



**ELCIC**

*In Mission  
for Others*

# Continuing Education Plan:

Renewing Professional Leaders in the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

## Purpose & Guidelines

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) encourages high standards for its professional leaders. A fundamental requirement is a thorough grounding in the Christian faith and Holy Scriptures coupled with an understanding of the world and society in which ministry must take place. In addition, servant leaders need to grow continually in understanding and competence in order to be faithful in discipleship.

The Continuing Education Plan (CEP) of the ELCIC, under the direction of the Program Committee for Leadership for Ministry (PCLM), offers the means by which pastors, diaconal ministers and lay professional leaders, and other church lay workers may:

- develop present knowledge and skills;
- acquire new knowledge and skills; and
- experience growth for more effective ministry.

Continuing education can be done through credit courses, non-credit courses, workshops, church-wide events, self-study, retreats or guided groups.

Continuing education should be planned to further the individual's goals for ministry and to serve the employer/congregation's goals for mission. Continuing education in the ELCIC, therefore, is seen as a joint effort between the employee and the employer/congregation. Although membership in the CEP is on a voluntary basis the PCLM recommends that all ELCIC employees become a CEP member as a way of encouraging life-long learning.

## Member Account

A separate account is maintained for each member, where the member contributions, employer/congregation contributions and education disbursements are recorded. Financial administration is provided nationally by ELCIC Group Services Inc. and therefore the account continues if the member transfers to another ELCIC employer/congregation.

Interest, net of administrative costs, on accumulated funds is designated to the long-term fund, i.e. no interest is added to the member account.

## Contributions

The recommended minimum annual contribution of the member is \$150 and the employer/congregation is \$300. A larger amount may be contributed on the basis of 1/3 being paid by the member and 2/3 being paid by the employer/congregation. Alternatively, a member may make contributions without the employer/congregation portion or in addition to the recommended ratio.

Employers/congregations may also choose to pay the entire CEP contribution on behalf of an employee.

Employer/congregation contributions are not vested and will be transferred to the long term fund when a member closes their account.

## **Study Leave Time**

The employer/congregation is encouraged to grant the member a minimum of two weeks study leave per annum, in addition to vacation time, accumulated over a period of three years to a maximum of six weeks. The member's employer/congregation and the Synod Bishop must approve any use of study leave time in advance.

All study leaves must be related to the member's job responsibilities or to a recognized degree program.

## **Retirement**

CEP members on the ELCIC roster with a retired status may continue to maintain their CEP account and continue to request funds for education purposes.

## **Education Disbursements: Short Term (1 day to 6 weeks)**

A member may request funds by completing the CEP short term study payment authorization form. This form must be completed in full and signed by the member, the employer/congregation and the Synodical Bishop. If a member is on leave from call or retired only the member and the Synod Bishop need to sign the form.

Travel costs incurred in order to participate in an approved individual study program with travel or sponsored study/travel tour programs are an allowable expense.

CEP funds are intended only for continuing education purposes. Funds may not be used to purchase or lease computers or other equipment.

## **Termination / Account Closure**

When a member terminates service in the ELCIC, the member portion in the account will be paid out to the member and the employer/congregation portion will be transferred to the long-term fund.

Members in the process of terminating service in the ELCIC may use their full account balance for the purposes of retraining. Whenever possible, members are advised to consider the use of CEP funds as part of their transition strategy before service is complete. Arrangements to use funds for re-training require the endorsement of the Synodical Bishop, and must be applied for within two months of terminating service. If the member elects not to apply for the funds for retraining, the member portion will be paid out to the member and the employer/congregation's portion will be transferred to the long-term fund.

If a member transfers to another roster (e.g. the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), the member account will be treated in the same manner as a termination; the member portion in the account will be paid out to the member and the employer/congregation portion will be transferred to the long-term fund.

In the event of a member's death, the member portion in the account will be paid out to the designated beneficiary. The employer/congregation's portion will be transferred to the long-term fund.

### **Education Disbursements: Long Term (3 to 12 months)**

*Eligibility* - Long term grants are intended to support members in developing knowledge and skills and in experiencing growth for more effective ministry. A member must have been an active contributor to CEP for at least one full year and have been in an ELCIC-approved ministry for at least five years.

*Application Approval* – The member must first have permission for an extended leave of absence (3 months or more) from their employer/congregation and their Synodical Bishop. Then the grant application form must be completed and submitted to the Program Committee for Leadership for Ministry (via National Office). Applications for long-term funds will be considered annually by the Program Committee for Leadership for Ministry and therefore applications must be received by January 15 each year for the upcoming academic year for which funds are required.

*Awards* – The maximum grant awarded per member for any one year will be \$5,000. The size of grants awarded in a given year will depend on availability of funds and number of applicants. Consideration will be given to need. The total amount awarded per member in any 10-year period shall not exceed \$25,000.

*Salary During Study Leave* - The employer/congregation will be encouraged to contribute a portion of the member's salary during this leave (e.g. employed 3 years–20%; 4 years–30%; 5 years–40%; 6 years–50%, etc.). This would include the understanding that the member returns to the employer/congregation for at least one year following the study leave if the employer/congregation desires that the member return.

*Additional Requirements for long term study* -

All study leaves must be related to the member's job responsibilities or to a recognized degree program (academic or clinical) requiring full-time residency.

A member who is applying for long-term funds is expected to use funds from his or her CEP member account in support of his or her long term study goals.

Members who are awarded a long-term grant will be asked to submit a report to the Program Committee for Leadership for Ministry that briefly describes the activities, insights and benefits of their studies.

All extended study leave for pastors are to be planned with the Synodical Bishop for purposes of career counselling and so that adequate arrangements can be made for pastoral services during the absence.

## Administration

Forms – All forms for:

- enrolment
- contribution remittance
- approval for short term study payment authorization
- application for long term study grants

are available at:

- **ELCIC Group Services Inc. website:** [www.elcicgsi.ca](http://www.elcicgsi.ca) (under forms)
- **ELCIC website:** [www.elcic.ca](http://www.elcic.ca) (under Leadership and Continuing Education Plan)