



LARGE GROUP NETWORK

**HANDBOOK,
PLANNING GUIDE, &
PROCESSES**




2025

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INTRODUCTION

Large Group Networks (LGNs) within the Western District (WD) are role/affinity-based groups that span across our whole District (Alberta & NWT). You'll find more information as you read through this Handbook, but the heart of why we have LGNs is to cultivate the health and effectiveness of Licensed Workers (LW) in the Western District.

Large Group Networks are always at varying stages of development and reflect different network-specific dynamics and priorities. No two LGNs look the same, and Network leaders continue to adapt to changing realities. However, what is represented here reflects a co-created path (involving LGN leaders) to provide a framework for LGNs moving forward.

HANDBOOK OVERVIEW

[Click HERE
to print this
one page
overview!](#)

WHY DO WE EXIST?

To cultivate the health and effectiveness of our Licensed Workers through peer relationships.

HOW DO WE BEHAVE?

- **ENCOURAGE:** We listen to one another and the Holy Spirit, pray for and with one another and cheer one another on in work and life.
- **INCLUDE:** We include others by being intentionally invitational & hospitable.
- **RESOURCE:** We share generously all God has given us.
- **COLLABORATE:** We affirm that everyone has something to contribute, as we ask the question, "What could we do together, that we could never do alone?"

WHAT DO WE DO?

As a relationship-based network, we cultivate supportive, flourishing relationships and facilitate resource collaboration and innovation.

HOW WILL WE SUCCEED?

- **CLEAR COMMUNICATION:** Ensure people know what they need to know.
- **OBVIOUS ONRAMPS:** Ensure clarity around how to connect to the LGN.
- **SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES:** Ensure the right supports are accessible.

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW?

Establish consistent, equitable, scalable structures and supports (clear framework, database, and processes)

Raise value, awareness, and accessibility of LGNs for all Licensed Workers (and as appropriate, to non-licensed workers and lay volunteers)

WHO DOES WHAT?

DISTRICT STAFF

A) Peer-to-peer Mobilizer

- Oversees LGN Culture and Systems/Processes
- Vision Casts Culture
- Coaches District Contacts
- Manages the entire Large Group Network Budget process for the WD Office

B) District Contact

- Serves as the primary contact for the LGN Lead Team
- Provides appropriate levels of leadership to the LGN Lead Team in accordance with the life cycle of the Lead Team
- Assists in recruiting and approves Lead Team members

C) Administrator

- Updates documentation and website
- Coordinates with the LGN Lead Teams to execute events and gatherings

NETWORK LEAD TEAM

- Ministry Plan development and execution
- Including budget proposal and management
- In-Network Communication
- Liaison with District Contact
- Leadership Recruitment

PROCESS CLARITY

DISTRICT FIELD STAFF INVOLVEMENT:

Overall LGN Lead: Peer to Peer Mobilizer - Sarah Hunter (shunter@thewcd.ca)

Event & Process Support: Leader Development Team Administrator - Nathalia Xavier (nmxavier@thewcd.ca)

Database Support: Wendy Ng (wng@thewcd.ca)

INDIVIDUAL NETWORK DISTRICT CONTACTS:

- **Chaplains:** Scott Dixon
- **Children's Pastors:** Sarah Hunter
- **Local Mission:** Sarah Hunter
- **Executive Pastors & Directors of Operations:** Les Bon-Bernard
- **Large Church Pastors:** Matt Boda
- **Global Mission:** Jerin Thomas
- **New Venture Leaders:** Clint Mix & Jerin Thomas
- **Small, Solo & Rural Church Pastors:** John Brown & Graham English
- **Transition Pastors:** Scott Dixon & Clint Mix
- **Worship Pastors:** Jeremy Peters & Sarah Hunter
- **Youth Pastors:** Jeremy Peters

Each District Contact:

- Serves as the primary district contact for the LGN Lead Team
- Approves the addition of New Lead Team Members

Each District Contact dialogues with their respective Network Leads to determine the scope of their involvement. This could include:

- Leadership/ Recruitment/Onboarding
- Coaching/Equipping
- Facilitation of strategic dialogue, training, etc.
- Resourcing & Connections
- Attendance/Participation at LGN gatherings

PROCESS CLARITY

NETWORK LEADS

Goal

Each LGN will have a clearly identified Network Lead Team who will work together to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Strategic planning for each ministry year, including budget proposal
- Planning and facilitation of LGN gatherings/events
- Reviewing and curating resources
- Communication with LGN
- Onboarding new LGN members
- Regularly attending the LGN lead team meetings
- Coordinating with District Contact and Administrative Assistant.

Network Lead Teams are currently at every stage of development – some don't have any non-District staff identified, and some have teams as large as eight people. The goal is that all LGNs would have a clearly identified team of people with a co-created strategic plan for each ministry year.

Expectations

Members of the LGN Lead Team must:

- Agree with the Large Group Network values of Including, Encouraging, Resourcing and Collaboration.
- Honour their work commitments at their church of employment while making space to connect with the Lead Team on a regular basis (frequency set by Lead Team) to deliver on the plans for the year.
- Take appropriate responsibility for a portion of the Lead Team's role, within reason as a volunteer leader in the ministry.

Approval: All Network Leads will require approval by the District Contact for the network as well as the approval of their church supervisor.



LGN PROCESSES

ROCK RMS

This is the church management system (database and website), where we manage our LGNs. **All members of an LGN (with contact info) can be found in Rock.** We ask Network Lead Team members to familiarize themselves with Rock as a tool for communication, tracking, reporting and event management. A tutorial to learn how to manage your group and its members can be found [**HERE**](#)

EVENT REGISTRATION PROCESS

The WD Office will provide registration, communication and finance management for all events requiring RSVP and registration fees. The Event Registration Process can be found in [**Appendix A**](#) of this document.

FINANCIAL PROCESS

Budget Guidelines

Each LGN has a yearly approved budget amount. This is determined through a proposed budget request, submitted by the Network LT to the Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer by March 15th each year, for the following ministry year (July 1-June 30).

The full Financial Process can be found in [**Appendix B**](#) of this document.

The Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer and the WD Finance Committee will approve budget requests based on several factors included, but not limited to:

- Number of workers included
- Overall cost of the event
- Effectiveness in including/onboarding workers from across the district
- Effectiveness in resourcing/equipping workers
- Effectiveness in encouraging collaboration across the district
- Effectiveness in cultivating worker health and effectiveness

LGN PROCESSES

Budget Template

The WD Office provides an LGN Budget Template to enable Network Leads to plan their ministry year and track expenses throughout the year. The Budget Template can be downloaded [HERE](#)

COMMUNICATION PROCESS AND GUIDELINES

- Each LGN Lead Team is responsible for communications within the LGN for ongoing care, and inclusion in events, gatherings, training opportunities and group chats.
- The WD Office will provide communication for events, gatherings and training opportunities to the larger constituency.

The Communication Process can be found in [Appendix C](#) of this document

RESOURCE CURATION PROCESS

Resourcing one another is a high value in our LGNs. The LGN Lead Team is asked to review and curate resources that are helpful to leaders in their role, so that the WD Office can ensure quality resources are hosted on the WD website for others in the district to access. The full resource curation process can be found in [Appendix D](#) of this document.

NEW MEMBER ONBOARDING PROCESS

Inclusion and encouragement are highly valued in our LGNs. One of the most significant first steps to inclusion is to welcome and onboard new LGN members. The complete New Member Onboarding Process can be found in [Appendix E](#) of this document.



LGN OPTIONS

The following reflects the range of possible forms of engagement that each LGN can explore (though not limited to these)*:

In-Person

- Overnight Retreats
- Regional Hub gatherings (geographical enabling day retreats)
- District Event add-ons (ex. meal at Prayer Retreat or District Conference, etc.)

Digital

- Relational connect/resource sharing
- LGN specific workshops/toolbox for equipping
- Learning Circles (ex. time bound, 3-6 month focus; possible outside speaker/trainer/equipper)

** See also supporting document "Developing and Cultivating a Network" on page 22-24*



INTERSECTION WITH PEER-TO-PEER COACHING CIRCLES



Overall Coaching Circles

Lead: Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer, Sarah Hunter

A WD Leader Development team priority that has overlap with LGNs is the development of Peer Coaching Circles. You can find more information about these circles [HERE](#), but primary scope involves the following:

- 4-6 people
- Trained/equipped facilitator
- Peer coaching focus (with meeting framework/tools)
- Not defined around role/affinity
 - Peer Coaching Circles might have pastors/leaders who share a similar role (ie. all youth pastors), but they carry the possibility and intention to broaden relational integration (ie. a combination of a lead pastor, chaplain and community engagement leader, etc.)

- Regional focus (whenever possible); want to enable regular in-person connects

A LGN Lead Team may choose to utilize the Peer Coaching Circle model within their overall LGN strategy (i.e. Facilitate role/affinity-based Circles), but this is at the prerogative of Network members.

For more information on Peer Coaching Circles, Click [**HERE**](#)



NEXT STEPS

To get connected to your Large Group Network, go to <https://thewcd.ca/large-group-networks> to fill out the contact form and someone will be in touch about next steps.



*Click [HERE](#) to
print a fillable
version of the
Ministry
Planning
Guide*

MINISTRY PLANNING GUIDE

THE FOLLOWING PLANNING GUIDE IS INTENDED TO HELP LGN LEAD TEAMS THINK, PRAY AND LISTEN TO JESUS ABOUT HIS DIRECTION FOR THE UPCOMING MINISTRY YEAR. THIS CAN BE DONE TOGETHER AS A GROUP OR DONE INDIVIDUALLY BEFORE DEBRIEFING TOGETHER AS A LEAD TEAM.



1. Current Reality

a) We exist to maximize relationships as we work toward cultivating the health and effectiveness of workers.

- On a Scale of 1 to 10, how are we doing towards this end? Why did you choose the number you did?

b) How do we behave?

i) Release blessing – we prioritize cheering one another on (Encouragement)

- What do you love about how we currently do this?
- What do you long for more of?

ii) No One Left Behind – we are intentionally invitational and hospitable (Inclusive)

- Love?
- Long for more of?

iii) Open-handed – we share generously all God has given us (Resource)

- Love?
- Long for more of?

iv) Shared learning - we affirm that everyone has something to contribute (Collaboration)

- Love?
- Long for more of?

2. Ministry Planning.

a) Review the support documents “Developing and Cultivating a Network.” (page 22-24)

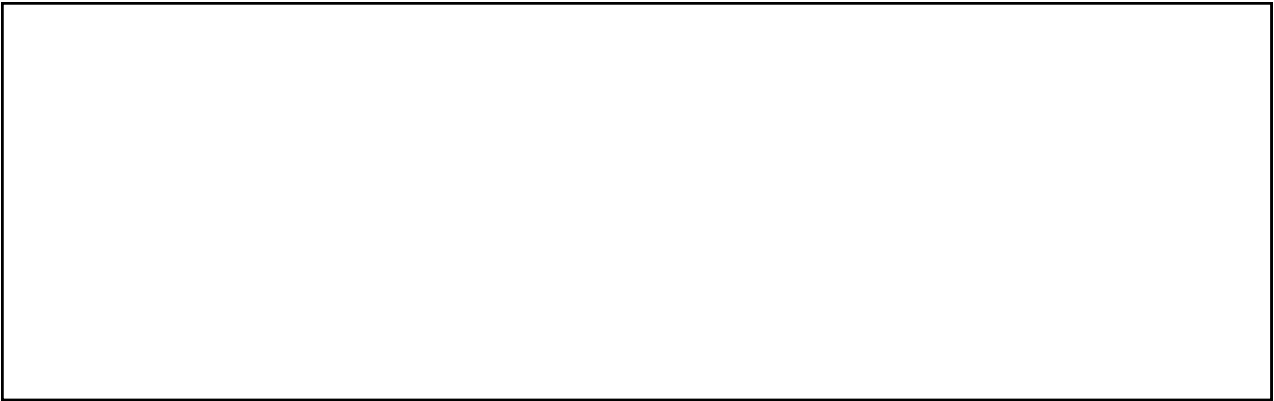
b) Discern together with Jesus the passions, desires, opportunities, and needs within the LGN.

Pause and give Jesus the floor.

Begin with some space to be quiet and listen to Jesus and anything that lingers in your mind as you think about the upcoming year. As you do so, consider the following: Ask Jesus...

- What has worked well that we could keep doing?
- What opportunities could we explore to strengthen the Network?
- How might we best ensure all of our behavioural values are further developed?
- What small thing would make the biggest difference?
- What is the biggest challenge to address or problem to solve?
- If we could only prioritize one initiative, what would it be and why?

c) Share ideas as a group (Possibly pause and give Jesus the floor again!)



d) Review role of Lead Team members

Depending on the make up of your Lead Team, you may want to assign/delegate tasks to various members. At a minimum, ensure that everyone knows how they contribute to the team.

i) Care & Connection within Network

- Consider assigning churches and/or ministry leaders to Lead Team (LT) members to increase relational support and follow-up
- The LT member could then take ownership to check-in with those in their circle periodically. This would also further ensure that LT members are aware of what's happening throughout the District (including pastoral transitions, etc.).



ii. Planning

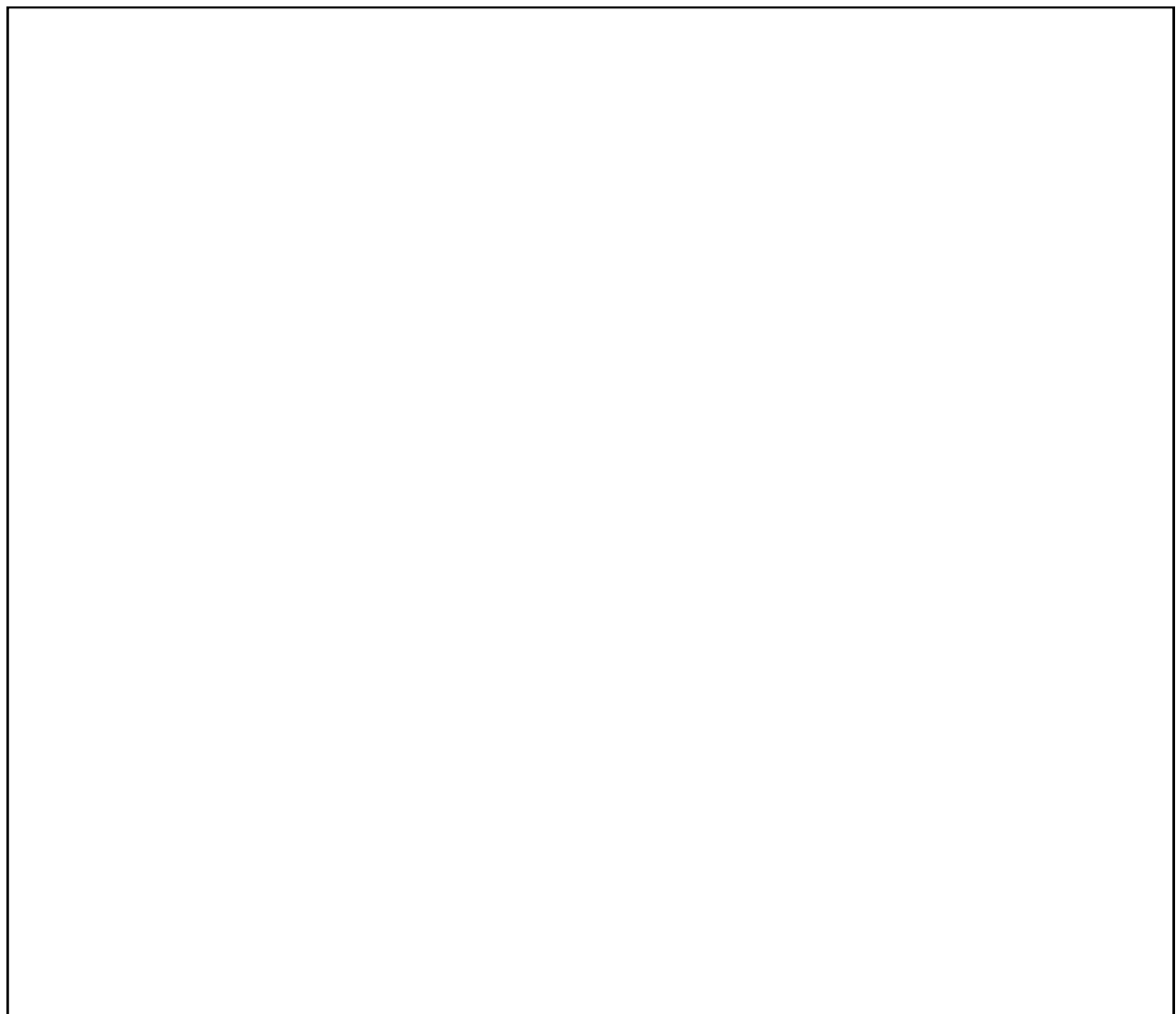
- Overall Ministry Trajectory
- Entire LGN gatherings (digital or in-person)
 1. Retreats
 2. Collaboration/Equipping events
- Peer Circle strategy and execution

iii. Communication

- Ensuring communication responsibilities are understood and actioned
 1. Within LGN
 2. With District Staff

iv. Recruiting/developing future Lead Team members

- In consultation with District Contact



1 If a Peer Coaching Circle approach is agreed upon, be sure to utilize the 'Peer Coaching Circle Handbook' (available [here](#)).

3. Review Strategic Anchors

In light of your ministry planning, consider the following:

a) Clear Communication – ensure people know what they need to know

- Who needs to know what?
- What is required to ensure clear communication?
- Who is responsible?
- Timeline?

b) Obvious Onramps – ensure clarity around how to connect to LGN

- Are there any further steps we can take to ensure further clarity about how to connect to the Network?
- Who is responsible?
- Timeline?

c) Supportive Structures - ensure the right supports are accessible

- Are there any further supportive structures that need to be developed and/or strengthened?
- Who is responsible?
- Timeline?

4. What's most important right now?

a) Pause and give Jesus the floor

- Ask: Jesus, what is particularly important to you from our planning conversation?
- What do you want to give emphasis to? Nuance? Make sure we don't miss?
- Is there anything else you want to say with respect to our conversation, plans, team, etc.?
- What simple thing could we action that will have the most impact?
- Who is best positioned to 'own' what?
- Who else do we need to involve to make this happen?

b) Summarize the most important ideas. Ensure communication with District Contact (if they're not present at your meeting).

c) Assign tasks (make sure everyone knows who is doing what by when)

d) Set date for the next meeting:

DEVELOPING & CULTIVATING A NETWORK

1. Decentralized and Organic

A Network's greatest potential flows from a simple trellis (supportive structures) that enables connections, collaborations and relationships to develop naturally (including use of social media and group messaging apps).

2. Sufficient frequency

Networks are relational, and relationships require time and attention, and as such, there must be sufficient frequency of interaction to foster relationships. While an LGN won't connect every week, once a year is not adequate either

3. Shared Expectations

The potential for a great LGN experience will be shaped by helping people understand what they can expect to both contribute and receive from the Network. Clarity around the minimum participation expectations is how the Lead Team can serve the Network.



POTENTIAL MODELS

These models are not intended to be mutually exclusive and undoubtedly, there will be overlap between them. The goal and intention is not to (necessarily) choose one model over another, but rather to provide some framework ideas for how an LGN could choose to function.

Also, these models do not reflect additional ways to leverage social media (i.e. Facebook groups, etc.), or how an LGN may choose to utilize an in-person retreat to further augment connection and collaboration.

Model 1: Care & Support Focus (monthly connect, rotating focus and means)**1. Three (3) Whole Network Connects/year (Fall, Winter, Spring)**

- a. Everyone in the LGN encouraged to participate
- b. District-wide engagement
- c. Utilize to grow relational awareness (who else is in our District?); scalable equipping (everyone can learn from a presentation); communicate key ideas (everyone hears at the same time in the same way)
- d. Digital and/or In-Person (retreats, etc).

2. Three (3) Regional In-Person Connects/year (Fall, Winter, Spring)

- a. Geography-related Peer Circles (5-8 People)
- b. Point leader/ facilitator who 'owns' initiating date, location, etc.
 - i. Utilize Peer Coaching Circle resources

(HERE)

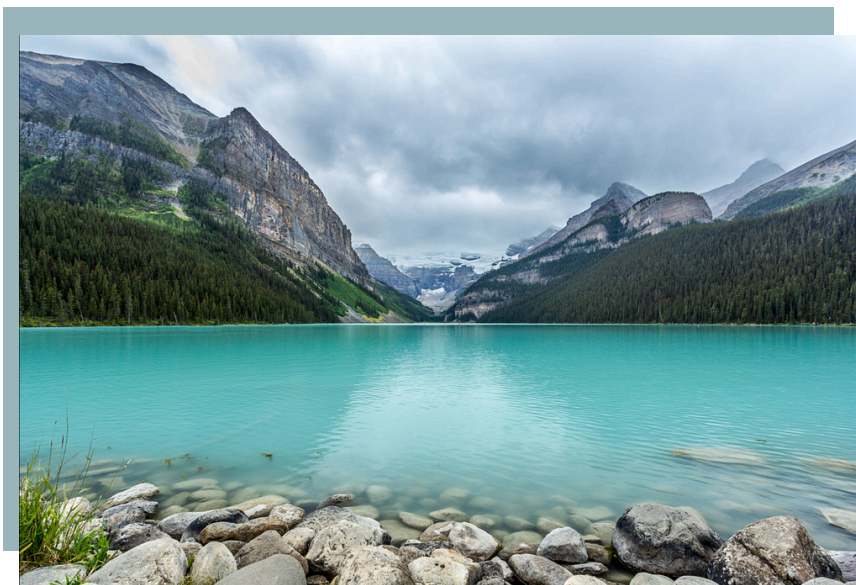
- c. Essentially a network within the network
- d. Use of messaging apps for ongoing connection

3. **Three (3) Check-Ins (text, email, phone, zoom)/year** (Fall, Winter, Spring)

- a. LT member or Peer Circle Facilitator ownership
- b. Express interest (you're not on your own), care (how are you doing), prayer (how can I pray for you), encouragement (God is with you)

Model 2: Time-Bound Equipping Focus

- 1. **Specific equipping and shared learning focus**
- 2. **Identified trainer/facilitator** (could be within the Network or external voice); could be video-based resource or live equipper.
- 3. **3-6 month commitment**
 - a. Monthly Digital connect
 - i. Pre-set dates and times
 - b. Shared expectation that participants attend every session.
- 4. **Built-in breakout peer processing time** (triads/quads)
 - a. Could also encourage triads/quads to connect once in-between sessions for further interaction (related to the topic, or focus on care and support)



APPENDIX A EVENT REGISTRATION PROCESS

ROLES

1. LGN Network Lead Team decides on details:

- a. Location
- b. Preferred date
- c. Preferred location
- d. Speaker
- e. Agenda
- f. Communicates to Network internally

2. LDT Administrator

- a. Coordinates with venue and LGN Lead Team to secure location and event needs.
- b. Arranges payment for venue
- c. Creates Event Registration, & Communication components
- d. Manages Event payments and reimbursements*
- e. Communicates to larger district through Snap Shot and Social Media

3. District Contact

- a. Approves final agreement with venue

*See Corresponding Processes in Appendix B - Financial Processes for event expenses and reimbursement.

APPENDIX B

FINANCIAL PROCESSES

YEARLY BUDGET PROCESS:

Step 1: Budget Proposal

Network Lead Teams are responsible for submitting their proposed budget for the coming ministry year (Jul 1 - Jun 30) by March 15th each year to the Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer. The completed Network Budget Template will include details for all planned expenses. Download a fillable copy of the WD Network Budget Template [**HERE**](#)

Budgets for in-person or online events should include the appropriate details from those outlined below:

- Anticipated number of participants (possible min-max range)
- Number of speaker sessions (if applicable)
- Speaker Fee
- Additional Speaker Costs (travel, meals, accommodation)
- Venue costs (including total # of days)
- Accommodation costs (including total # of overnights)
- Food costs (including total # of meals)
- Event miscellaneous costs* and rationale

Inclusion and Encouragement Initiatives related to welcoming/blessing (new) members to the LGN should include the estimated number of people welcomed/encouraged, the types of initiatives planned and an estimated amount per person.

Additional Network Initiatives requiring funding should include appropriate details and rationale

** The WD doesn't typically cover mileage. However, a LT may allocate funds to subsidize costs for participants with longer-than-normal commutes on a case-by-case basis*

Budget Considerations

To ensure a consistent, equitable and scalable framework, the annual budget allotment is designed to address the following:

- Speaker/ Trainer/ Facilitator (both in-person and digital gatherings); honorariums as per WD Finance procedures
- Venue subsidy up to a predetermined % of total cost* (i.e. group meeting space)
- Accommodation subsidy up to a predetermined % of total cost* (i.e. individual rooms for overnight)
- Food
- Resource development
- Inclusion and Encouragement Initiatives

* The predetermined % of total cost will be evaluated on a yearly basis (during the budget preparation season in March-May) and will be equitable across all LGNs.

Step 2: Budget Approval

The Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer will review individual LGN budget proposals and submit the entire LGN budget proposal to the Finance department by March 30th each year. The Finance Committee typically approves final budgets by May 30th each year. The Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer will communicate approved budget amounts to the District Contact once the Finance Committee approves. Approval of LGN budgets considers multiple factors. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Effectiveness in including, encouraging, resourcing licensed workers, and collaborating across the district.
2. The number of licensed and non-licensed workers included in the initiatives.
3. Equity between LGNs.
4. Financial situation of the WD.

Step 3: Budget Management

The LGN Lead Team and the District Contact will manage the budget to ensure it adheres to the approved budget proposal. The following activities are typically required to manage the budget.

EVENT REGISTRATION PROCESS: The Leader Development Team Administrator will provide event support for registration (including fees) through RockRMS.

INVOICE PAYMENT PROCESS: The hotel and the caterer should send invoices to the Leader Development Team Administrator, Nathalia Xavier (nmxavier@thewcd.ca) for processing and payment.

EXPENSE APPROVAL PROCESS: The District Contact is responsible to sign-off on all LGN related expenses. Lead Team members should consult the District Contact before making purchases.

REGISTRATION FEES: Any funds collected through registration fees that are not used/required before the end of the fiscal year (June 30th), return to the overall WD LGN budget and do not carry over year-to-year unless prior written consent (with rationale) from WD Staff.

RECEIPTS: Request a reimbursement form from the Leader Development Team Administrator. Fill out applicable areas and return them with your receipts. If an EFT Form has not been completed in the past, Finance will contact you after the reimbursement form has been approved.

APPENDIX C RESOURCE CURATION PROCESS

RESOURCE CURATION PROCESS

The LGN Lead Team will curate, vet and approve strong resources for their network. The following outlines how resources will be researched, received, vetted, approved and displayed for our district.

1. The LGN Lead Team collects potential resources specific to their Network by actively pursuing them and receiving recommendations from District workers
2. The LGN Lead Team or a designated sub-team vets and approves the strongest resources for the unique needs of workers in their network.
3. The LGN Lead Team sends the approved resources to the LDT Admin and Peer- to-Peer Mobilizer
4. The Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer familiarizes themselves with the approved resources.
5. The LDT Admin ensures documents are stored in WD file storage and uploads them to the appropriate resource bank on the website.
6. The LDT Admin includes a digital link to the website resource bank on the LGN Rock Group page.
7. The LDT Admin sends an email with a link to the Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer and the LGN Lead Team and communicates the resources to WD workers via snapshot.
8. The LGN Lead Team informs the LGN.

APPENDIX D

COMMUNICATION PROCESS

COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication of Events

- LDT Admin works with the LGN Lead Team to communicate “Save the Date” and Finalized event details and registration to the broader district family through the WD website and snapshot.
- LGN Lead Team uses Rock, social media and other Group Chats (such as WhatsApp) to communicate to LGN members.

Other Communications

- The LGN Lead Team fosters communication within the LGN and is encouraged to utilize Rock, social media, and Group Chats.
- The Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer works with LGN District Contacts and LDT Admin to ensure LGN Prayer Retreat gatherings are communicated strategically and cohesively.
- The Peer-to-Peer Mobilizer communicates the LGN vision and values to the WD.

APPENDIX E NEW MEMBER ONBOARDING PROCESS

ONBOARDING PROCESS

Coordination and collaboration between the Western District Office and the LGN Lead team is required to ensure new LGN members are consistently identified, added and onboarded.

The following outlines the onboarding process for new LGN members.

1. New LGN members are added to the Rock LGN group when:
 - a. A worker is employed, licensed or ordained, or
 - b. The worker or volunteer applies to join the group via the LGN Contact Form at <https://thewcd.ca/large-group-networks>
 - c. When LGN members, Lead Team members, or district staff invite people to join the group, they should forward the LGN Contact form link <https://thewcd.ca/large-group-networks> to the potential new member. This ensures that we have the proper permission to communicate with individuals.
2. Upon completion of the contact form, the LDT Admin confirms that the individual can be added to the LGN, adds their information to the Rock LGN, and sends the name to the designated LGN Lead Team member.
3. The LGN Lead Team member tables the new members at the next LGN lead team meeting to ensure someone champions onboarding each new member to the network.

4. Any LGN Lead Team members involved in onboarding new members can reference the LGN Onboarding Primer **HERE** to better understand the District's values and vision for LGNs.

5. The designated LGN Lead Team member reaches out for a phone call or in-person conversation, welcoming the new member within a pre-determined time set by the Lead Team.

When LGN members, Lead Team members, or district staff invite people to join the group, they should forward the LGN Contact form link <https://thewcd.ca/large-group-networks> to the potential new member. This ensures that we have the proper permission to communicate with individuals.





**THE WESTERN DISTRICT
OF THE ALLIANCE CANADA**