped you (including your testimony of how you came to follow Jesus)
- A description of your church, school, and community involvement
- A description of your talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts
- A description of your personality
- Personal reflections on your character
- A statement about your career goals and/or ministry objectives
- Your resume (optional, if you feel this will help the discernment team)

Please refer to [Appendix 2 – LDPG Discernment Process for the Supporting Church](#) for information on meeting with the leader of the discernment process and sharing your personal profile.

Appendix 2 – LDPG Discernment Process for the Supporting Church

The LDPG discernment process is designed to be used by a supporting church in conjunction with the booklet ***Finding Leaders for Tomorrow's Churches***. Page numbers from this resource are noted after each step.

- It is the church's responsibility to identify participants for the discernment process (pp. 5-8).
- Identify/assign an individual to act as the leader of the discernment process and choose a discernment team (pp. 11-12).
- The leader of the discernment process meets with the candidate to agree on the timeline and elements of the discernment process (p. 13).
- The candidate prepares a personal profile (see [Appendix 1](#)) and reviews it with the leader of the discernment process (pp. 14-15).
- Prior to reading the candidate's profile, members of the discernment team should write reflections about the candidate's suitability for their desired ministry direction (p. 15).
- Once the candidate is satisfied with their profile, a copy is given to the discernment team leader for distribution to the other team members (p. 15).
- Each member of the discernment team reviews the candidate's profile. Discernment team members are encouraged to meet individually with the candidate and often find it valuable to take the candidate out for coffee or lunch to ask questions they may have (p. 15).
- The discernment leader plans the discernment meeting (a three-hour allowance is recommended) and designates someone to take detailed notes (p. 15).
- The discernment team meets with the candidate to listen, to pray, and to discern. The candidate will share about their life, their involvement in ministry, and their desire to study (p. 16).
- The discernment team debriefs—without the candidate present—and reviews specific follow up assignments for team members (p. 16).
- The leader of the discernment team communicates recommendations to the candidate and to the church leadership/congregation (p. 16).
- The leader of the discernment team ensures that church leadership allocates sufficient funds for the LDPG contribution.
- The leader of the discernment team follows up on the conclusions of the discernment meeting and prepares a written summary. This summary will be given to the candidate and included as part of their LDPG application. This should include:

- A summary of the candidate's profile, their giftedness, and ministry plans.
- A summary of insight and counsel discussed.
- A statement of recommendation for the LDPG program and local church leadership. For example, "We have encouraged _____ to pursue further education in preparation for ministry. We are recommending _____ to CCMBC for the LDPG program. Specific observations and affirmations that have led us to this point include..."

Next Steps for the Supporting Church

- Identify an individual from the church who will take responsibility for nurturing the candidate's growth in ministry (p. 17).
- Create an occasion to bless the candidate for ministry and recognize their response to the call of God and the church to pursue ministry (p. 17).
- Provide hands-on experience by giving the candidate opportunities to lead and experience ministry (p. 18).
- Continue contact and support as a sending church (p. 19).