

Saskatchewan Conference Policy for Dependent Care, Travel, Salary Replacement, and Meal Costs

Whereas both the prophetic tradition of Israel as found in the Hebrew Testament and the Christian Testament emphasize concerns for and the inclusion of the poor and the marginalized in the life of the community and this is consistent with the social gospel and the traditions, theology and polity of The United Church of Canada and Saskatchewan Conference;

Whereas Saskatchewan Conference has a long history of providing financial assistance to facilitate and encourage the attendance and participation of people at its annual meetings and at the other meetings which take place within the life of the Conference;

Whereas in 1994 the Conference Executive decided that "wherever practical, possible, and cost effective", the annual meeting will provide dependent care and failing this, the Conference will reimburse actual costs for dependent care to a maximum of \$75 per day, and effective January 1st, 1996 this became the policy of Saskatchewan Conference in relation to all meetings within the life of the Conference;

Whereas in 1995 the Annual Meeting decided that people who are not in the paid ministry of the United Church and who, for economic reasons are unable to participate in the work of the Conference, may claim up to \$75 per day for a maximum of 5 days per year to attend meetings;

Whereas in 1996, the Conference Executive decided that when a person is required to stay overnight at a location away from home while they are on Conference business, the individual will be reimbursed for reasonable accommodation expenses;

Whereas the 1996 policy in relation to overnight accommodations has never applied to the annual meeting of Saskatchewan Conference as billets are provided upon request for those attending the annual meeting;

Whereas currently the policy of Saskatchewan Conference is that annual meeting delegates who travel over 300 kilometres return may claim \$0.11 per kilometre for each kilometre over 300 and that if the individual feels an economic need to make a travel claim for their total travel (including travel amounts less than 300 kilometres) they may do so;

Whereas on November 21st, 2013, United Church General Secretary Nora Sanders issued an Opinion 13-002-R which confirmed that a Conference cannot require members attending the Conference annual meeting to pay a registration fee and that participation in a Conference annual meeting should not be limited by the individual's financial means to pay, but determined that the Conference may charge a fee for its annual meeting to help defray costs as long as the Conference puts appropriate arrangements in place so that no one is prevented from participating in the annual meeting for financial reasons;

Whereas in 2012, Saskatchewan Conference became an affirming conference "as one that embraces diversity and strives to include all, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, education, ability, economic status, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity to participate in the structures of conference";

Whereas at its 2013 annual meeting, the decision was made that, to maintain Saskatchewan Conference's objectives of inclusivity, it study the issue of subsidizing meal and travel costs upon request for those that need assistance;

That it be the policy of Saskatchewan Conference that:

Commencing with the planning for the 2015 Annual Meeting of Saskatchewan Conference, the Annual Meeting Planning Committee make decisions in planning the meeting which are as practical and cost effective as possible while at all times have as a priority the need to enable the attendance and participation of all people within Saskatchewan Conference who want to attend the Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting Planning Committee communicate to the people of Saskatchewan Conference at least once before each Annual Meeting that enabling the attendance and participation of all people within Saskatchewan Conference who want to attend the meeting is part of what it means for Saskatchewan Conference to be an affirming ministry of The United Church of Canada and a responsibility to be shared both by the Conference and by the pastoral charges as it relates to the attendance of delegates to the Annual Meeting.

Dependent Care - The Annual Meeting Planning Committee will, upon request, reimburse from the Budget for the Annual Meeting a delegate's costs for dependent care to a maximum of \$100 per day per participant who normally provides such care. Such reimbursement will be to a maximum of 5 days per year in relation to an individual's attendance at all of the meetings or other gatherings of the Conference.

Travel – While the expectation is that carpooling will be practiced for attendance at all meetings within Saskatchewan Conference, reimbursement for travel to and from the annual meeting from the Budget of the Annual Meeting, will be covered after the first 300 km, at 23 cents per kilometer for an individual traveling to the Annual Meeting, and at 30 cents per kilometer when carpooling with other delegates to Saskatchewan Conference. If the individual feels an economic need to make a travel claim for their total travel (including travel amounts less than 300 kilometres) they may do so.

Salary Replacement – People who are not in the paid ministry of the United Church and who, for economic reasons are unable to participate in the work of the Conference may claim from the Budget of the Annual Meeting up to \$81.60 per day as a replacement for salary that they would lose because of their attendance.

A claim for both Dependent Care and Salary Replacement will be determined on a case by case basis.

Conference Meal Costs – If an individual is unable, for economic reasons, to attend the Annual Meeting of Saskatchewan Conference because they cannot afford the meal fees, they may make a claim for a partial or full subsidy from the Budget of the Annual Meeting. On the same basis, the cost incurred for meals while traveling to and from the Annual Meeting will be paid or, if necessary, an advance upon such costs may be made upon request at the following maximum rates: Breakfast - \$8.00, Lunch - \$10.00, Supper - \$15.00.

To claim a subsidy or an advance a request should be made to the Conference Program Staff person or the Convenor of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee who will make the decision on these requests jointly. It is understood that confidentiality on these matters shall always be adhered to.

It is also intended that where possible individual attendance and participation in all parts of the life of Saskatchewan Conference be encouraged and enabled, and as such the parts of this policy which provide for Dependent Care, Travel, Salary Replacement, and Meal Costs also apply as appropriate to the attendance and participation of people as part of the work of the Conference Executive and the Committees, Networks, and Tasks/Task Groups of Saskatchewan Conference. The requested costs shall be paid from the Budget for the meeting or gathering in question.

All rates referred to in this document will be reviewed periodically.

This policy should be evaluated at the completion of two annual meetings to assess, among other things, whether the appropriate balance between inclusiveness and the financial limitations of Saskatchewan Conference, has been achieved.

Approved by the Saskatchewan Conference Executive as a policy of Saskatchewan Conference on February 13th, 2015