

RESOURCING THE LOCAL CHURCH

Grants from the Maine Conference

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HANDBOOK
Revised 2025

Resourcing the Local Church
Maine Conference United Church
of Christ
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Resourcing the Local Church Grants provide funding to churches and individuals within the Maine Conference United Church of Christ.

Our Faith Foundation classes often look up information online and use YouTube videos, so our youth have been really enjoying the four new Chromebooks made possible by the Resourcing the Local Church grant. We also purchased a new projector used for workshops, Children's messages during worship, and free movies during the winter months. Last but not least, we purchased 4 wireless microphones. All the angels could be heard at the Christmas pageant! They can be directly connected into our video system, so there is no extraneous noise on the recordings available on our website." The First Church in Belfast, 2024.

The members of the Second Congregational Church Norway would like to thank Resourcing the Local Church for helping us to fund our new sound system. We have been using the sound system with two wireless microphones for the past few weeks. Members are so very thankful to be able to comfortably hear during church services and during special meetings. The sound quality is 100% better than it was with the old system. We can now confidently stream our services and host larger groups with sound needs in our sanctuary." Second Congregational Church of Norway, 2024.

Acknowledgements

RLC COMMITTEE as of October 2025

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SOURCES

Rules of Procedure for Resourcing the Local Church Committee

Approved by the Board of Directors on January 27, 2018

Purpose originally stated in the Maine Conference Capital Campaign

“To Gather Into ONE”

Bylaws of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ

MANY THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR TESTIMONIALS

Elizabeth Haynes, The First Church in Belfast

Pam Davidson, Second Congregational Church of Norway

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SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Members of the Resourcing the Local Church Committee including Jan Barton

FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN GATHERING INFORMATION FOR THIS DOCUMENT

Revised 2025

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Introduction

The Maine Conference United Church of Christ established an endowment fund in 1998 as part of the “To Gather into ONE” Capital Campaign. The endowment fund is invested by the Trustees of the Maine Conference in accordance with the Bylaws of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ. The interest earned by the endowment is the funding source for ***Resourcing the Local Church (RLC) Grants*** which are used exclusively for a variety of programs, needs, and services for Maine UCC churches.

In January 2018, the Maine Conference Board of Directors authorized the Resourcing the Local Church (RLC) Committee oversight of **Member in Discernment (MID) Scholarships**. Funding for MID Scholarships is part of the Maine Conference Annual Budget.

The Resourcing the Local Church (RLC) Committee is made up of seven people, both laity and clergy, representing and appointed by each Association within the Maine Conference. A Conference Minister also serves as an ex-officio member of the committee.

Section I: RLC Church Grants

What RLC Grants for Churches monies will support

For building renovation and repair, or for new construction, the RLC Committee looks for clear evidence of creative fund raising on the part of individuals and congregations to help meet project costs. RLC can supplement but not substitute for use funds already held by a church. Church buildings are often landmarks or historic places in Maine towns, and non-church community members and organizations (in addition to outside foundations) are often willing to share in the cost of their preservation. Also, church facilities are often used by non-church individuals and organizations who may be able to help with funding these projects.

In addition, the RLC Committee is often able to help with the cost of new programs or services – or with expansion of existing services – within a local church. It can assist individual churches with programs or events that also benefit other local churches. As with building projects, the RLC Committee looks for clear evidence that the local church will be able to cover some portion of costs associated with the proposed new or expanded program.

For example:

- Address handicapped accessibility
- Upgrade audio-visual technology used in worship or educational classes
- Construct a new outdoor sign with LED message
- Make available an automatic defibrillator
- Address accidental damage or vandalism to a building
- Provide services of a crisis counselor

NOTE that RLC church grants are limited in size with a maximum of \$5000. The intention of the RLC grants is to assist congregations to sustain or expand their ministries, but limited resources mean that we are unlikely to be able to fund entire projects. Grant applications must be submitted as part of project planning rather than after a project has been completed. Each church is limited to one grant award per year.

RLC Grant Application Process for Churches:

- Awards are granted by a majority vote of the Resourcing the Local Church Committee.
- The **Resourcing the Local Church Committee** meets up to six times per year, although additional meetings can be arranged for emergency applications.
- Deadline for all non-emergency applications are **January 31, March 31, May 31, July 31, September 30, and November 30** each year. If a response is needed quickly to deal with a problem like hurricane damage or other issue where time is of the essence, mark your application as “EMERGENCY REQUEST”.
- Applicant will be notified of the RLC Committee’s decision within one week of the meeting.
- Grant funds will be paid by the Conference Business Office upon receipt from the Grantee of either invoices or receipts. Payment cannot be made based on estimates.
- Grant funds must be disbursed six months from the date Grantee receives written approval from RLC. Grantee may request additional time if necessary.

BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION:

- Assess whether the project falls within the guidelines of this specific type of grant. Contact a committee member listed on the second page of this handbook if you have any questions about whether your request falls within the scope of this grant.
- Determine what other funding sources can be accessed, including church assets and fundraising opportunities.
- Look at all possible options before deciding to do the project.
- Prepare a one or two page description of the planned project and how it maintains, improves, or expands the church ministry. Include information on other options that were considered when deciding how to accomplish the project’s goals.
- Provide copies of (1) the church’s current financial budget, (2) current statement of all church financial assets, and (3) a year-to-date statement of income and expenses. Also describe fundraising efforts and results, other contributions, and any other attempts to fund this project.
- For construction, renovation or repair projects, provide 2 or more written estimates, if possible, from a business or individual who could complete the work. If only one estimate is possible, please explain why. If possible, provide photos of the areas of the planned work.

- Complete the RLC Church Grant Application that follows and attach documentation described in previous bullets.
- Return the completed grant application to conference@maineucc.org with “RLC grant application” in the subject line OR send via USPS to the conference office mailing address listed on the front cover of this handbook and include ATTN: RLC before the street address. (NOTE: the conference office will relocate in the near future, so you may need to find the new address from another source.)
- Following notification of acceptance of the application, submit invoices or receipts for the completed work/purchases to the Maine Conference business office or send electronic copies via email to conference@maineucc.org Please note “ATTN: RLC” either way. Invoices will be paid directly to the vendor; receipts marked “paid” will be reimbursed to the church.
- Projects must be completed within 6 months of the grant’s approval. Funds not utilized within 6 months tie up much needed funds that could be used to serve other churches within the Maine Conference.
- Grantees must inform the RLC Committee of any delays or extenuating circumstances so appropriate action can be taken.
- Grantees are required to submit a project completion form to RLC at the Maine Conference Business office within 60 days of expenditure of grant funds. Blank completion forms can be found at the end of this handbook.



**RLC
Church
Grant**

Date _____

Church Name _____

Street/ PO Box _____

Town _____ ZIP _____

Phone(s) _____ Cell _____ Email _____

Contact Person: _____

Position (check one): Pastor Lay Leader Other

Church Membership _____ Average Sunday Worship Attendance In Person _____ Livestream _____

Please share the approximate percentage of those attending your church on an average Sunday

Children _____ Youth _____ Young Adults _____ Middle Aged Adults _____ Elderly Adults _____

Name of Project _____

Has your church applied for an RLC Grant before (check one): Yes No

When _____ Was your previous request granted (check one): Yes No

What is the status of the previous project? _____

Anticipated Date of Program/Project _____

Your Church's Contribution \$ _____ Other Resources \$ _____

Amount Requested from Committee \$ _____ Total Cost \$ _____

Please Sign Below

Applicant _____
(Print Name) _____
(Signature) _____

Pastor _____
(Print Name) _____
(Signature) _____

**BE SURE TO READ AND FOLLOW INSTRUCTION on the preceding pages of the RLC
Handbook before submitting this application and required supporting materials!**

Section II: RLC Individual Grants

What RLC Grant monies for Individuals will support

The Committee can grant funds to assist lay leaders and clergy in attending developmental workshops and help laity, clergy, and youth with the costs of wider mission activities. Finally, the Committee can supply financial support to Conference programs which directly benefit local churches, and we can help pay for Interim Ministry training. In all these situations, the RLC Committee anticipates that the applicant will also have pursued and documented other avenues of potential funding.

For example:

- A lay leader participating in ecumenical activities focused on peace and justice initiatives such as those provided by the Maine Council on Churches
- A young adult considering ministry attending a General Synod meeting
- A clergy traveling abroad on a mission trip

NOTE that RLC individual grants are limited in size with a maximum of \$2500. The intention of the RLC grants is to assist individuals as they equip themselves for ministry, but limited resources mean that we are unlikely to be able to fund entire projects.

RLC Grant Application Process for Individuals:

- Awards are granted by a majority vote of the Resourcing the Local Church Committee.
- The Resourcing the Local Church Committee meets up to six times per year, although additional meetings can be arranged for emergency applications.
- Deadline for all applications are **January 31, March 31, May 31, July 31, September 30, and November 30** each year. If a response is needed quickly to deal with an issue where time is of the essence, mark your application as “EMERGENCY REQUEST”.
- Applicant will be notified of the RLC Committee’s decision within one week of the meeting.

- Grants are typically paid by the Conference Business Office upon receipt of either invoices or receipts from Grantee. Payment cannot be made based on estimates.
- Grants must be disbursed six months from the date Grantee receives written approval from RLC. Grantee may request additional time if necessary.

BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION:

- Assess whether the project falls within the guidelines of this specific type of grant. Contact a committee member listed on the second page of this handbook if you have any questions about whether your request falls within the scope of this grant.
- Determine what other funding sources are available.
- Provide a **detailed description** of not more than two pages as to how you will use the requested funds. List the ways in which you support and actively participate in the life of your congregation and include **how the grant will benefit the ministry of your local church.**
- Provide a one page description of how you propose to pay for this project. Explain why financial assistance is needed.
- Complete the RLC Individual Grant Application on the following page and attach documentation described in the bullets above.
- Return the completed grant application to conference@maineucc.org with “RLC grant application” in the subject line OR send via USPS to the conference office mailing address listed on the front cover of this handbook and include “ATTN: RLC” before the street address. (NOTE: the conference office will relocate in the near future, so you may need to find the new address from another source.)
- Following notification of acceptance of the application, submit invoices or receipts for the completed work/purchases to the Maine Conference business office or send electronic copies via email to conference@maineucc.org Note ATTN: RLC either way. Invoices will be paid directly to the vendor; receipts marked “paid” will be reimbursed to the individual.
- Projects must be completed within 6 months of the grant’s approval. Funds not utilized within 6 months tie up much needed funds that could be used to serve other churches within the Maine Conference.
- Grantees must inform the RLC Committee of any delays or extenuating circumstances so appropriate action can be taken.
- Grantees are required to submit a project completion form to RLC at the Maine Conference Business office within 60 days of expenditure of grant funds. Blank completion forms can be found at the end of this handbook.



Date _____

Name _____

Street/ PO Box _____

Town _____ ZIP _____

Phone(s) _____ Cell _____ Email _____

Church Membership _____

Church Address _____

Church Phone _____ Email _____

How long have you been a member of this church? _____

Have you applied for an RLC Grant before (check one): Yes No

Current Employment _____

For how long? _____ Retired? (Check one) Yes No For how long? _____

Employment prior to retirement _____

Name of Project _____

Total Cost _____ Amount Requested from RLC _____ Date Needed _____

Your Contribution \$ _____ Your Church's Contribution \$ _____

Have you sought other sources for funding? (Check one) Yes No

If so, list the source(s) and the amount received _____

Required Signatures:

Applicant _____ Pastor _____

BE SURE TO READ AND FOLLOW INSTRUCTION on the preceding pages of the RLC Handbook before submitting this application and required supporting materials!

Section III: Member in Discernment (MID) Scholarship

Scholarship Application Process...

The Maine Conference Board of Directors authorized the Resourcing the Local Church (RLC) Committee oversight of Member in Discernment (MID) Scholarships. Funding for MID Scholarships is part of the Maine Conference Annual Budget.

- Scholarships are to be used for tuition payments solely for courses of study approved by the applicant's Committee on Ministry (COM).
- Funds will be disbursed directly to the educational institution.
- The Resourcing the Local Church Committee meets up to six times per year.
- Deadline for all applications are **January 31, March 31, May 31, July 31, September 30, and November 30 each year.**

Required Actions:

- Complete MID Scholarship Application Form – see next page.
- Complete an essay outlining how the scholarship will help you meet your vocational goals and objectives.
- Provide documentation of financial need – see application form for details.
- Provide a letter of reference from your UCC church pastor confirming membership, participation, and MID status.
- Provide a letter of support from your association's Committee on Ministry that recognizes your coursework as appropriate.
- Return the completed scholarship application with supporting documentation to conference@maineucc.org with "MID Scholarship application" in the subject line OR send via USPS to the conference office mailing address listed on the front cover of this handbook and include "ATTN: RLC" before the street address. (NOTE: the conference office will relocate in the near future, so you may need to find the new address from another source.)
- Scholarship recipients must inform the RLC Committee of any delays or extenuating circumstances, i.e. illness, course cancellation, etc.



MAINE CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

The Maine Conference United Church of Christ awards a limited number of scholarships to Members in Discernment (MID) preparing to become Authorized Ministers in the United Church of Christ. The Resourcing the Local Church Committee (RLC) oversees the MID Scholarship process. Awards may be limited to \$1000 or less depending on the number of applicants.

Scholarships are to be used solely for tuition payments. Funds will be disbursed directly to the educational institution. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis by the Resourcing the Local Church Committee.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Applicant must be a Member in Discernment (MID) with an Association of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ.
- Documented financial need. *Please enclose a page that includes the following:*
 - Amount of education loan debt to date
 - Projected educational costs
 - Financial resources, i.e., scholarships, fellowships, grants, gifts
 - The number of people in your immediate family you are supporting
- Letter of reference from the pastor of your local Maine UCC church confirming membership, participation, and MID status.
- Letter of approval from your association's Committee on Ministry for the proposed coursework or internship.

Applicant Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone(s): _____ Cell Phone: _____

Maine UCC church you are a member of: _____

Association of the Maine Conference UCC where you are an MID: _____

How are you preparing for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ?

(Check all that apply.)

Name of accredited seminary/theological school attending: _____

Maine School of Ministry (MESOM)

Name of other theological education program or course of study: _____

When would you like the funds disbursed to the institution? _____

Funds from Our Church's Wider Mission and Friends of the Maine Conference help to support the Maine Conference United Church of Christ MID Scholarship Fund.

Section IV: Resourcing the Local Church Committee Bylaws

Article I – Name

The name of this committee shall be the Resourcing the Local Church Committee, Maine Conference United Church of Christ.

Article II – Purpose

Section 1. The Resourcing the Local Church Committee shall:

A. Award grants from the Resourcing the Local Church Endowment Fund to:

1. Expand existing services within the church
2. Aid in the development of new programs within the church
3. Aid in the development of new services within the church
4. Aid in the development of new congregations

B. Other services may be to:

1. Provide emergency funds for churches
2. Provide training for Interim Ministry
3. Provide services of a crisis counselor to assist in local church conflict resolution
4. Sponsor laity, clergy, and youth participation in the wider mission activities of the United Church of Christ
5. Assist lay leaders and clergy in attending developmental leadership training workshops
6. Assist churches in addressing current building needs or future building possibilities
7. Support conference programs that directly benefit local churches

C. In addition, award grants designated in the Conference annual budget for Members in Discernment (MID) scholarship and any other/special projects, requested by the Board of Directors.

Article III – Membership

Section 1. The membership of this committee shall consist of seven people, both laity and clergy, one representative elected by each Association in the Maine Conference. A conference minister shall serve as an ex-officio member.

Section 2. Committee members, appointed by each Association in the Maine Conference, shall serve no more than two terms of three years each, and may not be reappointed until one year has elapsed, except as indicated below

In Section 3.

Section 3. When a vacancy occurs, the executive committee from the respective Association shall name a successor to complete the remainder of the term vacated. If such person serves a half term or less, he or she shall be eligible for appointment to a subsequent full term.

Article IV – Officers

Officers shall be a chair and a vice chair, elected each year by the committee.

Article V – Duties

Section 1. The chair shall:

- A. receive and acknowledge the receipt of each grant application
- B. schedule and chair the meetings
- C. send copies of grant applications received to committee members prior to each meeting
- D. keep records of grant applications received, committee decisions, and other communications
- E. ensure the minutes of each meeting are taken, and furnish committee members and the Conference office with copies of minutes, including the dates of subsequent meetings
- F. sign all vouchers before submitting them to the Maine Conference Business Manager G. prepare a report for the annual meeting of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ

Section 2. The vice chair shall:

- A. chair meetings and conduct all the duties of the chair in the absence of the chair

Section 3. The conference minister shall:

- A. act in an advisory capacity
- B. designate a conference representative to be present at meetings in his or her absence

Article VI – Meetings

Section 1. Meetings are held quarterly, scheduled by the committee. Meetings may be held electronically or in-person, at the discretion of the committee chair.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the chair to conduct additional, unexpected, or emergency business.

Section 3. Four members present shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4. A majority vote shall rule.

Article VII – Applications

Section 1. Grant application forms can be found on the Maine Conference website.

Section 2. Criteria for evaluating grant applications are based on financial need, creativity, perceived results, completeness of application, fundraising efforts reflecting the congregation's financial commitment to the project, and

funds available. Fundraising could be expected to involve not only the church membership, but also the community and/or individuals concerned, as appropriate.

Section 3. MID scholarships shall be awarded only to verify MIDs of an Association in the Maine Conference and will be based on financial need. Criteria for evaluating other/special awards shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 4. No local church or other applicant shall be granted more than \$5,000.00 per calendar year.

Section 5. Before a grant application is discussed by the committee, a committee member, designated by the chair, shall personally contact an appropriate representative of the applicant to discuss in detail the application and its background.

Article VIII – Finances

Section 1. Income from the Endowment Fund for the Resourcing the Local Church shall be used annually to carry out the duties of the committee as stated in Article II, Purpose, and as was originally stated in the Maine Conference capital campaign “To Gather Into ONE” with the exception of MID scholarship or special/other grant awards – the origin of those funds will come from the Maine Conference annual budget.

Section 2. The Endowment Fund shall be invested by the Trustees in accordance with the Bylaws of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ, Article III.

Section 3. Awards shall be made as voted by the committee. Vouchers shall be signed by the chair of the committee.

Section 4. The Business Manager of the Maine Conference shall disburse the funds and keep records in accordance with the Bylaws of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ, Article III.

Section 5. Committee members may be reimbursed for their expenses. Expense vouchers shall be directed to the Board of Directors.

Article IX – Amendments

Resourcing the Local Church Rules of Procedure may be amended at any duly called meeting of The Resourcing the Local Church Committee by a majority of the members present, provided that the amendment is submitted to the Board of Directors of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ for approval. Any member of the Maine Conference, in good standing, may submit a recommendation for a Rules of Procedure amendment to The Resourcing the Local Church Committee for consideration.

Article X – Parliamentary Authority

Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the proceedings of this committee in all cases not provided for in the Rules of Procedure of the Maine Conference the Rules of the Board of Directors, or the Rules of Procedure of The Resourcing the Local Church Committee.

Approved by the Board of Directors on January 27, 2018

Section V: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are there different RLC Grant Applications?

The majority of the applications come from congregations who are seeking to make capital improvements, start a new program, or underwrite an existing program. Requests from individuals are frequently related to training or other educational opportunities. Church projects and individual projects often have a different focus, therefore require different application forms. Similarly, Scholarships for Members in Discernment serve a different purpose.

2. Will the applicant have any interaction with members of the Resourcing the Local Church Committee?

Yes, a member of the committee will contact you directly and ask for additional information. If possible a committee member may do a site visit in an effort to gain a better understanding of a project.

3. May a church or individual apply for more than one RLC Grant in a given year?

No, an applicant can only apply one time in a calendar year.

4. Why doesn't every applicant receive the same amount?

Disbursements are dependent upon the number of requests the RLC Committee receives in a given quarter and the scope of the project.

RLC Grant Completed Project Report

Date _____ **Contact Person:** _____

Church Name _____

Street / PO Box _____

Town _____ **ZIP** _____

If possible, please include a separate page with photos which illustrate the impact of your project.

Please share with the RLC Team the impact this project has had for your congregation. Include advice for other churches who might want to follow your example. (This may be used in our hand-outs and/or in the Conference Weekly news. If you DO NOT WANT your report shared, please be sure to state that clearly)

Please return report to the Maine Conference business office within 60 days after project is completed. Send via email to conference@maineucc.org with “RLC grant completion report” in the subject line OR send via USPS to the conference office mailing address listed on the front cover of this handbook and include “ATTN: RLC” before the street address. (NOTE: the conference office will relocate in the near future, so you may need to find the new address from another source.)