

APPLICATION PROCESS

Congregations apply on behalf of their pastors through their Conference Office.

The Conference must endorse the application. Endorsed applications are forwarded to the Congregational Vitality and Discipleship team who will make the final decision of eligibility.

Applications are accepted yearly from January through September with an annual deadline of October 1st.

For Applications, Contact:

Ms. Gloria Otis
(216) 736-3875
otisg@ucc.org

Primary Contact:

The Reverend Pésida Rivera-Méndez
(216) 736-3813
riverap@ucc.org

The Reverend David Schoen
(216) 736-3827
schoend@ucc.org

Once approved, the Pastor must be enrolled in Life Insurance and Disability Insurance (LIDI) through the Pension Boards, UCC at the expense of the congregation (1.5% of the pastor's annual salary basis) to receive the grant.

If the pastor hasn't already established a Pension Boards Benefits Account, they must do so before any benefits can be awarded.

New Church Benefit Support Program of the United Church of Christ

A
Partnership
with



&
Local Church Ministries
of the
United Church of Christ



United Church Board
of
Ministerial Assistance

SUPPORT FOR NEW CHURCH STARTS



The United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA) of the Pension Boards, UCC in

partnership with the Congregational Vitality and Discipleship Team of Local Church Ministries has committed to the support of new ministries of the United Church of Christ by creating a grant program designed to help cover the cost of benefits for pastors during the first crucial years of a new church start.

The UCBMA's mission is to support initiatives that foster spiritual and emotional maturity, physical well being, financial responsibility and effective leadership among ministers and lay employees of the UCC to ensure healthy leadership leading to healthy churches.

During its first three years, this program has made a significant difference in the lives of New Church planters and their families. It has provided relief to young congregations with limited funds, struggling to provide fundamental benefits of health, dental and pension benefits for their pastors. It has enabled pastors to partner with their new congregation and fully focus on the hard work of establishing a new plant without the worry and distraction of inadequate benefit coverage for themselves and their families.

The Congregational Vitality and Discipleship Team of Local Church Ministries give thanks to the Pension Board for this important ministry; their commitment to new church development and to our new church planters. We look forward to our continued collaboration and partnership in this vital ministry.

ABOUT THE GRANT

In 2008, The United Church board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA) approved a grant of \$100,000 per year to be administered by the Congregational Vitality and Discipleship Team of LCM to award grants assisting new church starts with the cost of health, dental and pension benefits for their called pastors. These grants are disbursed by the Pension Boards in the form of credits directly to the benefit accounts of clergy employees of new UCC congregations. The grant program is subject to annual evaluation and renewal by the UCBMA.

The Congregational Vitality and Discipleship Team of the Local Church Ministries, a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ determines who receives the grant(s) and qualifies those who will receive the grant(s) subject to the following criteria:

1. The Minister must have Ministerial Standing in an Association or Conference of the United Church of Christ.
2. The congregation must enroll the Minister in the UCC Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan at the expense of the congregation, (1.5% of pastor's annual salary basis).
3. The Minister must qualify for enrollment in the various benefit plans subject to the normal enrollment criteria of the Pension Board-UCC.

4. The Minister has the option to choose to enroll in all the benefit plans (health, dental, and pension) or may opt to choose any combination of the benefit plans.
5. New Church Start grants last for three years. The amount of the grant awarded is at the discretion of the Congregational Vitality and Discipleship Team of LCM with a maximum of \$10,000 awarded in the first year of the grant. The amount of the grant will decrease each subsequent year of the program. A typical grant of \$8000 for the first year, will likely decrease to \$6000 in the second year and \$4,000 in the final year of the program.
6. Upon conclusion of a minister's employment, the grant will end for that pastor; however they are eligible to continue in the benefits plan at their own, or their next church's expense.
7. Congregations awarded a New Church grant for a pastor who leaves the church, can apply to continue the grant for their new pastor. Only one New Church Grant is awarded per congregation.

