



New Faith Communities Policy for New Beginnings Fund Grants

United Methodists of Upper New York

YEAR 2 to 4 APPLICATION

Introduction

The **New Beginnings Fund** of United Methodists of Upper New York supports grants of \$2,500 or more to intentionally reach new people in contextual ways to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The New Beginnings Fund – made up of the net proceeds from the sale of the church buildings of discontinued congregations – enables closed churches to provide a legacy to reach new people and for new churches take root.

The goal of New Faith Communities in Upper New York

is to intentionally reach new people in contextual ways to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

To be eligible, ministries must be:

1. Explicitly built to reach new people outside of the existing church
2. Relational
3. Helping new people explore, embrace, and grow in their faith in the Wesleyan way
4. 4 years or less into their ministry

New Faith Communities may include:

- **New Church Starts:** A brand new church that has the potential to charter and live in the connectional system with the potential for self-sustainability in terms of growth and finances. Must include worship and service/community care. Multi-site campuses fall into this category. New Church Starts must attend the UNY Launchpad training to be eligible for funding. Approval from the Bishop and Cabinet is required.

- **New Faith Communities/Fresh Expressions:** Smaller, less traditional ministries. Unlikely to charter or continue to grow beyond a certain point. It may be seen as a stepping stone towards faith. Includes coffeehouses, house churches, intentional communities, digital ministries, ministry in the marketplace, etc. Preference is given to applicants who have attended Launchpad.
- **Church ReStarts:** Church Restarts may be considered NFC's Church Restarts are eligible for up to matching grants only, based on their pledged annual giving.

Application Process

1. **The Director of New Faith Communities can approve grant applications up to \$5,000** through the enclosed application process.
2. **Grant applications exceeding \$5,000*:** are reviewed bi-annually.
Grant applications for

January 15	close November 1
July 15	close May 1

Applications received after these dates will be considered six months later.
*Funding exceeding \$5,000 must receive approval from the Bishop and Cabinet.
3. **Review and Interview:** Applications are reviewed by the Director of New Faith Communities, and interviews may be scheduled for further exploration and clarification. These conversations could be via phone, video chat, or in person. Additional information may be requested.
4. **Decision Communication:** Decisions are communicated via email and followed by a detailed Covenant.
5. **Covenant Agreements:** The Director of New Faith Communities and the planting team's leadership sign agreements outlining payment plans and mutual expectations.
6. **Funds Disbursement:** New Beginnings Fund Grants are distributed with the following schedule*

1 st Quarter:	January 15
2 nd Quarter:	April 15
3 rd Quarter:	July 15

4th Quarter: October 15

*Grants of \$5,000 or less may be distributed bi-annually or in a lump sum.

7. **Sustainability and Reporting:** Applications are for one year of funding. Subsequent grants require new applications and demonstrate financial sustainability plans. Any subsequent grants will be considered on the basis of a new application in the coming years and clear reporting on progress meeting intended goals is expected. **After three to five years of ministry**, in the UNY's discretion, the NFC will transition from being a New Faith Community and no longer qualify for New Beginnings Fund funding. NFCs may apply for grant funding for up to 5 years. New Faith Communities are considered NFCs for up to the first 5 years of ministry.
8. **Upon completion, please send the application AS A WORD DOCUMENT** to Director of New Faith Communities, AbigailBrowka@unyumc.org

Additional Insight regarding Grants

1. Depending on the strategy used in planting, different funding patterns can be expected. For instance, a team with a clear vision, strategy, and a strong launch team already in place might apply for a larger sum in year one, and then hope for decreasing grant support in subsequent years when goals are being met, disciples are being made, and growth is seen. Other strategies might call for a small grant in the first year while a vision takes shape and a leadership team grows, and then a larger grant in year two when a launch is planned.
2. **New Faith Communities must demonstrate a long-term commitment to the United Methodist Church.** If your New Faith Communities is connected to an existing Church, the church must have a history of faithfully contributing to United Methodist Ministry Shares to receive a NFC's grant. This will be checked.
3. New Faith Communities may or may not have large group worship experiences. New Faith Communities may or may not ever own property and buildings. New Faith Communities may use any music, worship or liturgical style that helps their people to encounter and worship God. New Faith Communities will be asked to report statistics annually of: How many people are welcomed and become active, consistent participants? How many people are in small groups, and seeking to follow Jesus? What teams have been developed? How many new leaders are being developed?
4. Priority will be given to applications for funding that support plans that align well with the core values of our Annual Conference. These can be found below.

Core Values for New Faith Community

1. **Radical Hospitality:** Diverse people are invited and welcomed without prejudice or judgment. Every person is valued for the unique spiritual gifts, life experience and resources they bring.
2. **Discipleship Focus:** Encouragement of all members to follow Christ through learning, using their gifts, and expressing God's love. NFCs have a clear discipleship pathway.
3. **Small Group Engagement:** The primary growth points for developing disciples are in small groups where true community is fostered, scriptures are engaged, God is worshipped, faith is discussed, concerns and dreams are shared, mutual prayers are offered, mission projects are embraced, and people are routinely invited to follow Jesus Christ, in an atmosphere where it is safe to ask any question, explore any thought, express any doubt.
4. **Team-Based Leadership:** Distribution of responsibilities among various leaders to avoid dependence on individuals.
5. **Generosity:** Regular opportunities for members to contribute to transformative mission and giving from the start.
6. **Multiplication:** Emphasis on inviting others and developing new leaders and groups.
7. **Missional:** Active engagement in mission to transform communities and neighborhoods.

NEW BEGINNINGS FUND: YEAR 2-4 APPLICATION

Updated February 2024

Contact Information:

Name of New Faith Community:

Physical location (if applicable):

Mailing Address:

District and DS:

Sponsoring/Parent Congregation (if applicable):

Lead Planter's Name:

Phone:

E-mail:

Clergy Status of Lead Planter (if applicable):

Full Connection Elder / Full Connection Deacon / Provisional Member / Associate Member /
Local Pastor with CoS or MDiv / Local Pastor / Laity

Has the Lead Planter attended Launchpad, if so what year:

What was the launch date/initial funding date of the NFC?

When will this NFC reach the 5 year limit of NFC support?

Does this ministry qualify as an NFC by being:

Yes / No Built specifically to reach new people outside of the existing church

Yes / No Relational

Yes / No Helping new people explore and grow in their faith

Yes / No 4 years or less into their ministry

Narrative Questions: Please limit each response to 100 words or less.

Vision, Strategy, Goals and Plans

1. Is this NFC a New Church Start, New Faith Community or Church ReStart?

2. What is the ministry's core vision?

3. Need: What is the defined need this NFC addresses? How has this need been determined?
4. Target population: Who are the people you want to specifically reach? What needs do these people have that God is calling you to meet?
5. Strategy: What strategy guides your approach? Provide a strategic overview, specific goals, timeline, and measurable outcomes.
6. Disciple-Making: Describe in detail your disciple-making strategy/pathway.
7. How is this ministry designed to reach new people outside of the existing church?
8. What are the fruits of this ministry over the past year?
9. What contextual needs and missional impact are you serving in your ministry's context?
10. Describe the physical location of your ministry and any property agreements, rentals, or leases you are obligated to.
11. Is there a demonstrative need for a change in appointment for the NFC? If so, please describe with conclusive evidence.
12. What is the average attendance at your NFC ministry in the past year?
13. Is this an increase, decrease or neutral to the previous year?
14. How many of your average attendance are new people who have become regular attendees in the past year?

Leadership and Team

15. Provide an assessment of the lead planter's gifts, skills, experience, passion and evidence of fruitfulness as it relates to the NFC.
16. Please identify the various teams that have been developed to support the vision: (list and identify purpose of each, and how many persons are committed to each)
17. Please identify any partnerships (with groups, individuals, etc.) you have established in your community and within the Conference, which share your vision and support your work.
18. Please identify any peer networks the leaders are working with and learning from.
19. Does the Lead Planter have a coach? And if not, what is the plan for engaging one?
20. List Leadership Development and Congregational Development the NFC has participated in, in the past year.

Financial Resources*

***All non-chartered NFCs are required to have a local UMC or the Conference serve as their fiscal agent through which all their finances flow through. Church Restarts please base responses on matching grants based on your pledged annual giving.**

21. Who is the fiscal agent of the NFC? Where do finances flow through?
22. Please provide the financial plan and budget for this plant. Include all estimated expenses and other anticipated income including if a New Beginnings Fund grant is received.

23. Describe how this plant may become a sustainable ministry over time.
Our goal is for every faith community to be self-sustaining as soon as possible. Our funds are finite. Because of this, each application should clearly delineate plans for financial sustainability. Your application will be stronger if you have been gathering other partners and other funding sources. We like to give matching grants!
24. How many years do you anticipate applying for New Beginning Fund grant funding from the Conference?
25. Is your NFC connected to an existing church? If so, please explain the relationship to the existing church.
26. What is the total amount of grant funds you are applying for?
27. Would you like to apply for any Continuing Education funds this year? If so, please describe your Continuing Education request.

All UNY New Faith Communities must adhere to the following Covenant and additional Agreement for Legal Relationship to be eligible for grant funding.

New Faith Communities Covenant

These Covenants are promises made by the below-mentioned New Faith Community (“NFC”) to the UNY:

1. We covenant to engage in **one-on-one coaching** during the first year of ministry and ongoing group coaching in subsequent years, as outlined by the Director of New Faith Communities.

2. We acknowledge that **after three to five years of ministry**, in the UNY’s discretion, the NFC will transition from being a New Faith Community and no longer qualify for New Beginnings Fund funding.

3. We acknowledge that our ministry must **reapply for funding ANNUALLY** during the bi-annual grant funding cycle to receive future New Beginnings Fund funding. We acknowledge that subsequent years of funding will most likely be released using a step-down model, thus decreasing funding each year.

4. **We pledge a long-term commitment to the United Methodist Church.** If this NFC leaves the United Methodist Church for any reason, we covenant to repay 75% of all grant funds received and 25% of the value of any land/buildings given for ministry within one year.

5. **In the event this ministry ends**, I/We commit to contacting New Faith Communities Director, Abigail Browka at AbigailBrowka@unyumc.org, to release further funding and our District Superintendent to coordinate pastoral appointment.

6. If applicable, **we covenant to Charter** this ministry at such a time as we reach an average of 70 persons in worship or such other certain level of persons in worship as set or directed by the UNY.

7. We covenant to **not purchase or take ownership of any real estate prior to chartering.**

<hr/> <i>Pastor of Sponsoring Congregation (if applicable)</i>	<hr/> <i>date</i>
<hr/> <i>Lead Planter</i>	<hr/> <i>date</i>
<hr/> <i>District Superintendent (where plant will be located)</i>	<hr/> <i>date</i>
<hr/> <i>Director of New Faith Communities</i>	<hr/> <i>date</i>