

Introduction

Waterford Mennonite Church recognizes that one of the needs of the congregation is to provide adequate opportunity for the spiritual life of attenders, both in preparation for a vocation and for fullest participation in the life of the church. We want to make it possible for students to enter educational programs that can prepare them for a vocation and for the fullest expression of their gifts in the life and mission of the church.

Basic Philosophy

The congregational Mennonite Education Fund Aid Plan has the following purposes:

1. To affirm our belief in the distinct values of Christian education in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.
2. To reduce the financial burden created by attending a private Mennonite college/seminary.
3. To promote a spirit of sharing and servanthood in our congregation.
4. To give students further opportunity to learn about and appreciate Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, biblical interpretation, and lifestyle applications in today's society.

Operating Principles

The operating principle of this plan is to make up part of the difference that now exists between the cost of education at a private Mennonite school and the cost of a tax-supported, state-operated institution. It is meant to reduce the financial factor in a family's decision-making. Aid will be given in the form of grants and are not loans to the family or individual.

Waterford Mennonite Church has maintained a Mennonite education aid plan since the early 1980s. The congregation continues to support each student who attends a Mennonite educational institution by providing financial assistance. The plan is administered by the Mennonite Education Fund committee, which is comprised of the Business Manager (as needed) and three members of the congregation approved by the Ministry Leadership Council.

The following guidelines were established to help administer this plan. All applications and/or exceptions must be reviewed by the Mennonite Education Fund committee, as assigned by the Ministry Leadership Council of the congregation.

General Operating Procedures

1. Aid funding is available in the form of a grant on behalf of the student to the Mennonite educational institution for students and parents (for Bethany Christian School applicants) who are members or have been actively attending Waterford Mennonite Church for Twelve (12) Months prior to the beginning of the school year for which assistance is being received (this is typically around September 1). In order to be eligible, each student must submit an application by the deadline on the application form.
2. Waterford Mennonite Church expects both the student and parents (for Bethany applicants) to attend Sunday services and actively participate in church activities, including the student's Sunday School Class or small group, regular MYF, Junior MYF, or Venture Club. After graduation, the congregation encourages students to continue attending and supporting Waterford Mennonite Church or another Mennonite congregation.
3. The Facilities and Finance Ministry Team will develop an annual spending plan as part of normal budgeting procedures. If an adjustment to planned aid is appropriate, changes will be communicated as soon as possible.
4. Students/families are encouraged to apply for additional assistance through the Mennonite educational institution, including eligible federal, state and institutional aid, as needed. If students/families are unable to meet the financial obligation that remains, requests for additional assistance can be brought to the Mennonite Education Fund committee for review.

5. Applications should be submitted annually. Requests for mid-year transfers to Mennonite educational institutions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Mennonite Education Fund Committee.

Bethany Aid Operating Procedures

- Waterford Mennonite Church may provide up to 65 percent of the cost of tuition for students at Bethany Christian School depending on available funding. Families of students will be responsible to pay the remainder of tuition directly to Bethany Christian. The amount of the financial obligation designated by these percentages will be calculated after all eligible discounts have been applied (e.g. Family discount, and Employee discount), according to Bethany's standard discount plan.

College/University Operating Procedures

- Waterford Mennonite Church may provide up to 20 percent of the cost of tuition for undergraduate Mennonite college or university for each student enrolled in at least half-time depending on available funding.
- Aid is available for tuition at Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada colleges and universities, including:
 - Goshen College (IN)
 - Eastern Mennonite University (VA)
 - Hesston College (KS)
 - Bluffton University (OH)
 - Bethel College (KS)
 - Conrad Grebel University College (Ontario, CA)
 - Canadian Mennonite University (Manitoba, CA)
- A student will qualify for a maximum of eight semesters of undergraduate Mennonite college aid.
- Any student who participates in a year of Christian service post high school will be eligible for an additional \$500 per semester for up to eight semesters of undergraduate studies at a Mennonite college.

Seminary Operating Procedures

- Waterford Mennonite Church may provide up to 30 percent of the cost of tuition for a Mennonite seminary depending on available funding.
- Aid is available for graduate tuition at Mennonite seminaries, including:
 - Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (IN)
 - Eastern Mennonite Seminary (VA)
- A student will qualify for a maximum of 90 credit hours of seminary aid.

Exceptions / Notations

- *If a student becomes a new Christian, is from a non-Christian home, is not attending another church and plans to make Waterford Mennonite Church his/her church home, this student may request special consideration from the Mennonite Education Fund Committee in consultation with the pastoral team.*
- *If the congregation wishes to sponsor a student from another setting (such as a mission project), this student may be added to the Mennonite Education Fund plan in consultation with the Mennonite Education Fund Committee*