Rocky Mountain Conference

The Tributary Fund  
Funding for New Ministries, Church Starts, and Revitalizing Ministries

# Purpose

The purpose of the Rocky Mountain Conference is to inspire, challenge, and empower generous faith and justice communities across the West. One way we do this is by supporting people – both ministers and lay persons – who are called to work on behalf of the ministry of Christ in the greater Rocky Mountain area. The Tributary Fund is just one of the tools we use to do this.

# A Relational, Conversational Process

When a person is called to ordained ministry, she or he becomes a “Member in Discernment” and enters a relational process with a team that helps to affirm, shape, and cultivate the sense of call. The Tributary Fund uses a similar process. Those who see themselves as Call-Bearers for new ministry, new churches, or ministry revitalizations enter a discernment process to affirm and shape the call and help to bring the ministry into fruition.

# Entering the Process & Process Expectations

Call-bearers seeking funding and support will first complete the application and submit it to tributary@rmcucc.org. After the Tributary Fund team reviews the application, a member will contact the applicant for an initial conversation and to schedule conversations with the team. Applicants should plan for a discernment period of 2 to 4 months.

The discernment process will use a relational conversation model of group discovery and consensus building. The team will help Call-Bearers assess the sense of call, the extent to which the proposed ministry fits the RMC’s purpose, the levels of readiness and commitment of the team to move the ministry forward, and the long-term sustainability of the proposed ministry. This conversation of possibilities is meant to engage Call-Bearers across the Conference in helping bring into being new ministries, churches, or revitalizations that enable us to be the ministry of Christ.

# Funding Cycle and Capacity

Funding applications will be received by March 15 each year with the discernment conversations beginning soon after. Funding decisions and disbursement of funds generally will be completed six months after application date.

Each year, the RMC Board will determine funding levels for the Tributary Fund. We expect funding levels will vary from year to year given investment performance and other financial considerations as recommended by the RMC Board’s Finance Committee.

# Renewability of Grant Funding

Each grant will be given for a one-year period. Renewal grants for up to two additional years are possible for ministries meeting key milestones as determined jointly by the Call-Bearer and the Tributary Fund Team. To be considered for renewal funding, a Call-Bearer must complete a renewal application, including an assessment of the prior year, by the application deadline stated above.

# Application Checklist

* **Cover Letter (one page)**

Please include a cover letter telling us about your team and your community partners and describing the purpose of the grant request and how it aligns with the Rocky Mountain Conference mission and grantmaking priorities.

* **Summary Sheet Form**

Please use the template provided.

* **Project Narrative**

Please use 12-point font with 1-inch margins and include the heading provided for each question (below). It is not necessary to repeat the text of the question in our response. Please limit your narrative to five (5) pages.

Narrative Questions (see prompts on pages 4-5)

1. Project team
2. Goals
3. Current ministries/churches
4. Proposed new ministry, new church, or revitalizing ministry
5. Evaluation and results
6. Collaboration
7. Inclusiveness
8. Leadership
9. Commitment to service
10. Approach to challenges
11. Sustainability

* **Attachments**

If you omit any of the required attachments, please provide an explanation for doing so.

1. New ministry, new church, or revitalizing ministry budget
2. List of key team members and community partners, citing the roles of each in your proposed new ministry, new church, or revitalizing ministry

Thank you for your time and effort in completing this application. We look forward to learning about your plans!

# Summary Sheet Form

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of New Ministry, New Church, or Revitalizing Ministry** | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| **Physical Address (and mailing address, if different)** | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| **Phone** |  | **EIN** | |  | **Website** | | |  |
|  | | |  | | | | | |
| **Proposed Leader(s)** | | |  | | | | | |
|  | | |  | | | | | |
| **Proposed Leader(s) Phone** | | |  | | | | | |
|  | | |  | | | | | |
| **Proposed Leader(s) Email** | | |  | | | | | |
|  | | |  | | | | | |
| **Amount of Grant Request** | | |  | | | | | |
|  | | |  | | | | | |
| **Description of Proposed New Ministry/New Church/Revitalizing Ministry** (250-word limit) | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
|  | | |  | | | | | |
| **Proposed Time Period for Grant** | |  | | | | **to** |  | |
| **Please describe the geographic area for this proposed New Ministry/New Church/Revitalizing Ministry.** (250-word limit) | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| **Please acknowledge that you have made the appropriate Association aware of this proposed New Ministry/New Church/Revitalizing Ministry, including who you discussed the work with, and when.** (250-word limit) | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |

# Signature of Applicant

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Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

# Grant Proposal Instructions

Please use 12-point font with 1-inch margins and include the **HEADING** provided for each question. It is not necessary to repeat the text of the questions.

1. **New Ministry/New Church/Revitalizing Ministry Team.** Discuss your team’s gifts, strengths, and resources. Describe how members of your team already strive to be the hands and feet of Christ in your community and in the world.
2. **Goals.** Please describe the need you seek to fill and describe why you believe that you have the commitment, faith, and energy to fill it. Please define the individuals and communities who will be impacted by your new ministry/new church/revitalizing ministry and how they have informed your plans.
3. **Current Ministries/Churches.** Please provide a brief description of the ministries/churches in which your team members currently participate. Include information on the people and communities you serve. Please provide some examples of how your work has impacted people in your community and beyond.
4. **Proposed Ministry/New Church/Revitalizing Ministry.** Please provide a summary of what you are proposing. How will you use your inherent gifts and assets to build and grow this work? What do you hope to change? What voices do you seek to amplify? How does the work create the world that you want to see? How is the community outside your congregation meaningfully involved? What milestones will be important to your success?
5. **Evaluation and Results.** What does success look like? How will you measure the impact of your efforts? How will the people and the communities that you serve participate in evaluating the results of your work?
6. **Collaboration.** Describe your team’s most significant interactions with other organizations and efforts in your community and beyond. How will you include collaboration and community partnerships to achieve the results you seek?
7. **Inclusiveness.** Describe how your team strives to be inclusive in your work. How will you ensure that your team seeks out, reaches, and serves people with the most need and those who tend to be marginalized and underrepresented in decision-making. How will your work amplify the voices of those who are often unheard?
8. **Leadership.** Please describe the role of your leaders in advancing your proposed new ministry/new church/revitalizing ministry.
9. **Commitment to Service.** Please describe the commitment among members of your team – and others in your community – to building and growing your proposed new ministry/new church/revitalizing ministry.
10. **Approach to Challenges.** Please discuss potential challenges or difficulties you may encounter and how you plan to mitigate or overcome these challenges.
11. **Sustainability.** Tributary Fund grants are intended to help provide seed funding to launch new ministries and nurture them through their initial growth phase. Please discuss your plans for funding your new ministry/new church/revitalizing ministry beyond the period of financial support provide by a Tributary Fund grant.

# Evaluation Criteria

Members of the Tributary Fund team will evaluate grant proposals using the following criteria:

**Capacity 10 points**

* New Ministry/New Church/Revitalizing Ministry Team 5 points
* Current Ministries/Churches 5 points

**Need 10 points**

* Goals 5 points
* Proposed Ministry/New Church/Revitalizing Ministry 5 points

**Approach 35 points**

* Collaboration 5 points
* Inclusiveness 5 points
* Leadership 5 points
* Commitment to Service 5 points
* Approach to Challenges 5 points
* Evaluation and Results 5 points
* Sustainability 5 points

**1**Does not meet expectations / standards

**5**Exceeds expectations / standards

**3**Fully meets all expectations / standards

**4**

**2**

TRIBUTARY FUND TEAM

# Purpose

The Tributary Fund Team evaluates Tributary Fund grant applications for review and action by the full Rocky Mountain Conference Board of Directors. This is a board-driven process.

# Membership

* New Ministry Board member (Chair)
* The five (5) association representative board
* Finance committee member
* Associate Conference Minister as designated by Conference Minister

# Duties

* Evaluate all grant requests using Tributary Fund process and scoring
* Present summary to the full RMC Board, including a ranking of projects reviewed and recommendations for projects to be approved. The RMC Board makes all grant award decisions.
* Review existing grants for progress toward goals

Tributary Fund Calendar

**Release Call for Applications** February 1

**Completed Applications Due** March 15

**Initial Review of Applications** March 15 – March 31

**Conversations with Applicants** April 1 – April 30

**Final Review of Applications** May 1 – May 15

**Team Submits Award Recommendations to Board** May 15

**Board Makes Award Decisions** May 15 – May 31

**Awards Announced at Annual Celebration** Early Summer

**Continuing Conversations during Implementation** Throughout the grant