|  |
| --- |
| **NJC Church Plant Guidelines**  **New Jersey Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc.**  **Introduction:** The New Jersey Conference of Seventh-day Adventists recognizes that one of its major responsibilities is to plant churches. The Savior’s commission to carry the gospel to all the world (Mathew 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15) means not only preaching the message but ensuring the welfare of those who accept that message. This involves shepherding as well as securing a place of worship for the church plant. Such a situation calls for organization.  The focus of the Church Planting Strategy will be on new churches whose primary goal is growth through accessions from the communities in which they are planted. To obey Christ’s command to take the gospel to the world, the New Jersey Conference needs more workers.  Jesus’ words are still true today that “the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few” (Luke 10: 2 NIV). To fulfill the mission of Christ and reach new communities for God, the New Jersey Conference needs volunteer leaders who can lead current Church Plant groups, companies, and churches. Training lay pastors, elders, and other leaders is the best solution.  The New Jersey Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has established Policies for Church Plant groups to facilitate church growth and planting. These Church Plant groups will be led by a volunteer lay leader or volunteer lay pastor under the supervision of the district pastor and Mother church board, and it must be approved by the NJC Conference Administration.  It is with this responsibility in mind that the following guidelines are put in place for Church Plant group.  The purpose is to open churches and new work in cities and towns throughout New Jersey where there is currently not an Adventist Church.  The group of Adventist believers that express interest in planting a congregation in a community, need to follow the following steps:   1. Church board approval (mother church) and recommend budget for the CP 2. Business Meeting approval 3. Send a copy of the minutes from the church board and business meeting with the doc. Application for Church Plant Organization, to the Secretariat office of the NJC. ([www.njcsda.org/forms](http://www.njcsda.org/forms)) 4. The Administration will submit a request to the Columbia Union and NAD for financial subsidy. (CU and NAD policy only provide funds for 4 church plants groups per year for each conference.)   Funding the Church Plant Group:  As Conference, Union and NAD funds are available, they will be ***used for evangelistic outreach*** and to ***assist*** with ***rental of facilities for up to one year***. After the year of financial assistance by the Conference and the local church or churches, the Church Plant group will be expected to operate fully from their local funds generated from the members of the group.  Attendance/Membership Requirements: Church Plant groups will begin with an initial core of up to 12 members from the “Mother Church” (sponsoring church or churches). When the Church Plant group reaches a total of approximately 20 individuals attending the meetings, then they will become eligible for assistance from the Conference for rental of a facility. The 20 individuals will be comprised of the 12 core leaders plus 8-10 new converts or potential converts who are attending on a regular basis.  Rental Assistance: Rental assistance for Church Plant groups will be provided for the first year, with 50% paid by the local sponsoring church or churches and 50% paid from the Conference evangelistic budget. Rental assistance must be coordinated with the sponsoring church (es) and the Conference.  Secretary/Treasurer for Church Plant Groups: Tithes and offerings will be processed by the Church Plant group/Company upon the appointment of a Volunteer Lay Pastor. In collaboration with the district pastor, the church plant group is to select an acting treasurer and acting secretary.  Planning: Every congregation needs to have a yearly plan for church growth (see Conference Administration for sample document) to ensure an ongoing, balanced program of outreach, soul-winning, and nurture. The process by which these plans are developed is as important as the actual plan. If the church leaders and members do not participate in planning, they may not support the plans. This happens when the church board or church ministries council or leadership team has a planning council each year, and then presents the plan to a general church business meeting or a leadership team along with the church budget or with the budget for the Church Plant group or Company. It will be the Volunteer Lay Pastor’s responsibility to act as facilitator for this process.  General issues to consider prior to consideration of a new Church Plant group: The sole purpose of the Church Plant is for evangelism. Church Plant group is for Kingdom growth not to transfer members from one church to another. Outreach is encouraged, however counsel and approval from the Conference administration is required before laying plans or starting a new group so that it can be coordinated with the conference strategic plan for growth in the conference.  1. Geographic location in relation to other churches: Church Plant groups should not be located in close proximity to an existing Church (no presence of same language group), which could negatively impact the operations of existing Church.  2. A sponsoring Church or churches willing to guide the new Church Plant group. On occasion, the conference itself may be the sponsoring organization.  3. An appropriate number of baptized adult members who have been established in the Church for a reasonable period of time.  4. Evangelistic growth potential in the community in which the congregation will be located.  5. Adequate lay leadership.  6. Adherence to the teachings, standards, and policies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the New Jersey Conference.  7. Ability to assume appropriate financial responsibility such as school subsidies, etc.  8. Reason for wanting to start a new congregation (new Church Plant groups should not be formed because of internal Church disputes).  9. Direct supervision by a district pastor will begin at the formation of the Church Plant group and beyond (company and church status). The district church pastor will begin working with the Volunteer Lay Pastor during those formative times. The Volunteer Lay Pastor will serve in a pastoral role working under the direction of the district pastor.  Voted by ADCOM - April 19, 2016  Revised and voted by ADCOM - Feb , 2020 - Action # |