



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

NATIONAL MINISTRIES  
OF THE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK  
(Common Policies)

**October 2021**

## **Purpose, Mission, Vision Statement**

### **Purpose Statement (from the Gospel of Matthew):**

*To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.*

### **Vision Statement:**

*United in Christ's love, a just world for all.*

### **Mission statement:**

*United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Employee Handbook sets forth the Common Personnel Policies and methods of work for employees of the National Ministries United Church of Christ (NMUCC)<sup>1</sup>. Please familiarize yourself with these practices as they describe what is expected of you as well as what you can expect from the NMUCC as an employer. As the handbook is intended to be used as a ready reference to the policies, updates to the handbook will be prepared and distributed whenever changes occur. In the interest of brevity, the handbook is not exhaustive. If clarification of any policy is needed, or if some concerns are not covered, contact Human Resources for clarification.

The materials contained in this handbook are presented for information purposes and can be changed at any time by the NMUCC with or without notice. These materials do not constitute an employment contract, expressed or implied. All employees of the NMUCC are employees-at-will and either the employee or the NMUCC can terminate the employment relationship at any time for any reason not prohibited by law. No representative of the NMUCC has the authority to enter into an agreement with an employee that is contrary to the foregoing. *Note: Mission personnel and 700 Prospect employees are not subject to these policies and are guided by a separate set of policies and procedures through Global Ministries and 700 Prospect Corporation accordingly.*

### **1.1. EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The NMUCC will:

- 1.1.1 Employ people in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws including equal employment opportunity; (see 2.1.1).
- 1.1.2 Provide salaries and employee benefits which are reasonable in light of the job to be performed and overall NMUCC financial conditions;
- 1.1.3 Establish reasonable hours of work;
- 1.1.4 Maintain safe and healthy working conditions;
- 1.1.5 Welcome constructive suggestions which relate to methods, procedures, working conditions, and the nature of the work performed;
- 1.1.6 Permit each employee as much discretion and responsibility as is consistent with their job assignment, and a well-coordinated and effective operation.

### **1.2. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employees will:

- 1.2.1 Give a productive day's work;
- 1.2.2 Arrive at their work area and begin work on time;
- 1.2.3 Demonstrate a considerate, friendly and constructive attitude towards fellow employees and our constituencies;
- 1.2.4 Observe management direction and comply with applicable work rules and policies;
- 1.2.5 Not disclose confidential records and information learned while working for NMUCC. The confidential information employees may come in contact with will vary depending upon the employee's position, but may include items such as financial information, computer passcodes or personal information regarding employees.

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<sup>1</sup> NMUCC includes employees of the Covenanted Ministries, United Church of Christ Board, Common Services Corporation and the Church, Building and Loan Fund.



## **2. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

## **2.1. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

The NMUCC is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer and affirms its moral and legal commitment to support and implement a program of equal employment opportunity. The NMUCC embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion and provides equal employment and advancement opportunities to all employees. Employment decisions at NMUCC are based on merit, qualifications, skills, and business needs and considerations. Discrimination in employment based on any classification protected under federal, state or local law is a violation of NMUCC's policy and is illegal. Equal employment opportunities are provided to all employees and applicants. The NMUCC does not discriminate against any employee or applicant because of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, genetic information, past, present or future service in the uniformed services, or religion, except when religion is a bona fide occupational requirement, or any other legally protected characteristic under applicable federal, state or local law.

The NMUCC expects all employees to share in its commitment to equal employment opportunity and will not tolerate any acts of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation in violation of this policy. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination. Employees can raise good faith concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Employees who believe in good faith that they have been subjected to or have witnessed discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in violation of this policy, should promptly report the conduct in accordance with the complaint procedures set forth in Section 2.2.4.

2.1.1 The NMUCC has adopted a voluntary Affirmative Action Policy which encourages a workforce that is representative of the broad spectrum of our diverse society. The NMUCC endeavors to recruit employees from backgrounds that vary by race, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, genetic information, past, present or future service in the uniformed services, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic under applicable federal, state or local law. *The NMUCC is proud to be a multicultural, multiracial, open and affirming, accessible to all, equal opportunity employer.*

2.1.2 Unlike Affirmative Action Policies for federal agencies or plans that are ordered by a court with a goal or quota system attached to correct past history of discrimination, the NMUCC's voluntary Affirmative Action Policy was established to acknowledge and celebrate diversity, in all of its forms, and to recognize the value added when there is a diverse workforce. In order to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, the NMUCC:

- ensures job openings are advertised widely and broadly to diverse audiences to provide search committees with a pool of qualified diverse candidates for consideration;
- makes hiring and administrative decisions that support equal employment opportunity;
- administers equitable policies and procedures, including those governing compensation, benefits, promotions, and professional development;

- analyzes personnel practices for bias and ensures equal employment opportunity; and maintains EEO statistics.

## **2.2. WORKPLACE HARASSMENT PREVENTION**

The NMUCC maintains a policy of ensuring that no employee or applicant will be subjected to workplace harassment. Workplace harassment may take the form of sexual or nonsexual harassment. To ensure that all employees are aware of the types of acts covered by this policy, each type of harassment is described below.

### **2.2.1 Sexual Harassment**

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- submission to sexual conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of an individual's employment;
- the submission to, or rejection of, sexual conduct by an individual is the basis for any employment decision affecting that individual; or
- sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or that create an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, text messages, instant messaging, emails or invitations;
- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, innuendo, jokes about gender specific traits, sexual propositions;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters or magazines or websites.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, leadership opportunities, or comfortable participation in the life of the NMUCC. It is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, or to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal

proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee.
- The victim does not have to be the recipient of the inappropriate conduct. It can be anyone who hears or sees or is otherwise affected by offensive conduct.
- Prohibited sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to or discharge of the victim.

### **2.2.2. Nonsexual Harassment**

Harassment on "nonsexual" grounds is also unlawful. Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity and expression, national origin, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, and/or genetic information constitutes discrimination in the terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

Such harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of their race, color, religion, gender, gender identity and expression, national origin, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information or that of relatives, friends or employees, and that:

- has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment;
- has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

- epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, and/or genetic information; and
- written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability and that is placed in emails, text messages or other electronic communications, on walls, bulletin boards or elsewhere on the employer's premises, or circulated in the workplace.

### **2.2.3. Bullying**

The NMUCC values the well-being of its employees and recognizes that bullying in the workplace can significantly impact an employee's physical and mental

health, as well as their overall work experience. Bystanders who feel threatened or humiliated as a result of witnessing bullying are also covered by this policy. Bullying can take a variety of forms and may include behaviors that are physical, verbal, nonverbal, direct or indirect, and may take place in-person, virtually, or by electronic means. Some examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Persistently interrupting a person or otherwise preventing a person's legitimate attempts to speak;
- Shouting or yelling at, berating, ridiculing, or demeaning others;
- Name-calling and attacks on one's character, using a person as an object of ridicule, using nicknames after being warned that the nickname is considered to be offensive, or spreading gossip and rumors about the person to others;
- Mocking, ridiculing, or putting someone down in front of others, constant unwarranted criticism, or making offensive remarks regarding a person's known intellectual or physical attributes;
- Spreading false or sensitive information about another employee;
- Deliberately excluding, isolating or marginalizing someone from normal workplace activities;
- Invading personal space after being asked by the employee to move or step away;
- Threats, either explicit or implicit, to the security of a person's position when not part of the legitimate process by the supervisor to set expectations or engage in the corrective action process.

Bullying can occur in a variety of circumstances as follows: The bully can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee.

If an employee feels that they are being subjected to any form of harassment or bullying they should immediately state that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop. If the inappropriate conduct does not cease, or if the employee is unable to or is uncomfortable with addressing the alleged harasser directly, they should report the incident to their supervisor or to the Director of Human Resources. It is helpful, but not required, to provide a written record of the date, time and nature of the incident(s) and the names of any witnesses.

Supervisors must deal expeditiously and fairly when they have any knowledge of sexual harassment or bullying within their teams, whether or not there has been a written or formal complaint. They must:

- Take all complaints or concerns of alleged or possible harassment or bullying behavior seriously no matter how minor or who is involved.
- Report all incidents to HR immediately so that a prompt investigation can occur.
- Take any appropriate action to prevent retaliation or prohibited conduct from recurring during and after any investigations or complaints.

Supervisors who knowingly allow or tolerate sexual harassment or retaliation, including the failure to immediately report such misconduct to HR, are in violation of this policy.

#### **2.2.4. Duty to Report and Consequences**

The NMUCC will neither condone nor tolerate acts of workplace harassment or bullying under any circumstances. All employees are under a duty to report to their supervisor, or to the Director of Human Resources any acts of workplace harassment or bullying that they may experience or observe. Any employee who feels that they are a victim of workplace harassment or bullying behavior should immediately contact their supervisor or the Director of Human Resources so that the matter may be promptly investigated and appropriate action taken. This policy should also be followed if an employee feels harassed or threatened in any way by non-employees, including but not limited to threats by email, voicemail, social media, or any other electronic communications.

All complaints and investigations are treated confidentially to the extent possible and information is disclosed strictly on a need-to-know basis. The identity of the complainant is usually revealed to the parties involved during the investigation and the Director of Human Resources takes appropriate steps to ensure that the complainant is protected from retaliation during and after the investigation. All information pertaining to any harassment complaint or investigation is maintained in secure files within HR.

#### **2.2.5. Retaliation is Prohibited**

To ensure that all employees feel comfortable in bringing forward any complaints or concerns, NMUCC has adopted a no retaliation policy. This means that NMUCC will not tolerate any retaliation toward or against any employee who reports possible violations of this policy or any potential violation of law, who assists in any investigation which may occur under these policies or who lodges a complaint under the grievance procedure (see Section 8 of these policies). Should any employee believe they have been retaliated against, they must immediately report this belief to their supervisor or to the Director of Human Resources. Any individual found to have retaliated against an individual will be disciplined, up to and including discharge.

### **2.3. SAFE CONDUCT POLICY CONCERNING ABUSE PREVENTION**

#### **2.3.1. Policy Prohibiting Abuse, Exploitation, and Harassment**

As a community of Christian faith, the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities, and a community in which employees, volunteers and persons served by the NMUCC can work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. All persons associated with the NMUCC should be aware that the church is strongly opposed to Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment and that such behavior is prohibited by NMUCC policy. It is the intention of the NMUCC to take action to prevent

and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate this policy.

### **2.3.2. Conduct of our Employees and Volunteers**

Consistent with the priesthood of all believers, it is important that every employee, including Authorized Ministers, independent contractors and volunteers be adequately prepared and educated for the ministry in which they serve others, and to understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

It is the policy of the NMUCC to encourage its employees, independent contractors and volunteers to nurture safety within the work performed on behalf of the NMUCC by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

### **2.3.3. Consensual Romantic or Sexual Relationships:**

The NMUCC prohibits romantic or sexual relationships between a supervisor and employees who report directly or indirectly to that supervisor by way of the same team or ministry, because such relationships tend to create compromising conflicts of interest or the appearance of such conflicts. In addition, such a relationship may give rise to favoritism or bias in employment decisions affecting the staff member. Moreover, given the uneven balance of power within such relationships, consent by the staff member is suspect and may be viewed by others, or at a later date by the staff member, as having been given as the result of coercion or intimidation. The atmosphere created by such appearances of bias, favoritism, intimidation, coercion or exploitation undermines the spirit of trust and mutual respect that is essential to a healthy work environment.

### **2.3.4. Requirements for Commencing and Continuing Employment or Volunteerism**

- a. Before beginning their duties, all employees, independent contractors and volunteers may be required to submit an application and/or disclosure form.
- b. Before beginning their duties, all employees, independent contractors or volunteers may be personally interviewed to assess the suitability of their character and qualifications for the position they seek.
- c. Prior to employment, the NMUCC will conduct a criminal background check and employment reference check for all prospective employees, including, but not limited to, a registered sex offender review for each prospective employee, by searching their name on the Department of Justice website at [www.nsopw.gov](http://www.nsopw.gov). The registered sex offender review will be repeated on an annual basis for all employees.
- d. Prior to assignment as an independent contractor or volunteer, the NMUCC will conduct a background check which will include at

minimum, a registered sex offender review for each independent contractor, or volunteer, by searching their name on the Department of Justice website at [www.nsopw.gov](http://www.nsopw.gov).

- e. All employees will be required to complete mandatory training on “Harassment, Abuse and Exploitation Prevention” as scheduled by the NMUCC, not less than once each three-year period.
- f. All Authorized Ministers employed at the NMUCC are expected to attend all boundary workshops required by the Association where the Minister currently has standing.

### **2.3.5. Additional Requirements for Child and Youth Ministry**

- a. The NMUCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God’s love.
- b. In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines in addition to the general requirements for ministry.
- c. All volunteers who regularly work with children and youth will complete and submit a disclosure document.
- d. Before beginning their duties, all prospective employees will undergo a background check, including but not necessarily limited to inquiries of references and a criminal history verification by a third-party vendor.
- e. All volunteers, independent contractors and employees who regularly work with children and youth will receive orientation regarding the abuse prevention policy and procedures.
- f. It is the practice of the NMUCC to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for youth activities. In situations where participants are readily visible to each other, there will be no fewer than two unrelated adults present with children. Youth over the age of 14 may assist an unrelated adult in supervising children and youth activities; however, such assistance does not alter the requirement that at least two unrelated adults be present.
- g. Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor will be required for all activities off the property of the NMUCC or a NMUCC affiliated church, and any overnight activities.

### **2.3.6. Definitions**

**Authorized Minister:** a person who holds Ordained Ministerial Standing, Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing, or has been commissioned, licensed, or granted Lay Ministerial Standing by an Association of the United Church of Christ or region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).



**Independent Contractor:** a person who is contracted by the NMUCC to perform services that are not ordinarily performed by a NMUCC employee, normally on a short term or temporary basis. An independent contractor, for purposes of this policy, does not include a vendor or third party who supplies goods or services to the NMUCC. (i.e. attorneys, auditors, suppliers of equipment/office supplies, caterers, musicians, etc.).

**Sexual Exploitation:** sexual activity or conduct (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a person takes advantage of the vulnerability of the person being served by causing that person to engage in sexual behavior with the NMUCC employee or volunteer.

**Sexual Harassment:** Refer to section 2.2 of this Handbook.

### **2.3.7. Complaint Procedures**

- a. The Director of Human Resources will lead the investigation into and respond to any complaints under this policy. The Director of Human Resources is familiar with the terms of this policy as well as the established policies of the NMUCC for addressing concerns, complaints and grievances, as set forth at paragraph 8.1 of the Common Personnel Policies. Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment:
  1. The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the respondent, the individual accused of sexual exploitation or harassment.
  2. If the complainant is an employee or volunteer of the NMUCC, the complainant can raise the concern with their supervisor.
  3. If an informal resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the complainant may bring their concerns to their supervisor or the Director of Human Resources.
- b. The Director of Human Resources and the appropriate representative (“the fact-finding team”) such as the Office of General Counsel shall work cooperatively in the fact-finding process and will interview and gather information from persons who may have pertinent information. Upon conclusion of the fact-finding process, a report will be presented by the fact-finding team to the complainant and the appropriate Officer of the Church and/or to the Audit Committee of the United Church of Christ Board (“UCCB”).
- c. To resolve the matter, the fact-finding team shall make determinations and make recommendations to the appropriate Officer of the Church and/or the Audit Committee of the UCCB to resolve the matter. These may include, but are not limited to:
  1. finding that sexual exploitation or harassment has occurred, and that the appropriate body of the church is called upon to take action accordingly; such action may include one or more of the following:
    - a formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;
    - recommending or requiring psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment;

- probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
  - dismissal from employment or volunteer position.
2. finding that sexual exploitation or harassment did not occur.
  3. The fact-finding team and the appropriate Officer of the Church, who will determine the appropriate actions to resolve the matter, may seek the advice of legal counsel or others to advise it in performing its functions.
- d. A written summary of the fact-finding team's investigation and recommendations will be maintained.
  - e. The person(s) toward whom the inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the complainant. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence will excuse or exonerate inappropriate behavior. At any time the NMUCC may initiate or proceed with the formal complaint process.
  - f. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment or exploitation, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident occurred.
  - g. Any person bringing a sexual harassment or exploitation complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminates against or discharged.
  - h. The appeal process for any complaint under this policy is set forth at section 8.5 of the Common Personnel Policies.

### **2.3.8 Child Abuse**

The NMUCC will follow legal requirements for reporting child abuse at all times. Apart from any legal requirements the NMUCC will make a report to the appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, if at any time the NMUCC has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child. Any employee of the NMUCC who becomes aware, in the context and circumstances of their employment, of the facts or circumstances that child abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services by calling 855-O-H-CHILD (855-642-4453), and also report the matter to the Human Resources Office so that the NMUCC may take appropriate action in a timely manner.

### **2.3.9. Clergy**

Apart from any disposition of the matter by the NMUCC, all allegations of behavior which call into question the fitness for ministry of any Authorized Minister will promptly be forwarded to the Association where the Minister currently has standing. The Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) ministry team provides process guidance

and support to Committees on Ministry and Conference staff, and is the team to which any questions or concerns shall be directed.

### **2.3.10. Confidentiality**

Except as set forth in 2.7.7 and 2.7.8, information concerning a complaint will be received in confidence. Supervisors and other members of the staff will discuss a complaint only with those individuals who are involved in the investigation and resolution of the complaint. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances to protect the privacy of persons involved.

## **2.4 WORKPLACE ANTI-RACISM/ANTI-DISCRIMINATION EDUCATION**

- 2.4.1. The NMUCC shall provide required anti-racism education programs that contain, at minimum:
  - a. An overview of diversity and inclusion practices during new hire onboarding.
  - b. anti-racism education designed to address issues of privilege, stereotypes, and bias and the development of skills around these issues.
  - c. periodic meetings and/or forums to discuss these topics
- 2.4.2. All employees are required to participate in the anti-racism and the diversity & inclusion education.
- 2.4.3. Education is designed to take employees through graduated stages of learning.

## **2.5. ACCOMODATING DISABILITIES**

It is the NMUCC's policy in all employment-related decisions to give qualified individuals with disabilities consideration. No qualified individual with a disability will be denied or removed from consideration for employment, transfer, or promotion to any position because: (a) that individual has a disability; (b) has a history of disability; (c) is regarded as having a disability/impairment; or (d) requires reasonable accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the position.

The NMUCC will work to provide an effective and reasonable accommodation of a disability to allow a qualified employee with a disability to perform the essential functions of their job, provided that the accommodation does not impose an undue hardship. Similarly, a reasonable accommodation will be made available to applicants who may require one for the application process.

The NMUCC cannot consider accommodations for an employee's or applicant's medical condition of which it has no knowledge. Similarly, the NMUCC will not infer, anticipate, or presume that any individual has a disability. If an employee or applicant believes that they have a qualifying disability and needs a reasonable accommodation, it is the responsibility of the individual to report these facts to the Director of Human Resources. The Director of Human Resources will work with the employee and the employee's health care provider, if necessary, to determine the nature and scope of potential accommodation. To the extent feasible in addressing the employee's needs, the NMUCC will treat all information concerning the employee's medical condition as confidential.

A disability is any medical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. The NMUCC is committed to taking all reasonable actions necessary to ensure equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADA and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws.

**2.6. PRIVACY OF MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Any medical information obtained by NMUCC regarding any employee will be maintained by Human Resources in a confidential file separate from the employee file and will be accessible only upon a demonstration that it is necessary to be reviewed for lawful purposes.

**2.7. HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) DISEASE**

Workplace HIV/AIDS Education – General Synod XVI in its “Pronouncement on Health and Wholeness in the Midst of a Pandemic” states: “All persons need to be educated about the pandemic and about prevention of AIDS in ways that enable them to work through their fears and prejudices and convinces them to adopt effective behavior.” General Synod XVII endorsed the “Ten Principles for the Workplace.” Principle number six states: “The employer shall provide employees with sensitive, accurate and up-to-date education about risk reduction in their personal lives.”

**2.8 INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY**

This policy outlines specific steps that the NMUCC takes to safeguard employees’ health and well-being during widespread outbreaks of infectious diseases, while ensuring the ability to maintain essential operations. An employee shall not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of individuals in the workplace.

The NMUCC will take appropriate steps to minimize, to the extent practicable, exposure to infectious diseases at the workplace and will be guided by the Center for Disease Control and the federal, state, and local government. As appropriate, the NMUCC recommends measures that employees can take to protect themselves outside the workplace and encourages employees to discuss their specific needs with a physician or other appropriate health or wellness professional.

The NMUCC expects employees who contract an infectious disease or who are exposed to infected family members or other persons to remain home and seek medical attention if needed. The NMUCC also expects employees to notify their supervisor and the Director of Human Resources as soon as possible of their exposure or illness. See Appendix C. to view the COVID-19 Exposure Policy.

### **3. SEARCH GUIDELINES AND WORK CLASSIFICATIONS**

**3.1. SEARCH AND ANNOUNCEMENT/POSTING GUIDELINES**

The following establishes written policies that will result in consistency throughout the NMUCC in posting positions and filling vacancies and will help to ensure that the commitment to EEO/AA is evident in policies as well as in practice.

**3.1.1. Position Announcements**

All vacant position announcements will be posted internally for a minimum of seven (7) calendar days to provide opportunities for promotions. Positions may not be offered during the posting time. For those positions which require search committees, announcements of the vacancy will be posted broadly and until the application deadline.

**3.1.2. Inactive Positions**

A vacant position that has been posted and is not filled within 90 calendar days becomes inactive. To re-activate a vacant position it must be reposted in accordance with 3.1.1.

**3.1.3. Announcement/Search Guidelines**

The information listed below will be used as the standard guidelines when filling a position.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Internal Posting (National Offices)</b>	<b>UCC Website Posting</b>	<b>UCC Ministry Opportunities</b>	<b>Search Committee</b>	<b>National Search</b>	<b>Local Search</b>
Officer of the Church*						
Senior Staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Executive Associate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Team Leader	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Program Staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Executive Assistant	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Admin/Program Assistant	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Other Non-Exempt Staff	Yes	Yes	Depends on Position	No	No	Yes

\*See the United Church of Christ Constitution and Bylaws

**3.1.4. Upgrading a position**

For a position to be upgraded, one of the following criteria must be met:

- a. The employee has had significant additional duties to perform and is currently doing those duties, or the position will be taking on additional duties in the immediate future. No posting is required for an upgraded position.

b. The position is vacant and the job description is revised and upgraded. Post as described in the previous chart.

**3.1.5. Screening/interview/selection:** Human Resources will provide guidelines to Search Committees on EEO/AA requirements when hiring. Diversity compliance is necessary during all interviews.

**3.1.6. Offers of Employment:** To ensure all employment requirements are met with respect to new hires all offers of employment must be made through Human Resources.

**3.1.7. Background checks:** All offers of employment are contingent upon successful completion of a thorough background check, including but not limited to: local, national, and federal criminal search, prior employment verification, professional reference check. For persons wishing to transfer into a position with significant new or changed responsibilities, background checks may also be required.

Applicable to lay employees based in Washington, D.C. only: The NMUCC will comply with the Washington D.C. Fair Credit in Employment Act of 2016 and the Washington D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977. Pursuant to this policy, the NMUCC will not request or require employees, or candidates for employment, to disclose credit information during their employment or during the interview process.

## **3.2. EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS**

**3.2.1. Exempt Employees:** Exempt employees must meet specific criteria as to salary and primary duties and are paid a fixed salary that is not subject to deduction based on the specific number of hours worked. These employees are exempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA. Exempt employees are expected to work the hours necessary to fulfill their job requirements.

**3.2.2. Non-Exempt Employees:** Non-exempt employees are subject to the overtime provisions of the FLSA and therefore, entitled to overtime pay at one and one-half times their regular rate for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) in a workweek.

**3.2.3. Lay Employees:** Employees who do not hold ministerial standing.

**3.2.4. Clergy Employees:** Employees who hold ordained, commissioned or licensed ministerial standing. Ordained, commissioned or licensed employees in non-ministerial positions will be treated the same as lay employees with regard to taxes in accordance with Treasury Regulations Sections 1.107-1(a) and 1.1402(c) and Revenue Ruling 57-129.

**3.2.5. Full-time Regular Employees:** Persons hired to work the normal workweek of at least 37.5 hours. These employees are eligible for vacation, sick and personal leave, paid holidays, life/accident insurance, health/dental benefits, flexible medical reimbursement plan, flexible dependent care reimbursement plan and enrollment in the retirement plan in accordance with the NMUCC's policy as described in this handbook.

**3.2.6. Part-time Regular Employees:** Persons hired to routinely work fewer than 37.5 hours per week, but at least 20 hours per week. Note: The NMUCC acknowledges that the 20 hour per week minimum is more generous than the Affordable Care Act. These employees are eligible for prorated vacation, sick and personal leave, paid holidays, life/accident insurance, health/dental benefits, flexible medical reimbursement plan, flexible dependent care reimbursement plan and enrollment in the retirement plan in accordance with the NMUCC's policy as described in this handbook.

**3.2.7. Introductory Period Employees:** All new regular employees shall be placed on an Introductory Period of 90 calendar days. The Introductory period shall be extended one day for each workday missed by the employee during the Introductory period. A new employee is not eligible for paid leave other than NMUCC designated holidays or severe weather days occurring during the Introductory Period. Upon successful completion of the Introductory Period, the employee will be given regular status. In no event shall the change of status to regular be considered as creating a contractual relationship between the employee and the NMUCC. Either party may terminate the relationship at any time for any reason not prohibited by law.

**3.2.8. Temporary Employees:** Persons employed for a limited period (3-6 months) either full-time or part-time, or who work as needed. Temporary employees supplement the regular work force when necessitated by periods of peak workload, employee absences, or other situations as may be determined. Due to the short-term nature of the assignment, temporary employees are not eligible for benefits.

**3.2.8.1. Interim and Acting:**

a. Interim - fills a position for a specified amount of time, but may not apply for the position they are temporarily filling.

b. Acting - fills a position for a specified amount of time, but may apply for the position they are temporarily filling.

Interim and Acting employees' eligibility for benefits, if any, will be outlined in the offer letter or letter of call.

**3.2.8.2. Interns:** Persons assigned for a period of learning and development for a specific temporary period of time. Internships provide an individual with an opportunity to work closely with a ministry program of the United Church of Christ. The intern will be afforded a learning opportunity to hone skills through ministry, and interface with staff and leaders within and beyond the UCC. *Interns who are expected to serve in a ministry for over 20 hours per week and for a period of one year or more will be eligible for employer paid health insurance.*

**3.2.9. Independent Consultants (Contractors):** Persons engaged to perform distinct functions on an independent basis. Independent contractors are not employees; therefore, they are not eligible to receive the NMUCC's benefits. These



personnel policies do not apply to independent contractors, except where specifically indicated in these policies, or as required by federal, state or local laws. There are very specific legal criteria required to properly designate an independent contractor. Anyone wishing to contract with an independent contractor must contact Human Resources or the designated person to handle contracts prior to extending a contract offer.

**3.3. RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS:** All employees of the NMUCC are required to live within daily commuting distances from their office or work site, unless they are deployed employees pursuant to section 3.4.1.

**3.4. TELEWORK**

**3.4.1. Deployed Employees:** The Officers of the Church may, on a case-by-case basis, assign certain employees to work from an area other than the Cleveland National Offices. These deployed positions are generally geographical and/or relational positions. Determinations on which position will be assigned to a work location outside of the Cleveland National Offices are made based upon factors, including, but not limited to, the mission work and/or the geographical areas needing to be served. Deployed employees are considered regular employees and are subject to the Common Personnel Policies outlined in this handbook.

**3.4.2. Remote and Hybrid Employees:**

The NMUCC permits flexible work solutions when approved by the employee's supervisor in consultation with the appropriate Officer of the Church. Flexible solutions include telework from a home office or a hybrid arrangement that permits for regular work in the office and home. Supervisors have the responsibility of determining whether employees can effectively perform the job duties of the position while teleworking. Employees approved for telework will perform their duties from their respective home locality in Cleveland, Ohio or Washington DC where the NMUCC has office buildings. Some employees may not be eligible for telework due to the nature of their job responsibilities. The NMUCC will ensure that employees who telework receive equipment, supplies and other necessary resources to allow for effective work from home offices. Requests to telework as a disability accommodation are handled through the Human Resources - see section 2.3.

- a. Employees approved for telework are guided by these Common Personnel Policies and are held to the same performance standards as if working in one of the NMUCC's office buildings.
- b. Employees under a telework arrangement may receive reimbursement for the monthly cost of internet to be used for business purposes.
- c. Employees who meet the eligibility criteria may also receive an allowance for a portion of their personal cell phone that is also used for business.
- d. Employees are responsible for designating a safe work space and may be eligible to receive reimbursement for qualified home office furnishings.

- e. For deployed employees: When attendance is required for new employee orientation, staff meetings as approved by the respective Officer of the Church, or any training or workshops as outlined in these Common Policies, temporary lodging expenses and meals shall be reimbursed in accordance with the guidelines and procedures of the NMUCC.

## **4. WAGE AND SALARY ADMINISTRATION AND WORKWEEK/PAY PERIODS**

**4.1. WAGE AND SALARY ADMINISTRATION:** Remuneration shall be paid based upon the nature of the work performed and in accordance with the compensation system established by the NMUCC. Compensation shall be at the salary offered at the commencement of employment subject to subsequent adjustments.

4.1.1. **Wage and Salary Bases:** The compensation base for all positions will be reviewed periodically; adjustments may be made based on cost of living data, wage and salary market survey data, consideration of remuneration paid by other employers both within and outside the NMUCC and other such factors deemed appropriate by the NMUCC.

4.1.2. **Crisis Pay:** In the event that any of the National Staff Offices are closed for an extended period of time, payroll will continue for an undetermined period of time. During this time period, the Officers of the Church will consult with the board and reach consensus as to the duration of salary continuation for employees.

4.1.3. **Honoraria** – Honoraria received by employees while performing the ministry of the NMUCC are to be remitted to the appropriate ministry of the NMUCC. Officers of the United Church of Christ are considered to be representing the United Church of Christ and performing the ministry of the NMUCC at all times. All payments for speaking engagements and appearances of Officers of the United Church of Christ must be directed to the appropriate ministry of the NMUCC. Financial Services will provide Form W-9 to the payor upon request so that the payments can be appropriately directed.

**4.2. WORK WEEK, PAY PERIODS AND OVERTIME**

4.2.1. The NMUCC's regular hours of operation generally are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, which may vary by ministry team as necessary to serve the customer service goals. For non-exempt employees, the scheduled work week is 37.5 hours, with an unpaid, uninterrupted lunch break of 60 minutes, the exact time of which for each employee is subject to approval of their supervisor. Staggered lunch breaks may be necessary to ensure adequate phone coverage. The weekly and hourly schedules of employees will depend on the nature of their job assignments and the needs of the NMUCC.

The NMUCC supports flexible work schedules permitting employees to flex their schedules around these core hours. Additionally, employees may compress their workweek into four days. A compressed work schedule allows an employee to work a traditional 37.5 hour workweek in less than the traditional number of workdays. For example, a full-time employee scheduled for 37.5 hours per week may work four 9.37 hour days instead of five 7.5 hour days and take one full day off each week. Flexible work schedules require supervisor approval and a discussion with HR.

4.2.2. Pay Periods: The pay period is semi-monthly, spanning the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> through the end of each month. The normal payroll week is Monday through Sunday, beginning and ending at midnight on Sunday

4.2.3. Overtime: Non-Exempt Employees

Overtime worked will be the exception. Employees must obtain prior approval for overtime from their supervisors. Overtime worked in excess of the regularly scheduled work week and up to 40 hours will be paid at the regular rate of pay. Time worked in excess of 40 hours in any normal work week will be paid at one and one-half times the regular hourly rate. Holidays and other paid leaves will not be considered as time worked when computing overtime.

#### **4.3. TIMEKEEPING AND ATTENDANCE**

**4.3.1. Basic procedures** for recording attendance and absences of exempt and non-exempt employees.

- a. All employees report time off for sick, vacation, and personal time through the time and attendance web-based system.
- b. All non-exempt employees must log in and out daily in the designated attendance system. Human Resources will maintain detailed attendance records and may provide information to employees regarding earned time balances.
- c. Time balances are available in real-time via the attendance system.
- d. Regular and punctual attendance is an essential function of the employee's position with the NMUCC. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness will be addressed through the Corrective Action policy.

**4.3.2. Reporting Absence**

To ensure adequate and consistent coverage, it is each employee's obligation to notify the NMUCC as soon as reasonable, but in any event, no later than the employee's start time, whenever they will be late or absent. Employees must speak directly to their immediate supervisor or follow the procedures outlined by the ministry; a message left with someone else is not acceptable.

## **5. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

## 5.1. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- 5.1.1. Employment-at-will:** Either the employee or the NMUCC can terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason not prohibited by law.
- 5.1.2. Resignation** is a voluntary choice made by the employee to discontinue employment with the NMUCC and is considered a break in service.
- a. Exempt employees are expected to give a written four weeks' notice. Failure to give the expected notice may result in forfeiture of accrued vacation benefits.
  - b. Non-exempt employees are expected to give a written, two-week notice. Failure to give the expected notice may result in forfeiture of accrued vacation benefits.
  - c. An unexcused absence of three consecutive working days is considered job abandonment and a voluntary resignation.
- 5.1.3. Discharge** is an involuntary termination imposed for inability or failure on the part of an employee to meet performance standards, for misconduct or for other reasons deemed sufficient to warrant discharge in the judgment of management. (See 10. Corrective Action). If the problem cannot be resolved, a discharge date shall be established. All unused earned vacation shall be paid; but no severance pay shall be given. (See 5.3.5 Severance Package and 6.2.2 Vacations.)
- 5.1.4. Reduction in Work Force** – Termination of an employee may occur due to budgetary considerations or for other circumstances arising through no fault of the employee. If the employee has at least one year of service, the following shall apply:
- a. The official termination date will be established as the date of the end of the notice period.
  - b. Termination shall take effect with at least four weeks' notice, or payment or equivalent salary in lieu of such notice.
  - c. Payment for accrued vacation up to the date last worked will be made. (See 6.2.2 Vacations.)
  - d. Severance pay will be paid to eligible employees. This is in addition to any salary paid in lieu of notice. (See 5.3.5 Severance Package).
  - e. Outplacement information may be made available to affected employees.
- 5.1.5. Severance**
- a. An employee will be eligible for severance pay, if the employee is terminated after one full year or more of regular service as a result of:
    - 1) Reduction in the workforce, or
    - 2) Elimination of the position
  - b. An Officer of the Church will be eligible for severance pay, if the Officer
    - 1) has completed at least one full term; and
    - 2) is not seeking re-election; and
    - 3) is not retiring at the end of the term. An employee is considered to be retiring if the employee is drawing from the UCC pension account within three months of the end of the employee's tenure.
  - c. An employee will not be eligible for severance pay, if the employee:
    - 1) Resigns; that is, voluntarily terminates for any reason.
    - 2) Is discharged for misconduct or unsatisfactory job performance,
    - 3) Is laid off for a period of one year or less,

- 4) Retires, or
  - 5) Transfers to another position with the NMUCC.
- d. Severance pay shall be an amount equal to a minimum of 12 weeks of regular salary. In addition, the employee will receive one week of regular salary for each year of service up to a maximum of ten (10) weeks. Thus an employee may not exceed the maximum of 22 weeks of severance benefits. Severance will be paid in installments on regular pay days and is subject to all applicable federal, state, and local taxes.
  - e. Severance pay will be granted in addition to pay for any earned vacation for which the employee is entitled. (See 6.2.2 Vacations)
  - f. Employer paid benefits will continue during the severance period except that vacation leave and sick leave will not be earned.
  - g. Employees are responsible for the return of all NMUCC property, materials, or information in any form (including electronic) issued to them or in their possession or control. All property must be returned by employees on or before their last day of employment.

**5.1.6. Normal Retirement Benefits**

- a. An employee who retires at age 65 or older is eligible for full pension benefits as described in the Rules of The Annuity Fund-NMUCC.
- b. Health coverage for the employee and eligible dependents may continue at the employee's expense.
- c. Dental coverage for the employee and eligible dependents may continue at the employee's expense.
- d. Life insurance for the employee with 5 years of service will continue at the employer's expense, but at a reduced rate equal to 25% of the coverage amount before retirement prior to age 65.

**5.1.7. Early Retirement Benefits** – Early retirement may be taken beginning at age 55.

- a. Pension benefits may begin at age 55. (See Rules of The Annuity Fund-NMUCC and booklets; NMUCC Pension Plan for Clergy or NMUCC Pension Plan for Lay Employees.)
- b. Health, dental, and life insurance benefits coverage may be continued at the employee's expense for the employee and eligible dependents in accordance with provisions of The Plan.



## **6. EMPLOYEE LEAVES, TRAINING, AND PERFORMANCE**

## **6.1. HOLIDAYS**

- 6.1.1 Certain days during the year are observed as holidays giving eligible employees a day off with pay.
- 6.1.2 Full-time regular employees will receive their regular rate of pay. Part-time regular employees will receive holiday pay only for holidays they would normally be scheduled to work, and only for their regularly scheduled number of hours.
- 6.1.3 Temporary employees and independent contractors (consultants) are not eligible to receive holiday pay.
- 6.1.4 A minimum of 10 holidays will be observed during each calendar year. A schedule will be published the preceding calendar year identifying the designated days.
- 6.1.5 Any holiday which falls on a Saturday or Sunday will be observed on another day.
- 6.1.6 If the day before Thanksgiving or Christmas Day is not a scheduled day off, offices will close at 3:00 p.m. that day. Other than this provision, regular office hours will be observed before a scheduled holiday.

## **6.2. EMPLOYEE LEAVES**

### **6.2.1. General Policies**

- a. Upon return from any leave described in this section, an employee shall be restored to their original job, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits and other employment terms and conditions.
- b. Except for certain earned benefits specifically identified in individual leave descriptions below, an employee returning from leave shall be restored to the same benefits as if the employee had continued to work during the entire leave period.
- c. Except as set forth in section 6.2.5(f), use of leave time shall not result in the loss of any benefits earned prior to the leave. See specific leaves for use of sick, vacation, and personal time.
- d. Use of leave time shall not be counted as a break in service for purposes of vesting or eligibility to participate in benefit programs.
- e. Except as specifically identified in individual leave descriptions, the employee's medical, dental, and other previously identified employer paid benefits will continue during an approved leave at the employer's expense.
- f. In the event an employee elects not to return to work upon completion of the approved leave, the employee may be expected to reimburse the NMUCC for any benefit premiums paid during the leave, unless the employee is prevented from returning to work for reasons beyond their control.
- g. Failure to return to work at the expiration of an approved leave without prior authorization shall be considered a voluntary resignation. The effective date of the resignation shall be the date the leave expired.

### **6.2.2. Vacation**

- a. Employees eligible for vacation shall be paid at their regular rate of pay.
- b. The established vacation year for scheduling purposes is the calendar year. Calculating and crediting of earned vacation shall be done monthly.

- c. Earned vacation shall be taken within the year earned. (Exception: Employees who are completing their Introductory Period after October 1<sup>st</sup>. These employees shall be permitted to use earned vacation for the December holidays or carry over any accrued but unused vacation. Human Resources must be notified of any carry over vacation for these employees).
- d. Vacation time shall be scheduled and approved by the employee's supervisor(s).
- e. Paid holidays that occur during an employee's vacation will not be charged as vacation.
- f. Continuous service as a regular employee with any ministry of the NMUCC shall be counted in determining vacation benefits for employees.
- g. Upon separation from employment with the NMUCC, regular employees shall receive payment for any prorated, unused vacation.
- h. Vacation may be used before it is earned. However, upon separation from employment with the NMUCC, if an employee has taken more vacation than earned, the employee will reimburse the NMUCC for such unearned vacation.

Non-Exempt Employees

- Vacation shall be earned during the Introductory Period and shall be credited to the employee only upon successful completion of the Introductory Period.
- Non-exempt employees earn vacation for each full calendar month of paid employment at the appropriate rate according to the following schedule.

During Work Year	Vacation Days/Month Rate	Vacation Days Earned – 12 months
01-02	0.8333	10
03-06	1.2500	15
07-09	1.6667	20
10-UP	1.8333	22

- Part-time regular non-exempt employees who work at least 20 hours per week (1,040 hours per year) are entitled to vacation on a pro-rata basis.
- k. Exempt Employees
- Vacation shall be earned during the Introductory Period and shall be credited to the employee only upon successful completion of the Introductory Period.
  - Full-time exempt employees receive 22 working days (Monday-Friday), of vacation annually. This is earned monthly at the rate of 1.8333 days per each full month of employment.

- During the first calendar year of employment, vacation may be taken in accordance with the following table, subject to approval of the employee's supervisor.

<u>First Full Month of Employment</u>	<u>Number of Vacation Days</u>
January	22
February	20
March	18
April	17
May	15
June	13
July	11
August	9
September	7
October	6
November	4
December	2

- Part-time, regular, exempt employees who work a minimum of twenty hours per week shall earn and be eligible for vacation in proportion to their approved part-time status (e.g., one-half time, three-quarter, etc.).

### **6.2.3 Personal Leave**

- a. Purpose - To enable employees to conduct personal business and deal with emergencies, including inclement weather not covered by the severe winter weather below; and when it is necessary to be absent from work for reasons other than those covered under other leave policies. It is not meant to be utilized as additional vacation.
- b. Eligibility - All regular full-time employees are eligible for five (5) paid personal leave days each calendar year. Part-time regular employees who work at least 20 hours per week are eligible on a pro-rata basis.

Limitations - Personal leave days

- Are not cumulative;
- May only be used after successful completion of the Introductory Period;
- Must be scheduled in advance when the absence is not of an emergency nature;
- Do not roll over from one year to the next; and
- Are not compensable if not taken prior to termination of employment.

### **6.2.4 Sick Leave**

- a. Purpose - To provide income continuation to employees who are unable to work as a result of illness or injury, or to care for an ill member of the household.

- b. Eligibility - Full-time regular employees earn sick time at the rate of one day for each full month worked. Part-time regular employees earn sick time on a pro-rata basis. Sick time may be taken only after successful completion of the required Introductory Period.
- c. Limitations and Exceptions: Sick time is cumulative up to 120 days and is not compensable if not taken prior to termination of employment.
- d. Reporting: Employees are expected to call their supervisor at the beginning of each workday to report an absence. Employees are also expected to record all absences in the attendance system upon return. HR may request documentation of medical necessity.

#### 6.2.5. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

- a. Purpose - To provide job protection and no loss of accumulated service for time off taken by an employee for one or more of the following:
  - The birth of the employee's child and in order to care for such child;
  - The adoption or placement of a child for foster care with the employee;
  - To care for a child, parent, spouse, partner, or family member, as identified by the federal regulations, with a serious health condition;
  - To care for ill family members in exceptional cases when special permission is granted;
  - Because of the employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of the employee's position.
- b. FMLA Eligibility – An employee who has completed at least one full year of service with the NMUCC and has worked a minimum of 1,250 hours in the 12-month period preceding the commencement date of the leave is eligible for a total of up to 12 work weeks of FMLA during a 12-month period. In general, leaves of absence granted under this policy are **unpaid leaves of absence unless the employee has sick time to apply towards the absence** (See 6.2.5.f) or unless otherwise provided for in this policy. Additionally, employees must elect to apply unused earned personal leave and vacation if sick time has been exhausted.
- c. FMLA Duration and Conditions – An eligible employee is entitled up to a total of 12 work weeks of FMLA during a 12-month period or the exhaustion of benefited hours, whichever is greater. The 12-month period is measured forward from the date an employee's initial FMLA commences. A FMLA leave will run concurrently with other similar leaves mandated by state or local law, and all sick, vacation and personal time, applied during the FMLA, will be included as part of the 12 work week period provided by this policy. Employees with more than 12 weeks of sick time may be placed on an extended medical leave at the conclusion of 12 weeks and be subject to the NMUCC's normal policy governing employees who have exhausted their 12-week FMLA entitlement. (See 7.2 Workers' Compensation, 7.5.4 Short-Term Disability Leave and 7.5.5 Long-Term Disability Leave).

- Leave to care for a seriously ill child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, family member (as defined in the Family Medical Leave Act) or the employee's own serious health condition: Employees may take leave for these purposes when medically necessary on a consecutive basis or intermittently, or the employee may request to be placed on a reduced work week or reduced work days in compliance with FMLA regulations.
  - Non-consecutive periods of leave: If an employee requests an intermittent or reduced leave schedule due to a serious health condition (their own or that of a covered family member), the NMUCC may require the employee to transfer temporarily to an alternate position for which the employee is qualified, to better accommodate the recurring periods of leave the employee will require. Employees transferred under such circumstances will receive equivalent salary and benefits. Employees requesting intermittent or reduced-schedule leaves for planned medical treatment for the employee or a covered family member must make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the work for the NMUCC.
  - Employee's spouse or domestic partner employed by the same ministry within the NMUCC: An employee and spouse or domestic partner employed by the same ministry may not take more than 12 weeks of leave in the aggregate for the birth or care of a newborn, for the adoption or foster care placement of a child, or for the care of a parent.
- d. FMLA Notice Requirements
- Request for leave - Employees requesting leave must provide at least 30 days advance notice before leave is to begin, or if the need for leave is unanticipated, as much advance notice as practicable. Employees requesting leave are required to complete the NMUCC's FMLA form provided by the Human Resources Office at the time the leave is requested.
  - The NMUCC, in consultation with Human Resources, shall determine the status of a leave as FMLA qualifying or not, in accordance with the federal regulations.
  - The NMUCC, in consultation with Human Resources, may deem a leave to be FMLA even if not requested by the employee. In such circumstances, the NMUCC shall inform the employee of that determination at the commencement of the leave or at the time Human Resources is made aware of the qualifying event.
  - Return to work - For an employee's own health condition or that of a family member or member of the household, an employee on FMLA must notify the Human Resources every 30 days of the status of the condition and intent to return to work. Employees must, where feasible, provide the NMUCC reasonable notice of their intent to return to work. In all cases, when a decision is made by the employee not to return to work, the employee must notify the NMUCC and Human Resources immediately.
- e. FMLA Certification Requirements
- The NMUCC requires certification from a health care provider substantiating the employee's leave request. An employee will be required to submit a medical certification any time an absence of more than three consecutive work days is expected as the result of their own

serious health condition, any surgical procedure, or as further defined by the federal regulations. Certification requirements differ according to whether the leave is for the employee's own serious health condition or that of a covered family member. The NMUCC's medical certification form fully explains what information is required. When an employee foresees the need for leave, and has provided at least 30 days' notice, the certification should be provided before the leave begins. When this is not possible, the employee must provide the certification within 15 days of the NMUCC's request. Failure to provide certification on a timely basis may delay the leave.

- The NMUCC, at its own expense, may require a second or third medical opinion, depending upon the circumstances. During the course of the leave, the NMUCC may, under certain circumstances, require additional medical re-certification every 30 days.
  - In addition, if the circumstances giving rise to the need for the leave have changed significantly, or if the NMUCC has reason to doubt the validity of the stated reason for the absence, the NMUCC reserves the right to request re-certification at any time.
  - When the leave was for the employee's own serious health condition, the NMUCC also requires medical clearance indicating the employee can return to work and perform the essential functions of their position, with or without reasonable accommodation. The NMUCC will make a reasonable accommodation for any disability an employee may have, where required by law (ADA or other applicable law). Medical certification will also be required from any employee who is unable to return to work at the scheduled conclusion of a leave or who requests a leave extension.
- f. Use of Earned Sick, Vacation and Personal Leaves During FMLA – Employees on an approved FMLA must apply available benefit time, beginning with sick time, to the FMLA. Personal time and unused, earned vacation must be applied to FMLA, after sick leave is exhausted. After all applicable leave benefits have been exhausted, any remaining FMLA may qualify for Short Term Disability (STD as defined in 7.5.5) or will be unpaid.
- g. Employment Protection – An eligible employee who takes FMLA is entitled to return to their former job or to an equivalent job with equivalent benefits, pay and other terms and conditions of employment. However, no employee is entitled under this policy to any right, benefit, or position other than that to which the employee would have been entitled had they not taken leave. Thus, for example, if a layoff or reduction in force or some extenuating circumstances or business condition arises that affects the employee's position, reinstatement may not be possible.
- h. Benefits Continuation While on FMLA –
- During FMLA, the NMUCC will continue to provide full coverage for health and dental benefits, life insurance and, if applicable, employer pension contributions. The Human Resources Office will contact the employee and review the available options for contributions to the





- Eligible employees will receive a maximum of twelve weeks of paid new child parenting leave per birth, adoption or placement of a child/children. The fact that a multiple birth, adoption or placement occurs (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings) does not increase the twelve-week total amount of paid new child parenting leave granted for that event.
- During new child paid parenting leave, the employee will receive 100 percent of their regular pay to be paid as usual on a semi-monthly basis on regularly scheduled pay dates.
- The NMUCC will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid new child parenting leave period just as if they were taking any other time off such as paid vacation or paid sick leave.
- Approved new child paid parenting leave may be taken at any time during the twelve-month period immediately following the birth, adoption or placement of a child with the employee. Paid new child parenting leave may not be used or extended beyond this twelve-month time frame.
- Upon termination of employment, an employee will not be paid for any unused paid new child parenting leave.

#### **6.2.7. Leaves of Absences – Exceptional**

An employee who desires to interrupt employment for a period of time may, at the discretion of the National Ministry Executive (Officer of the Church), be granted an unpaid leave of absence under certain circumstances. All earned vacation and personal time must be exhausted prior to the taking of this leave. Terms of the leave shall be negotiated with the employee's supervisor and the Officer of the Church. During the leave of absence, salary is not paid and benefits are not earned. Insurance benefits permitted by the Plan may be continued at the employee's expense. Arrangements should be made with Human Resources for those who have voluntary benefits contributions or outstanding loans. This shall not be considered a break in service.

#### **6.2.8. Military Leave**

a. An employee who performs active or inactive duty with the Armed Forces of the United States of America (including National and Coast Guards) as a member of a Reserve unit may be granted a leave of absence for up to two weeks annually for training. During this leave, the employee will receive their regular salary and benefits less the amount of their military pay.

b. An employee who is a Reservist and is called up for active duty will be granted a leave of absence without pay for the period of active duty. Insurance benefits will be continued until they are provided by the U.S. government for the active duty service. The NMUCC will comply with the federal regulations as defined by USERRA.

#### **6.2.9. Jury Duty Leave**

An employee summoned for jury duty will be granted a jury duty leave of absence. An employee performing jury duty will receive their regular salary. Notify Human

Resources and appropriate supervisor upon receipt of summons for jury duty. Any remuneration received while serving as a juror should be forwarded to Financial Services, attention: Payroll.

#### **6.2.10. Voting Leave**

The NMUCC believes that it is the responsibility and duty of employees to exercise the privilege of voting in elections. In accordance with this philosophy, employees are **granted** approved time off **with pay** to vote. All employees should be able to vote either before or after regularly assigned work hours. However, when this is not possible due to work schedules, **Team Leaders** are authorized to grant a reasonable period of time, up to 3 hours, during the work day to vote.

#### **6.2.11. Sabbatical Leave**

- a. An exempt employee, in compensation grades 8 and above, after five years of continuous exempt service or after five years of continuous exempt service since the previous sabbatical, is eligible to apply and submit a plan for a sabbatical leave for two (2) months with full salary. Pay during the sabbatical will be at the salary the employee is earning at the time of the start of the sabbatical. No additional funds are available. The employee is expected to continue in the ministry they are serving for least one year following the sabbatical. Following a sabbatical leave, if an employee voluntarily terminates within one year of taking the leave, the employee will be expected to reimburse the National Ministry a prorated percentage of the salary and benefits paid during the sabbatical leave in accordance with the agreement signed prior to the taking of the sabbatical.
- b. Application for sabbatical leave and a plan for use shall be presented to the employee's supervisor, the Human Resources Director, and the employee's Officer of the Church who shall have the final decision as to the granting of the sabbatical. A report following the leave will be submitted to the employee's supervisor, team leader, and the Officer of the Church. The Officer of the Church reserves the right to provide a copy of the report to the board. The application for sabbatical is available in Human Resources.
- c. A sabbatical should be used as a time of study, reflection and renewal. It is not intended to be an extension of vacation. The activities planned during this time should relate to the mission of the church-at-large, or enhancement of performance or job/leadership skills. Planned activities may include, but are not solely limited to the following:
  - 1) College/university course work;
  - 2) Seminars and workshops;
  - 3) Information gathering/surveys related to the National Ministries
  - 4) Directed reading;
  - 5) Visitation (ecumenical, interfaith, community/global partners, UCC settings, etc.);
  - 6) Development of material to be utilized by the NMUCC;
  - 7) Research/development tasks; and
  - 8) Spiritual Pilgrimage.
- d. An employee is eligible for vacation during the year a sabbatical is taken.

- e. At the end of employment for any reason, including a reduction in force, the employee will forfeit any unused sabbatical time, without compensation for that time.

#### **6.2.12. Study Leave**

- a. An exempt employee (grades 6 and 7) after five years of continuous exempt service or after five years of continuous exempt service since the previous study leave is eligible to apply and submit a plan for a study leave for one (1) month with full salary. Pay during the study leave will be at the salary the employee is earning at the time of the start of the study leave. No additional funds are available. The employee is expected to continue in the ministry they are serving for at least one year following the study leave. Following a study leave, if an employee voluntarily terminates within one year of taking the leave, the employee will be expected to reimburse the National Ministry a prorated percentage of the salary and benefits paid during the study leave in accordance with the agreement signed prior to the taking of the study leave.
- b. Application for study leave and a plan for use shall be presented to the employee's supervisor, and the employee's Officer of the Church who shall have the final decision as to the granting of the study leave. A report following the leave will be presented to the employee's supervisor. The application for study leave is available in Human Resources.
- c. An employee is eligible for vacation during the year a study leave is taken.

#### **6.2.13. Bereavement Leave**

The NMUCC will provide up to 5 days of paid bereavement leave to all employees upon the death of a family member. The definition of family member covers a wide range of relationships, including spouse; domestic partner, parents; parents-in-law; children; brothers; sisters; grandparents; grandchildren; step-parents; step children; foster parents; foster children; guardianship relationships. Employees requiring bereavement leave should first notify their supervisor; then contact the Human Resources Director as soon as possible to request the leave and state your relationship to the deceased.

Limitations:

- May not be carried over from year to year.
- Is not compensable if not taken prior to termination of employment

#### **6.2.14. Severe Winter Weather**

The NMUCC provides three severe weather days for all regular employees who commute to the office daily. The severe weather days will be available during the winter months and may be used by employees when, in the employee's judgment, weather conditions make commuting to the workplace unsafe. The severe weather days will be added to the employee's time off allotment and made available November through March.

### **6.3. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.3.1. Education Assistance: The NMUCC supports employees who wish to continue their education to secure increased responsibility and/or professional growth within their careers. Employees who are full-time regular or part-time (20 hours or more) and have completed an introductory period may be provided reimbursement for academic costs and work time away if the course is available only during working hours. The NMUCC will reimburse up to a maximum of \$1,000 per calendar year incurred by an employee for continuing education through an accredited program that either offers growth in an area directly related to their current position, or one that might lead to promotional opportunities with the National Ministries. This education may include college credit coursework or continuing education unit courses. Employees must secure a passing grade of at least a “B” in order to receive reimbursement. Expenses must be validated by receipts and a copy of the final grade report must be presented to Human Resources. Employees who resign from their positions prior to completing a course will not be eligible for reimbursement. Education assistance is subject to the recommendation of the supervisor and the availability of funds as budgeted by the Team Leader on an annual basis. The application for Education Assistance is available in Human Resources.
- 6.3.2. Staff Development: The NMUCC encourages employees at all levels to participate in job-related training and development activities in order to enhance skills, expand knowledge, and grow as professionals. The responsibility for identifying and participating in training is shared by individual employees, their supervisors, and Human Resources. Employees are responsible for obtaining approval from their supervisor to attend professional development programs, and supervisors are encouraged to approve employee requests to participate in such programs, especially those offered by the NMUCC, whenever possible and appropriate. Supervisor approval may be dependent on factors such as budget and the relevance of the activity to either the employee’s current position or their professional development plan. Supervisors should evaluate the success of training efforts and keep records for reference. Employees are expected to make the most out of their trainings by identifying ways to apply the knowledge to their work.
- 6.3.3. United Church of Christ Office Support Staff Network (UCCOSSN). Employees are eligible after completion of their Introductory Period.
- a. UCCOSSN meetings are held every year. The meetings are held from Friday a.m. to Sunday p.m.
  - b. When a UCCOSSN meeting is held in Cleveland, all national support staff may attend. Attendance will be for the entire meeting and one day of vacation with pay will be granted, if the employee attends the entire meeting. The vacation must be taken within the week following the event.
  - c. When attendance is at the request of the employer, attendance is subject to overtime provisions. The National Ministries will pay the registration fee provided the employee attends the entire meeting.
- 6.3.4. Attendance of the UCCOSSN Meeting outside of the Cleveland Area

- a. All interested individuals must complete an application to attend the meeting. Forms are available in Human Resources.
- b. Those individuals who have significant interactions with the Conferences will be given priority for attending the meeting.
- c. Each National Ministry will be responsible for the payment of individual's expenses from that National Ministry. This payment will include all travel, lodging and meals.
- d. Attendance will be on a rotating basis as described below.
  - 1) Attendance is on a first come, first served basis within a National Ministry, unless an employee who has never attended requests to do so later than a repeat attendee. In this case, the individual who has never attended would be given the opportunity to attend.
  - 2) No more than five (5) individuals from a National Ministry may attend in a year. More than one Ministry team should be represented in this number. In the event only members of the same team within a National Ministry submit requests, only five (5) individuals will be approved for attendance.
  - 3) The employee's Officer of the Church or their designee will identify and inform those individuals who will and will not be attending and maintain records with this information.

#### **6.4. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Each NMUCC employee will participate in a performance evaluation process at least once a year and, if appropriate, at the time of a supervisory change if six months have elapsed since the last evaluation. The purpose is to provide the opportunity to assess performance and progress against the goals mutually agreed upon for the evaluation period, identify areas of concern and plans of action, establish goals for the future performance evaluation period and develop strategies for their accomplishment. The performance evaluation becomes a permanent part of the employee's personnel record. Each employee may submit a written response to the evaluation which will also become a permanent part of the employee's personnel record.

The General Minister & President evaluates the performance of Associate General Ministers. The General Minister & President receives a performance evaluation as described in paragraph 34 of the United Church of Christ Board Standing Rules. The evaluation processes are separate from the re-nomination process for Officers of the Church.

#### **6.5 BONUS FOR ACHIEVING HIGH LEVEL GOALS**

The NMUCC works as a collective community toward the High-Level Organizational Goals that are measurable each year. The goals are: Financial, Programmatic, Operational and People-Centered. Employees who complete at least two of the high level goals, along with the following will be eligible for a lump sum bonus at year-end.

- Completion of employee self-reflection evaluation
- Completion of individual and/or team goals
- Completion of required trainings offered through HR
- The employees most recent Performance Review is devoid of deficiencies

**6.6. LONGEVITY BONUS**

Employees completing a milestone anniversary will receive a cash lump sum on the pay date closest to their anniversary along with a commemorative pin, and a certificate of achievement from the General Minister and President.

Cash Lump Sum (taxable income) Reward Schedule:

5 years \$250  
10 years \$500  
15 years \$750  
20 years \$1,000  
25 years \$1,250  
30 years \$1,500

## **7. OTHER BENEFITS**

## **7.1. SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE: LAY AND ORDAINED EMPLOYEES**

All lay employees are required by law to participate in Social Security and Medicare under the Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA). Contributions will be withheld from the employee's pay for the employee's share and the NMUCC will pay the employer's share. These will be forwarded to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as prescribed by law. Clergy receive a Form W-2 but do not have Social Security or Medicare taxes withheld. Clergy must pay Social Security and Medicare by filing Form 1040 (Schedule SE), Self-Employment Tax. The NMUCC shall provide clergy with a social security offset to help with SECA (self-employment contribution act) taxes. The offset is considered extra income and the minister will have to report the offset as income for federal tax purposes and as income for SECA tax purposes.

**7.2. WORKERS' COMPENSATION** – Employees who are unable to work as a result of an illness or injury occurring in the course and scope of employment may be entitled to benefits under the Ohio or the appropriate state's Workers' Compensation Insurance Program. All accidents or injuries that occur while performing the NMUCC's business (regardless of location of occurrence) are covered by Workers' Compensation. Workers' Compensation and FMLA leaves run concurrently. Accidents or injuries that occur on the premises of the NMUCC or premises leased or owned by the NMUCC must be reported promptly to the employee's supervisor and the Human Resources Office.

**7.3. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE** – The State of Ohio does not provide unemployment compensation coverage for church employers and its employees. The reason for this exclusion is rooted in separation of church and state issues that have been made part of Ohio's unemployment law. As such, the NMUCC has worked to reduce the impact of this lack of an unemployment benefit by providing for severance benefits that are made available to employees should they be affected by a reduction in force.

## **7.4. HOUSING ALLOWANCE DESIGNATION**

7.4.1. Each year the National Ministries will take official action to designate a maximum amount of compensation to be paid the following year to each ordained (or commissioned) employee as a housing allowance in accordance with Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code. In the case of an employee hired during the tax year, the action designating that year's housing allowance will be noted in the offer letter per IRS regulations. Only that portion of the designated housing allowance which the employee can document as a valid housing expense in accordance with IRS guidelines can be deducted as tax-free income.

7.4.2. All exempt lay employees shall receive a taxable housing adjustment in the amount identified by the National Ministry.

## **7.5. EMPLOYEE INSURANCE COVERAGES**

The NMUCC shall provide for life insurance, health, dental, disability, and travel accident insurance coverage for its employees who work a minimum of 20 hours per week as described below. Applicable premiums are fully paid by the National Ministries.

**7.5.1. Employee Eligibility** – Eligible employees will be enrolled in the health, dental and life insurance coverages the first day of the month coincidental with or next following the date of employment subject to the rules, policies and provisions of



the Group Plans. Travel accident insurance coverage becomes effective on the first day of employment.

- 7.5.2. Health and Dental Benefits** – The NMUCC shall provide health benefits for eligible employees, spouse/partners and their eligible dependents as defined by the plan. Refer to the group plan booklet “NMUCC Health Benefits Plan for Clergy and Lay Employees” for details.
- 7.5.3. Life Insurance** – The NMUCC shall provide life insurance for eligible employees in an amount equal to the employee’s base salary rounded down to an even \$1,000 amount times two (e.g. \$25,500 = 25,000 x 2 = 50,000). Dependent life insurance is also provided: \$2,000 for a spouse and \$1,000 for each child. Refer to the group plan booklet “Your Program of Life Insurance” for details. Optional life insurance may be purchased by the employee. If an employee terminates employment for reasons other than death and/or retirement, a conversion plan will be made available at the employee’s expense with the insurance carrier.
- 7.5.4. Short-Term Disability** – The Short-Term disability benefit is provided for eligible employees who are unable to work because of illness or non-work-related accident. This benefit pays an amount equal to 50% of the employee’s weekly pay with a cap of \$3,000/month.
- a. Eligibility – an employee is eligible for short-term disability benefits after completion of four weeks of full time or 25 days of part-time employment.
  - b. Coverage
    - 1) Short-term disability leave begins on the eighth calendar day of disability as certified by a physician.
    - 2) Successive periods of disability separated by less than one week of active work shall be considered as one period of disability, unless the subsequent disability is due to an injury or illness entirely unrelated to the cause of the previous disability and commences after return to work.
    - 3) Short-term disability is equal to 50% of the average weekly salary with a maximum monthly benefit of \$3000.00 and is payable for a maximum of 13 weeks during any 52 consecutive weeks.
  - c. Limitation and Exceptions
    - 1) Short-term disability benefits are effective after the employee has exhausted all available sick leave.
    - 2) Credit for service for vacation and sick leave is not earned during a disability leave which exceeds three months, unless the employee is using earned sick leave.
- a. Documentation – A medical disability form must be completed by the employee and their physician and returned to Human Resources before disability benefits can commence.
- 7.5.5. Long-Term Disability** – The NMUCC shall provide long-term disability insurance as provided for eligible employees. Refer to group plan booklet “Your Program of Long-Term Disability” for details.
- 7.5.6. Flexible Benefits Program** – The NMUCC may provide various flexible benefit programs for eligible employees in compliance with the IRS Section 125 Regulations.

**7.5.7. Travel Accident Insurance** – The NMUCC shall provide one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) of travel/accident insurance coverage for all regular employees, while they are traveling on NMUCC business.

**7.5.8. Individual 24-Hour Extension of Accident Coverage** – Any regular employees may, at their own expense, enroll in this benefit.

**7.6. ANNUITY FUND (PENSION PLAN)**

7.6.1. Enrollment – All eligible employees shall be enrolled in the Annuity Fund administered by The Pension Boards – The United Church of Christ effective the first day of employment. The NMUCC shall make quarterly contribution payments on behalf of the employee.

7.6.2. Pension Contribution Calculation – The amount of contribution shall be calculated by multiplying the total base salary (and clergy housing allowance, if any) by the pension contribution rate approved by the General Synod.

7.6.3. Salary Reduction Contribution – On the basis of a signed agreement between the NMUCC and the employee, the NMUCC may reduce the compensation of the employee and pay this amount into the Annuity Fund or into any other investment vehicle as offered by the NMUCC as tax sheltered compensation, thereby increasing the employee’s ultimate retirement benefits. An employee interested in the Salary Reduction Contribution option should contact Human Resources for information, as restrictions apply.

**7.7. DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE:** In the event of the death of an active, regular (greater than 20 hours per week) employee, an amount equal to one month’s salary shall be immediately paid to the employee’s beneficiary or to the estate of the deceased employee. Health and dental coverage for the surviving spouse/domestic partner and eligible dependents will be continued at the expense of the NMUCC for up to six months. (See Section 7.5.3 Life Insurance).

**7.8. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available at no cost for employees through Ease@Work. Ease@Work is a Northeast Ohio based EAP that provides counseling, work-life and wellness services to support employees. Among the many services provided are assessment and counseling to help resolve personal matters including stress, depression, marital issues, substance abuse, anger, financial problems, childcare and elder care issues and much more. For a free confidential consultation call 800-521-3273.

## **8. CONCERN, COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

### **8.1. OBJECTIVE OF CONCERN, COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The NMUCC believes that one of the most basic requirements for successful working relationships is open communication. The NMUCC shall encourage fair and prompt resolution of employee concerns and complaints regarding work-related situations. Employees will be provided with an opportunity to present their concerns or complaints and appeal a supervisor's decisions through informal discussions and/or formal grievance procedures.

### **8.2. INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS**

Encourages employees to informally discuss their concerns with their supervisors. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be made, employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Human Resources Director, without fear of retaliation. The HR Director will provide resources to support a healthy resolution.

### **8.3. DEFINITION OF A GRIEVANCE**

A grievance is defined as an employee's expressed feeling of dissatisfaction concerning conditions of employment or treatment by supervisors or other employees. Examples of actions which may be causes of grievances include:

- 8.3.1. Application of the NMUCC's policies, practices, and procedures believed to be unfair;
- 8.3.2. Treatment considered unfair by an employee, such as coercion, reprisal, harassment or intimidation;
- 8.3.3. Alleged discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, marital status, religion or any other non-merit factor; and
- 8.3.4. Alleged improper or unfair administration of employee benefits or conditions of employment such as vacations, fringe benefits, promotions, retirement, employee performance evaluation or salary administration.

### **8.4. GRIEVANCE RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES**

Employees are encouraged to use the Grievance Procedure and must not, under any circumstances, be penalized for doing so. The NMUCC's management is responsible for ensuring that each grievance is fully processed. Employees are encouraged to address complaints as defined above with their supervisor or directly to Human Resources. An employee may have a co-worker accompany them to any grievance related meetings, as an observer.

### **8.5. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

- 8.5.1. Whenever an employee believes that a work-related problem exists which an informal discussion did not resolve, and the employee wishes to initiate a formal grievance, the employee should request a Grievance Form through the Office of Human Resources. The grievance will be reviewed and investigated by the Human Resources Director and the General Counsel and the employee will be notified of the status of the investigation within two weeks of submission. The employee for whom the grievance is against will be notified by HR of the grievance and informed that an investigation will be conducted. The investigation will include conversations with all parties involved, including witnesses, with the goal of identifying facts and arriving at a resolution.

After the investigation, a report of the findings and a recommended course of action will be presented to the Officer of the Church who leads the ministry of the employee against whom the grievance was raised for a decision on how to resolve the complaint. A response to the grievance will be provided to the employee who filed the complaint.

8.5.2. GRIEVANCE APPEAL

An employee who is dissatisfied with the decision as outlined by the Officer of the Church may submit a letter of appeal to the Human Resources Director who will then present the complaint and appeal letter to the three Officers of the Church who will hold a meeting together with the fact-finding team (HR Director and General Counsel) for review, discussion, and final determination.

8.5.3. In the event the grievance pertains to an Associate General Minister, the Human Resources Director and the General Counsel shall work cooperatively in the fact - finding process and will report their findings to the General Minister and President. In the event the grievance pertains to the General Minister and President, the Human Resources Director and the General Counsel shall work cooperatively in the fact-finding process and will report their findings to the Chair of the Board. In the event a grievance is against the Human Resources Director or the General Counsel, the General Minister & President will appoint an appropriate fact-finding team.

8.6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Information concerning an employee grievance will be received in confidence. Supervisors and other members of the staff will discuss a grievance only with those individuals who are involved in investigation and resolution of the complaint. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances to protect the privacy of persons involved.

## **9. DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

The NMUCC believes that substance addiction is a medical condition which should be treated as such. These policies have been written out of concern for the employee, their well-being and safety, and that of their co-workers.

**9.1. USE AND DISTRIBUTION PROHIBITED**

The distribution, possession, sale or use of drugs (except for personal use of a bona fide medical necessity) at the National Offices is prohibited. The use of alcohol is prohibited at the National Offices but may be permitted at certain UCC gatherings or events, including evening receptions or dinners, with the express permission of an Officer of the Church. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner as representatives of the UCC at gatherings or events where alcohol may be permitted.

Medical marijuana users will be required to consult with Human Resources regarding their needs in the workplace related to medical marijuana. All requests will be subject to a needs assessment and approval process. Recreational marijuana is strictly prohibited.

The National Offices includes any office, building or property owned or operated by NMUCC or any site at which an employee is to perform work for NMUCC.

**9.2. PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES**

- a. Any employee who tests above the cut-off levels for the following drugs will be considered to have a positive test and be in violation of this policy:

<b>10 Panel</b>	<b>EMT Screen (ng/nl)</b>	<b>GC/MC Confirmation (ng/nl)</b>
Amphetamine	1,000	500
Cannabinoids (THC)	50	15
Cocaine and Crack	300	150
Opiates	2,000	2,000
Phencyclidine (PCP)	25	25
Barbiturate	300	200
Benzodiazepine	300	200
Methadone	300	200
Methaqualone	300	200
Propoxyphene	300	200

Any employee who tests at .04% or higher for alcohol will be considered to have a positive test and will be in violation of the policy.

- b. All testing will be performed at and/or by laboratories and collection sites which are certified by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- c. All test results will be reported to the MRO (Medical Review Officer) prior to the results being issued to NMUCC. The MRO will receive a detailed report of the findings of the analysis from the testing laboratory. Each substance tested will be listed along with the results of the testing. NMUCC will receive a summary report and this report will indicate that the employee passed or failed the test. All of these

procedures are intended to be consistent with the most current guidelines or Medical Review Officers, published by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services.

### **9.3. TESTING**

- a. Pre-employment – All applicants will be required to submit to a drug screen after an offer of employment has been made, but prior to the beginning of employment. The offer of employment will be rescinded for any applicant who tests positive.
- b. Reasonable Suspicion. Employees may be required to submit to testing if a supervisor in coordination with the Human Resources Office has a reasonable and articulable belief that the employee is using or under the influence of a substance based on specific physical behavioral or performance indicators which may include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Lack of balance, unsteady or staggered walk or muscle twitching, red watery or glassy eyes, dilated or constricted pupils or having difficulty focusing eyes.
  - Disorientation, uncoordinated movement of body and hands, face/cheeks flushed, face sallow; slurred speech, memory loss or drowsiness.
  - Observation of drug or alcohol use, possession or distribution.
  - Absenteeism, tardiness, periodically missing from work, or deteriorating work performance.
  - The identification of an employee as the focus of a criminal investigation into unauthorized drug possession, use or trafficking.
  - A report of alcohol or other drug use provided by a reliable and credible source.
  - Repeated or flagrant violations of the company’s safety or work rules that pose a substantial risk of physical injury or property damage and that appear to be related to substance abuse.

A written report describing the employee’s condition shall be completed, dated and signed by the supervisor and a copy made available to the employee.

- 9.4. Any employee testing positive may be required to seek and successfully complete a rehabilitation treatment program as a condition of continued employment. The employee may not be permitted to return to work until evidence is presented certifying to the successful completion of the treatment program and fitness to continue in the job. Any employee who is unwilling or unable to successfully complete a treatment program, or while on the job, abuses drugs or alcohol following treatment shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- 9.5. Employees absent from work because of treatment for substance abuse will be subject to leave policies. (See 6.2.3, 6.2.4, 6.2.5, 6.2.8).



## **10. CORRECTIVE ACTION**

## **CORRECTIVE ACTION**

All employees of the NMUCC are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and generally acceptable work behaviors. Employees in supervisor positions should set an example by their conduct, attitude and work habits. Corrective measures are to be assessed for unacceptable conduct, in a consistent and fair manner.

- 10.1. HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANCE** – All levels of the corrective action process shall require prior assistance from the Office of Human Resources to determine if consultation or corrective action is warranted. Similarly, employees are encouraged to consult Human Resources for assistance in resolving disciplinary matters.
- 10.2. CONSULTATION** – Where corrective action, as described in 10.3, is unwarranted, as indicated by Human Resources, a consultation statement shall ensue. Consultation shall be administered as a means to discussing issues that have to do with job performance and/or inappropriate conduct. The idea of consultation is to prevent future infractions by making the employee aware that 1) a problem exists, 2) the problem has a negative impact on the organization, and 3) a workable improvement plan is needed.
- 10.3. CORRECTIVE ACTION** – Corrective actions shall be considered as constructive procedures for the purpose of correcting inappropriate work behavior. Therefore, in most instances, corrective actions should consist of the least severe action to accomplish this purpose. Employees may have a coworker present during a corrective action meeting as an observer, however, a corrective action meeting will not be delayed due to the unavailability of the employee's co-worker. Supervisors are encouraged to first informally address issues of concern with an employee, with constructive suggestions for improvement before initiating the formal process set forth below.
  - a. The following progressive process may be implemented.
    - Level 1** may be the initial action in the corrective action process. The purpose of this step is to alleviate any misunderstanding and to clarify the direction for necessary and successful correction of a problem. A corrective action form shall be completed and reviewed with the employee. The form will be placed in the employee's personnel file in Human Resources.
    - Level 2** may be the second action taken in the corrective action process. This action shall be taken when the employee has not satisfactorily corrected the problem as outlined during level 1. In cases of a more serious nature, level 2 may be given as the initial step in the process. A corrective action form shall be completed and reviewed with the employee. Infractions warranting this step shall be placed in the employee's personnel file in Human Resources.
    - Level 3** – When an employee fails to modify behavior and/or performance, it may be necessary to move to the final step in the corrective action process, which is termination. The Director of Human Resources should be contacted before any action is taken in this step.
  - b. Corrective actions shall be administered on a uniform basis throughout the NMUCC. However, each offense must be judged on a case-by-case basis and consideration given to the employee's past record. Depending upon the seriousness of the offense, one or more of these steps may be skipped.
  - c. For charges such as a threat to the safety and/or well-being of an employee, stealing, direct insubordination, sexual harassment, or reporting to work under the influence

of drugs or alcohol, a temporary suspension may be imposed while fact finding is being conducted.

- d. Serious offenses may result in immediate suspension or termination for the first offense. The NMUCC reserves the right to terminate any employee who, by their total behavior, is shown to be irresponsible.

**10.4. REASONS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE** may include, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to adhere to policies and procedures
2. Repeated unexcused or excessive tardiness or absence
3. Failure to meet effectiveness and productivity standards
4. Unsatisfactory performance evaluation

**10.5. REASONS FOR DISCHARGE FOR MISCONDUCT** may include, but not limited to:

1. Discriminatory acts
2. Harassment of any nature
3. Insubordination, involving, but not limited to, refusing to carry out the direction of a supervisor where personal safety is not a problem, and defaming, assaulting or threatening to assault an employee.
4. Dishonesty
5. Wrongful appropriation and/or misuse of NMUCC property and/or funds
6. Sabotaging or willfully damaging equipment or property of other staff
7. Theft, including, but not limited to, the removal of NMUCC property or the other property of another staff from the workplace
8. Falsification of employment records, altering agency records, or unauthorized use or disclosure of confidential information
9. Violence in the workplace
10. Failure to correct unsatisfactory performance.
11. Carrying firearms or other weapons while on NMUCC business or on NMUCC property. Any employee found with a firearm or other weapon on NMUCC property, premises, or while on official business will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge. The employee may also be subject to criminal prosecution.
12. Sale, purchase, distribution or use of alcohol or illegal substances on work premises, or any other act of misconduct, not described above, that the NMUCC in its judgment believes to be serious.

## **11. GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **11.1. OPEN DOOR POLICY**

The NMUCC encourages communication between employees and supervisors. This can include any matters concerning work conditions, or any other aspect of employment. Employees may speak to their supervisor personally, or they may choose to communicate in writing. Employees are encouraged to discuss recommendations, or to voice their concerns about any problems they believe in good faith exist. NMUCC's experience has shown that when employees and supervisors deal openly and directly with each other, it creates a positive work environment, fostering honest, open and clear communication, and positive attitudes.

11.1.1. The Office of General Counsel is available to employees with a "need to know" legal advice as a part of their job responsibilities and with the approval of their Team Leader. Team Leaders seeking advice must have first discussed the issue with their respective Officer. Supervisors should be copied on all communications. This process is important to ensure proper representation of the NMUCC as well as to ensure effective time management on the part of the Office of General Counsel.

## **11.2. PERSONNEL RECORDS**

The HR Office maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file may include such information as the employee's job application, résumé, records of training, documentation of performance evaluations, benefits and compensation records, along with other employment documents. Personnel files are the property of the NMUCC, and access to the information contained therein is restricted. Generally, only the employee and management personnel of NMUCC who have a legitimate business reason to review information in a file may do so. Employees may provide documents to the Director of Human Resources, that they would like added to their personnel files (for example, letters of appreciation).

## **11.3. VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

11.3.1. Eligibility – In compliance with federal law, the NMUCC verifies that every new employee is either a U.S. citizen or authorized to be employed in the United States. All employees are required to provide document(s) necessary for verifying employment eligibility.

11.3.2. External Organization/Agency

No verification of employment will be given to an external organization/ agency without signed authorization from the employee.

11.3.3. Requests for References

Any employee receiving a request for a reference or recommendation on behalf of their employment with the NMUCC must refer the request to the Human Resources Office. Do not under any circumstances respond to requests for references, recommendations, or employment information regarding another current or former employee, or provide an unsolicited reference or recommendation for another current or former employee with respect to any aspect of their employment or performance. This includes references and recommendations on any social media websites (for example, LinkedIn). All such information must be provided on behalf of the NMUCC to outside parties by

the Human Resources Office. The NMUCC's policy is to provide only neutral reference information in response to requests for references (for example, dates of employment, position(s) held, etc.).

- 11.4. EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS** – When minors are hired for temporary and part-time positions during the school year, a valid work permit must be obtained in advance of employment for all new hires under age eighteen. A valid work permit will be kept in the individual's personnel file to verify that they are legally employed.
- 11.5. DRESS FOR OFFICE/PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF EMPLOYEES** – An employee's dress and grooming should be appropriate to the work situation. Each person represents the NMUCC in appearance as well as actions. Employees are expected to dress in a manner that is normally acceptable in an office environment. Employees may wear jeans on Fridays.
- 11.6. EMPLOYING RELATIVES** – The NMUCC may employ a relative or cohabitant\* of an employee provided the individual possesses the required qualifications for employment. However, those persons will not be given work assignments which require one to direct, review, or process the work of the other.  
*\*Includes partner, spouse, parent, step-parent, sibling, child, step-child, in-law, grand parent and grandchild.*
- 11.7. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT** – Outside employment by employees shall be done on the person's own time and shall not interfere nor create a conflict of interest with their employment with the NMUCC. Officers of the United Church of Christ are considered to be representing the United Church of Christ at all times. An Officer of the United Church of Christ may not engage in outside employment.
- 11.8. PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**  
Dues for professional memberships and the cost of professional materials may be made available to employees upon the approval of the supervisor and subject to the availability of funds.
- 11.9. SUBSCRIPTION BUDGETS** – Each ministry will be responsible for allocating a budget for subscriptions. Ministries are encouraged to share literature by publishing their lists of subscriptions.
- 11.10. WORK ENVIRONMENT**
- 11.10.1. Safety and Health:** Employees are expected to support the NMUCC's objective to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. Employees are expected to comply with all safety and health requirements whether established by NMUCC policy or by Federal, state or local law (e.g. OSHA, ADA, etc.)
- 11.10.2. Smoking, Vaping, Electronic Cigarettes:** The NMUCC complies with Ohio's Smoke-free Workplace Law. Smoking is permitted only in designated areas outside of the building.

**11.10.3. Children in the Workplace:** The NMUCC strives to be sensitive to the needs of both employees and their families. The NMUCC also seeks to provide an environment that is conducive to the productivity of all employees. In the best interest of employees and children, the workplace is not appropriate for children.

**11.10.4. Lactation Breaks:**

The NMUCC supports breastfeeding mothers by accommodating the mother who wishes to express breast milk during the workday. For up to one year after the child's birth, any mother who is breastfeeding will be provided reasonable break times to express milk. A private, designated room shall be provided for this purpose. Please contact the Human Resources Office for more information.

**11.10.5. Prayer:**

It is common for meetings and gatherings to begin or end with a time of prayer or worship. An employee is not excused from participation in the meeting or gathering simply because prayer or worship may occur. However, active participation at any time of prayer or worship is completely voluntary. No employee will suffer any adverse action for refusing to actively participate in prayer or worship.

**11.10.6. All Staff Community Outreach**

The NMUCC will engage as a full staff in community outreach at least once per year. The full staff outreach is considered required for all employees. A list of volunteer organizations will be provided by the Office of Human Resources and communicated to employees ahead of the event.

**11.10.7. Individual Community Outreach**

The objective of this policy is for all employees to engage regularly in living out our faith values in our communities through ongoing service and advocacy. If you are a full-time employee, you will receive 7.5 hours (1 day) per quarter to use for service in the community. If you are a part-time employee, 20 hours or less, you will receive 3.75 hours (1/2) per quarter to use for service in the community. Specific time away for community service activities is subject to supervisor approval and will require at least two weeks' notice to your supervisor. Supervisors are encouraged to support time off requests which follow the protocols for this program. Community service hours must be used within the quarter and does not carry over. A list of sites and projects will be made available through the Office of Human Resources.

**11.10.8. Unauthorized Audio or Video Recordings**

To protect the confidential information of the NMUCC and to promote open communication among employees of the NMUCC, no employee may make an audio or video recording of a communication with another employee or employees, without the consent of all individuals involved in the communication. No employee may record, by any means, a conversation with another employee unless all of the following criteria are met:

- A legitimate purpose for the recording. For example, recording a team meeting via Zoom for the purposes of later date review.

- A recording device must be in plain view.
- The employee or employees have consented to being recorded.
- This policy is not intended to apply to communication between employees pursuant to Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

Customer relationship recordings that may be necessary to measure the quality of service is acceptable as long as the customer is informed that the call will be recorded. Secret recordings are strictly prohibited. A violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

#### **11.10.9. Weapons**

For the purposes of this policy, weapon refers to any object designed for the purpose of inflicting harm on another person. This includes: Any form of weapon or explosive; all firearms; and all illegal knives. Regardless of whatever federal, state or local laws that allow people to carry weapons in public, concealed or not, weapons are strictly prohibited in NMUCC buildings.



**12. TRAVEL AND RELOCATION AND MOVING EXPENSES**

**12.1. TRAVEL POLICIES** – Refer to the attached appendix for a comprehensive outline of the Business and Travel policies and procedures.

12.1.2 Travel related expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with IRS reimbursement regulations and the procedures of the NMUCC.

12.13. Non-Exempt Employees – Prior approval of all travel by non-exempt employees must be obtained from the employee’s supervisor.

12.14. Membership in Airline Clubs – Upon request, each ministry will pay 50% per year for membership to one airline club for employees as defined by position description. Funds will be derived from their travel budget and subject to the approval of the Team Leader or appropriate designated person. The employee will pay the remaining 50%.

12.15. TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry – The NMUCC will reimburse up to 50% of the TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry costs for employees that travel for the NMUCC. The original receipt must be provided to Financial Services.

12.16. Replacement Luggage – Employees who travel extensively, as defined by travel budget and position description, may receive a \$200 replacement luggage allowance from their travel budget within a two-year period. Eligibility begins one year after date of hire.

12.17. Corporate Credit Cards – Each Officer of the Church will be issued a corporate credit card to be used for carrying out the business of the ministry as it relates to travel and other ordinary ministry expenses. It will be the responsibility of the Team Leader to determine the other employee positions for which the card is necessary. Use of card for personal expenses is prohibited.

12.18. Exempt Employees

a. Travel Advances – Employees who are not provided a corporate credit card may be granted travel advances on an approved, as needed basis. Employees with corporate credit cards may be granted a travel advance if travel is to a country that does not readily accept credit cards. Travel advances will need to be fully accounted for upon return to the office.

b. Corporate Credit Cards – When credit cards are issued to employees who are required to travel extensively, all charges must be accounted for in accordance with the NMUCC’s procedures. All cards must be returned to Human Resources upon an employee’s termination of employment or upon request.

c. Key Cards- Distribution will be determined by the employee’s Team Leader.

d. Cell Phone Allowance - Employees may be provided a flat allowance in their semi-monthly paycheck as reimbursement for a portion of their personal cell phone that is also used for business. The flat allowance is approved by the Chief Financial Officer and reviewed annually to ensure the rate is appropriate based upon rates charged by plan providers. Employees to receive the allowance will be named by their Team Leader.

**12.2. RELOCATION AND MOVING EXPENSES**

12.2.1. When a national search has been conducted, reasonable and approved relocation and moving expenses shall be paid on behalf of exempt employees newly called by election or administrative appointment who are relocating for the employment with

the NMUCC. Qualified moving expenses will be included in employees' wages, subject to income and employment taxes.

12.2.2. Covered expenses are:

a. Packing, shipping, unpacking and insuring of up to 15,000 lbs. of household goods and personal effects.

b. Transportation of the employee and their family at the time of the final move.

12.2.3. The NMUCC shall report the amount of moving expenses to the Internal Revenue Service. Tax implications are the responsibility of the employee.

12.2.4. Moving Company – New employees are to obtain quotes from the designated NMUCC provider.

12.2.5. Moving Cost Limitations – See in Policy 12.2.2.

12.2.6. Search Visit – One search visit of up to five (5) days is allowed. Transportation for one round trip by air is provided for employee, and spouse or domestic partner, if applicable. Costs of meals (up to \$50/day per person) and lodging for employee and spouse or domestic partner will be provided for up to five days named. Cost of a rental car in Cleveland, if needed, is provided.

12.2.7. Temporary Lodging Upon Arrival – If warranted by unforeseen circumstance, temporary living expenses for up to fourteen (14) days will be provided, upon approval of the employing National Ministry. Arrangements will be made through our offices.

12.2.8. Transportation at Time of Move – Air transportation costs for the employee and household family from their place of residence to Cleveland will be covered at the time of the move to commence employment. If the employee chooses to drive, the employee will be paid either the equivalent cost of air transportation for the employee and the employee's family or actual mileage, (calculated at the IRS rate), whichever is less. No other expenses will be reimbursed when driving.

## **13. E-MAIL, INTERNET, AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS**

### **13.1. E-MAIL, INTERNET, AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

All electronic and telephonic communications systems and all communications and information transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems are the property of the NMUCC and, as such, are to be used solely for job-related purposes. The use of any software and business equipment, including, but not limited to fax machines, computers, and copy machines for private purposes is strictly prohibited.

Further, employees are not permitted to use a passcode/word, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless authorized to do so. All passcodes are the property of the NMUCC. No employee may use passcodes/words or voice-mail access that has not been authorized for that employee's use, not issued to that employee or that is unknown to the NMUCC. Moreover, the improper use of electronic and telephonic communications systems (e.g. transmission of offensive jokes or remarks) will not be tolerated. To ensure that the use of electronic and telephonic communications systems and business equipment is consistent with the NMUCC mandates, authorized representatives of the NMUCC may monitor the use of such equipment from time to time.

The NMUCC provides authorized access to the Internet. The Internet represents a useful tool for the NMUCC in conducting its ministries, but like any other tool, it must be used properly. For purposes of this policy, Internet includes any public electronic data communications network.

Internet E-Mail offers broadly similar capabilities to other company E-Mail systems except that correspondents are external to the NMUCC. External E-Mail messages may carry one or more attachments. An attachment may be any kind of computer file, such as a word processing document, spreadsheet, software program, or graphic image.

Just as the NMUCC has an official Internet website, so do other organizations. Most public websites are "read only", meaning that they permit a person who visits the site to read material posted on the website but not to leave a message. Other websites permit visitors to establish continuing contact by leaving a message (the electronic equivalent of leaving your business card or a telephone message). The owner or operator of a website may record the information that a connection was made from the NMUCC.

As a general rule, copyrighted material may not be forwarded, distributed, or incorporated into another work, material retrieved from a website or other external system. Very limited or "fair use" may be permitted in certain circumstances. Any employee desiring to reproduce or store the contents of a screen or website should consult with their Team Leader who will consult with the Office of General Counsel to ascertain whether the intended use is permissible.

Use of the Internet includes all restrictions which apply generally to the use of the NMUCC's E-Mail and other electronic and telephonic equipment, as noted above. In addition, the following rules apply with respect to Internet usage.

1. No Browsing of Restricted Content Websites: The NMUCC has blocked access to websites which contain pornographic material. However, the World Wide Web

changes on a daily basis. Users who become aware of sites that should be restricted are required to report such sites to the help desk.

2. **No Downloading of Non-Business Related Data:** The NMUCC allows the downloading of files from the Internet. However, downloading files should be limited to those which relate directly to NMUCC business.
3. **No Downloading of Application Programs:** The NMUCC does not permit the downloading or installation on NMUCC computers of application software from the Internet. Such software may not only contain embedded viruses, but is also untested and may interfere with the functioning of standard NMUCC applications.
4. **No Participation in Web-Based Surveys Without Authorization:** When using the Internet, the user implicitly involves the NMUCC in their expression. Therefore, users should not participate in Web or E-Mail surveys or interviews without authorization.
5. **No use of Subscription-Based Services Without Prior Approval:** Some Internet sites require that users subscribe before being able to use them. Users should not subscribe to such services without the express approval of their elected officer.
6. **No Violation of Copyright:** Many of the materials on the Internet are protected by copyright. Even though they may seem to be freely accessible, many of the intellectual property laws which apply to print media also apply to software and material published on the Internet. Employees are permitted to print out web pages and to download material from the Internet for informational purposes as long as the purpose for such copying falls into the category of “fair use.” Please do not copy or disseminate materials which are copyrighted. Employees having any questions regarding such materials should consult with their Team Leader who will consult with the Office of General Counsel. Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### **13.2 Cybersecurity Awareness**

Cybersecurity attacks are an increasingly evolving danger to the NMUCC’s sensitive data as attackers employ new methods to circumvent traditional security controls. Employees are more technologically reliant due to remote and hybrid work models, and data breaches by hackers can result in financial loss, identity theft, and access to protected information etc. Employees are required to complete cybersecurity awareness training each year to support the NMUCC in mitigating cyber threats to systems and information. Employees will be required to review and become familiar with phishing scams, virus detection, spear phishing, spam, ransomware, catfishing, insider threats and other cybersecurity threats that may evolve in the course and scope of employment. Employees are also required to use the virus protection software and follow the policies on internet, password security and software installation.

### **13.3 Hardware and Software Procurement Policy**

- To ensure compatibility and best pricing, purchases of all NMUCC hardware and software will require IT involvement ahead of the purchase.
- Purchases of peripherals (hard drives, adapters, mice, keyboards, etc.) require IT involvement ahead of the purchase.
- From time to time, the NMUCC may have excess computers and related technologies. In the event that there is the need to reduce inventory of this

equipment, this equipment will be offered to current employees for purchase at a set price on a first come first serve basis. Notice of such a sale will be posted at least 15 days prior to the sale and employees who are not able to be present on the date of the sale may designate another employee to represent them at the sale. A written notice of such an assignment must be made to the help desk.

#### **13.4 Social Media**

Includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's blog, journal, or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin or chat room, as well as any other form of electronic communication. All employees are expected to adhere to the NMUCC's Common Personnel Policies when using social media.

This social media policy applies to employees using social media while at work. It also applies to the use of social media when away from work when the content is related to the NMUCC, its program of work, or its interest, and/or when the employee's affiliation with the NMUCC is identified, known, or presumed or when such use impacts the employee's own job performance or the working conditions of other employees. It does not apply to content that is unrelated to the NMUCC, its program of work, or its interests.

Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects NMUCC's legitimate interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Employees may not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, or hateful to another person or entity affiliated with NMUCC. Examples of such conduct include posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, or any other status protected by law or NMUCC policy.

##### **Business Social Media**

An employee may not post content on social media on behalf of NMUCC without prior authorization from the employee's Team Leader or Officer of the Church. All content must comply with the Content Guidelines.

Employees may not send email blasts or create marketing material without prior approval, and may not use marketing materials without prior approval. Please understand that any work-related social media accounts are the property of the NMUCC and there is no expectation of privacy in any postings or other activity on those accounts. The NMUCC reserves the right to monitor such accounts. Upon any employment separation from NMUCC, administrator rights must be relinquished, and all login and passwords on any work-related social media account must be provided to the immediate supervisor.

## **Content**

All content posted on social media on behalf of the NMUCC must be consistent with and not denigrate positions taken, policies adopted, resolutions passed, or other actions taken by:

- General Synod of the United Church of Christ;
- The United Church of Christ Board; and
- The Covenanted Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

Content solicited and/or accepted by NMUCC, its officers, and/or its employees from non-employees for the purpose of posting on NMUCC social media must comply with this social media policy. A non-employee must be provided with and agree to NMUCC social media policy content guidelines prior to the non-employee agreeing to provide social media content. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related confidential communications.

## **Personal Social Media**

The NMUCC recognizes an employee's right to engage in any social media activities away from work that the employee finds appropriate. If the NMUCC, its program of work, or its interests is the subject of content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee of the NMUCC, that the views you are expressing are your own opinions and do not represent those of the NMUCC. If you publish a blog or post online related to the work that you do or subjects associated with NMUCC, make it clear you are not speaking on behalf of the NMUCC. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of NMUCC." Do not use NMUCC email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use. Do not create a link to the UCC website from your blog or other social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use. Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking site to a NMUCC website without identifying yourself as a NMUCC employee.

### **13.5 Media Inquiries and Contact**

When the NMUCC wishes to communicate publicly, it has well-established processes to do so. Any and all requests from outside media should be forwarded to the Director of Public Engagement & Digital Presence who is authorized to determine who will speak on behalf of the NMUCC depending on the topic, and to determine which media requests will be accepted.

### **13.6. Patents and Copyrights**

All patents and copyrights resulting from the investments of the NMUCC's resources shall be available for the NMUCC's use without payment of royalty. Consistent with federal law, the NMUCC owns and reserves the rights to all works created by employees in the course of their employment. Any use without permission is prohibited.



## **14. WHISTLEBLOWER**

## **14.1. WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

The NMUCC and the United Church of Christ Board (UCCB) are committed to the highest possible legal, ethical, and moral standards of business conduct. The NMUCC and the UCCB are dedicated to acting in good faith with respect to individuals who report improper behavior or activities, including suspected violations of law or of NMUCC or UCCB policy. This Whistleblower Policy (“Policy”) provides individuals with a process for reporting such violations and to reassure such individuals that they will be protected from retaliation for reporting, in good faith, the improper behavior or activities of any NMUCC officer, employee, or agent, or any director of the UCCB.

### SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The Policy applies to all NMUCC employees, including part-time, temporary, and contract employees, officers, and volunteers, as well as to directors and committee members of the UCCB. It is the responsibility of all individuals to whom this Policy applies to comply with the Policy and report any violations or suspected violations of the Policy.

The Policy is intended to cover serious and sensitive issues of improper behavior and activities, including those which relate to:

- Financial reporting;
- Violations of federal, state, or local laws or regulations;
- Violations of NMUCC or UCCB policy; or
- Other serious improper and/or unethical conduct.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list but rather a guide to the types of improper behavior and activities covered by this Policy. Employment-related concerns should continue to be reported in accordance with Common Personnel Policies § 8: Concern, Complaint, and Grievance Procedures. A report under this Policy that is determined to be more properly processed as an employment-related concern will be referred to Human Resources.

Reports of improper behavior and activities as described under this Policy must be processed according to this Policy regardless of the procedure under which the report is initially brought. For example, a person receiving a report of financial misconduct made under Common Personnel Policies § 8 must report the behavior to the Officer of the Church, named on page 61, or the Chair of the Audit Committee, as described in this Policy.

#### **14.1.1. Process for Reporting Suspected Improper Behavior or Activities**

Any person may report suspected improper behavior or activities. Such behavior or activities may involve employees, officers, directors, auditors, vendors, or other third parties. The person reporting suspected improper behavior or activities is a Whistleblower.

A Whistleblower should report suspected improper behavior or activities directly to either the Officer of the Church, named on page 61, or the Chair of the Audit Committee, who will in turn promptly notify the Office of General Counsel of the report. A

Whistleblower may make a report in person, by telephone, by e-mail, or by mail. Contact information is included at the end of the Policy.

Although a Whistleblower is not expected to prove the truth of the allegations or to investigate the behavior or activities, a Whistleblower should include whatever documentation is available to support a reasonable basis for the report.

A Whistleblower may report suspected improper behavior anonymously. Anonymous allegations should be detailed to the greatest extent possible because follow-up questions will not be possible.

Subject to legal and privacy considerations, the Whistleblower will receive a prompt response to their report, which may include:

- An acknowledgment that the report was received;
- An indication as to when the matter will be investigated; and/or
- An estimate of the time it will take for a final response.

Each allegation will be investigated by the Office of General Counsel, who may request the assistance of other parties as deemed necessary. Every effort will be made to protect the Whistleblower's identity to the extent possible. The Office of General Counsel will prepare a report of the findings of the investigation and submit the report to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee, in consultation with the Office of General Counsel, will recommend an appropriate response to the reported concern.

Subject to legal and privacy considerations, the Whistleblower will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.

Officers, employees, and agents of the NMUCC and directors and committee members of the UCCB who may be implicated in a report of concern shall not participate in any deliberation or discussion with the Audit Committee or the UCCB related to the allegation, except to present information directly to the Office of General Counsel on their own behalf.

In the event that the allegation implicates the Office of General Counsel, the Audit Committee will select an appropriate officer or UCCB member to conduct the investigation.

#### **14.1.2. Safeguards**

The NMUCC and the UCCB prohibit any form of harassment, retaliation, or other adverse employment consequence toward a Whistleblower in response to a good faith allegation under this Policy.

The NMUCC and UCCB also prohibit any form of harassment, retaliation, or other adverse employment consequence toward a person for disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency where the person has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a federal, state, or local law, rule, or regulation. Officers, employees, and agents of the NMUCC and directors and committee members of the UCCB are required to cooperate and provide truthful information in any investigation or inquiry by law enforcement.

Any person who retaliates against a Whistleblower or other individual who assists in the investigation is subject to appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination.

A Whistleblower's right to protection does not extend immunity for participating or being complicit in the matters which are the subject of the allegations or ensuing investigations.

Any employee, officer, or director found to have knowingly made a false allegation with malicious intent or to have knowingly produced false information with respect to the allegation will be subjected to corrective action.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

#### **Officer of the Church**

Karen Georgia A. Thompson  
700 Prospect Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44115  
[thompsonk@ucc.org](mailto:thompsonk@ucc.org)  
216-736-3201

#### **Chair of the Audit Committee**

Kevin Graham  
41 Beaver Drive  
Holiday Island, AR, 72631, US  
[kevin.graham@rmslifeline.com](mailto:kevin.graham@rmslifeline.com)  
281-380-3320 (Phone)

## **15. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

## **15.1 CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

The NMUCC and the United Church of Christ Board (UCCB) are committed to the highest possible legal, ethical, and moral standards of business conduct. Officers and key employees of the NMUCC and directors and committee members of the UCCB have a fiduciary duty under the law to act at all times in the best interests of the NMUCC and the UCCB. This Conflict of Interest Policy (“Policy”) defines the term “conflict of interest” and provides a process for identifying and disclosing conflicts of interest, and minimizing the impact of conflicts on the NMUCC and the UCCB. This Policy is intended to supplement but not replace any state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest that are applicable to NMUCC and UCCB.

### Scope of this Policy

This Policy applies to all NMUCC officers and key employees, as well as to UCCB directors and committee members. Key employees are employees who exercise substantial influence or control in their positions, and include but are not limited to: Chief Financial Officer, Chief Strategy Officer, Director of Human Resources, and any other persons designated as key employees by the Officers of the Church for the NMUCC. Collectively, the individuals to whom the Policy applies are referred to as “Covered Persons.” It is the responsibility of all Covered Persons to comply with the Policy and report any violations or suspected violations of the Policy.

### DEFINITION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A “conflict of interest” is any transaction or relationship that may compromise the ability of a Covered Person to make unbiased and impartial decisions on behalf of the NMUCC and/or the UCCB. These transactions or relationships may include, but are not limited to, family relationships, business transactions, professional activities, or personal affiliations.

#### **15.1.1. Prohibited Activities**

A Covered Person may not take personal advantage of a business opportunity that is offered to the NMUCC or the UCCB unless the UCCB first determines not to pursue the opportunity. A Covered Person must protect the confidential information of the NMUCC and the UCCB and must not use such confidential information for their personal benefit, for the benefit of a related organization (an organization in which a Covered Person serves in a leadership, employment, or ownership capacity), or to the detriment of the NMUCC or the UCCB. Confidential information is information that is obtained through the Covered Person’s position with the NMUCC or the UCCB that has not become public information.

#### **15.1.2. Identification of Conflicts of Interest**

All Covered Persons must submit an annual Statement of Disclosure detailing any facts or circumstances that might constitute a conflict of interest. All Covered Persons must submit an amended Statement of Disclosure within 30 days of a change or addition to the information provided in the annual Statement of Disclosure, or prior to any deliberation or vote on a matter involving the potential conflict of interest, whichever occurs first.

The Audit Committee will review each Statement of Disclosure for any set of facts or circumstances that may indicate an actual or potential conflict of interest. The Audit

Committee may request the assistance of the Office of General Counsel to identify such conflicts. When evaluating a particular set of facts or circumstances, the Audit Committee may consider, in addition to the information on the Statement of Disclosure, the following non-exhaustive list of factors that may indicate a conflict of interest:

- Solicitation or acceptance of gifts or other items of value that may create an appearance or expectation of special treatment in NMUCC and/or UCCB matters;
- Any incident of abuse or misuse of a leadership position for personal or third-party gain or benefit;
- Failure to provide any information requested by the audit committee;
- Situations in which a Covered Person may be divided between personal interests or the interests of another organization and the best interests of the NMUCC and/or the UCCB; and
- Business, professional, or other activities that would materially and adversely affect the NMUCC and/or the UCCB, either directly or indirectly.

The Audit Committee may request additional information from any Covered Person at any time in connection with a review of a Statement of Disclosure.

#### **15.1.3. Resolution of Conflicts of Interest**

If the Audit Committee identifies an actual or potential conflict of interest, it may recommend one of the following actions to resolve the conflict:

- Waive the conflict of interest as unlikely to affect the Covered Person's ability to act in the best interests of the organization;
- Determine that the Covered Person should be recused from all information, deliberation, and decision-making related to the particular transaction or relationship that gives rise to the conflict of interest. This course of action should apply when the transaction or relationship presents a conflict of interest that is limited to a particular activity; or
- Determine that the Covered Person must resign from their service to the NMUCC or to the UCCB. This course of action should apply when the conflict of interest is so pervasive that the Covered Person would likely seldom, if ever, be able to act solely in the best interests of the NMUCC and/or UCCB. The Audit Committee must report, in Executive Session, to the UCCB on the conflicts of interest identified each year and the actions taken to resolve such conflicts.

#### **15.1.4. Business Transactions with the NMUCC or the UCCB**

A conflict of interest arises any time a Covered Person, or a Covered Person's family member, seeks to enter into a business relationship with the NMUCC or the UCCB. A conflict of interest also arises when an organization in which a Covered Person serves in a leadership, employment, or ownership capacity ("related organization") seeks to enter into a business relationship with the NMUCC or the UCCB.

A conflict of interest does not necessarily preclude business relationships with the NMUCC or the UCCB. The following procedure is designed to resolve conflicts of interest whenever a Covered Person, or a Covered Person's family member or related organization, seeks to provide goods or services to the NMUCC or the UCCB as a paid vendor, or applies to receive a grant or contract from the NMUCC or the UCCB:

- The Covered Person must promptly disclose the intent to enter into a business relationship with NMUCC or the UCCB to the Audit Committee.
- The Covered Person must recuse themselves from all information, deliberation, and voting related to the contemplated business relationship.
- The UCCB shall appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed existing transaction or arrangement, using reasonable diligence.
- The UCCB must determine, without the presence or participation of the Covered Person, that the transaction is fair and in the best interests of the NMUCC and/or the UCCB.
- If the business relationship is approved, the Covered Person may not participate in any process by which the Covered Person, or their family member or related organization, is evaluated.
- The minutes of the UCCB meeting considering the transaction shall reflect, at a minimum:
  - The name of the Covered Person and their interest in the proposed business relationship;
  - The extent of the Covered Person's participation in the meeting;
  - Any determination as to whether the proposed business relationship was fair and in the best interests of the NMUCC and/or the UCCB and the specific reasons for such a determination;
  - Whether any alternatives to the proposed business relationship were considered;
  - The names of the persons present for discussions and votes relating to the proposed business relationship; and
  - A record of any votes taken in connection with the proposed business relationship.

#### **15.1.5. Violations of the Policy**

Any Covered Person who violates this policy is subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment or removal from the UCCB or committee of the UCCB.



**Receipt for Copy of Employee Handbook**  
(Common Policies)

June 2021

Please complete this page and return to Human Resources

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Last Name <b>(Please Print)</b>	First Name	Middle Initial
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I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Common Policies (Employee Handbook) of the National Ministries United Church of Christ. I understand my responsibility to familiarize myself with its provisions. I further understand that my employment is not for any definite period of time, and that nothing in the Employee Handbook in any way creates an expressed or implied contract of employment or warranty of any benefits. I additionally understand that any and all of the rules, policies, and benefits referred to in the Employee Handbook may be unilaterally amended, modified, or discontinued at any time.

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix

## A. Equal Employment Opportunity/AA Checklist

The United Church of Christ has repeatedly affirmed, through pronouncements and actions of the General Synod, its commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action. In furtherance of these pronouncements, the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ has adopted a voluntary Affirmative Action Plan, and has recommended this plan to Conferences, Associations, and Affiliated Bodies.

Affirmative Action is a set of specific and result-oriented procedures designed to eliminate both conscious and unconscious discriminatory employment practices. The UCC's Executive Council adopted the following definition of Affirmative Action in October 1986:

A program of proactive measures aimed at assuring that the composition of the staff of the United Church of Christ, National Setting fully reflects the diverse character of the UCC membership and our society.

The voluntary Affirmative Action guidelines encourages that all positions of employment reflect the broad spectrum of the diverse society in which we live. Therefore, the goal of this Plan is to ensure that we have diversity in the pool of applicants. In order to achieve diversity, the plan calls for all position openings to be advertised widely to diverse audiences. Unlike Affirmative Action Plans for federal agencies or plans that are ordered by a court to correct past history of discrimination, with a goal or quota system attached, the focus this AA/EEO Plan is obtaining a diverse pool of applicants for the search committee to choose from and not on forcing a result at the back end of the process.

In pursuit of the goals of this commitment to Equal Employment and Affirmative Action, the following checklist for use by search committees in all settings of the UCC is recommended.

### Checklist for Search Committees

1. **Affirmative Action** seeks to ensure diversity in the pool of applicants. This means that if a search committee finds that it does not have diversity reflected during the interview process, the committee should re-open the application process and re-advertise widely to diverse communities in an effort to diversify the applicant pool of candidates.
2. **The Search Committee:**
  - a. is an inclusive and diverse body of persons;
  - b. functions as an intentional Affirmative Action Committee in the search process, taking extra affirming, advocacy and development steps, if necessary, to assure that a significant pool of candidates representing the protected categories as indicated previously;
  - c. perceives itself to be an active (rather than neutral) body.
3. **A Statement of the Committee's commitment to Affirmative Action** and its intention to follow Affirmative Action Guidelines/Procedures accompanies announcements about positions, advertising of positions, letters to potential candidates about positions or other significant mailings from the committee to any place in the UCC system. The NMUCC

is proud to be a multicultural, multiracial, open and affirming, accessible to all, equal opportunity employer.

#### **4. Qualifications and Criteria for Positions:**

- a. For the National Ministries, the HR Office works with each team to develop a position description that ensures inclusive language and ensures that the position description asks for the minimum qualifications needed to perform the duties. For positions outside of the National Ministries, it is recommended that the position description be examined carefully before it is advertised to identify any overt or covert implications of discrimination which might have the effect of screening out persons from the protected categories.

Examples of overt implications of discrimination include specific race, ethnic, gender or age-based requirements. For example, a job posting may not require that the applicant be of a particular race, gender, age or national origin.

Examples of covert implications of discrimination are more subtle, such as a requirement that an applicant have membership in a particular organization that may screen out persons of a particular race, gender, age or national origin. Another example is any implied suggestion that the candidate must be young (terms such as "fresh perspective" and "energetic" can be seen as code words discouraging older applicants).

- b. The position description has been examined to determine the qualifications such as skills, experience, knowledge and abilities required to do the work. Based on the above, the qualifications should be listed within the categories of Minimum and Preferred.

#### **5. Advertisements for the Position** along with the essential duties and the minimum qualifications, the advertisement should always include the EEO language, i.e., we are a multicultural, multiracial, open and affirming, accessible to all, EOE. The following is a list of groups to send open position listings to:

- CAIM – Council for American Indian Ministries
- CYYAM – Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries
- UCCDM – UCC Disabilities Ministries
- MRSEJ- Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice
- PAAM – Pacific Islander Asian American Ministries
- Open and Affirming Coalition United Church of Christ
- UBC - United Black Christians
- United Samoan Ministries
- Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries
- UCC MHN – UCC Mental Health Network

#### **6. Recruitment Procedures:**

The National Ministries endeavors to recruit employees from backgrounds that vary by race, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, genetic information, past, present or future service in the uniformed services, religion, or any other

legally protected characteristic under applicable federal, state or local law. The NMUCC is proud to be a multicultural, multiracial, open and affirming, accessible to all, equal opportunity employer.

- a. A review of recruitment resources ensures that sources of personnel known specifically by and for the protected categories.
  - b. Special efforts are made to advertise the job description in publications which direct their news towards the protected categories as listed.
  - c. Circulation efforts are made to advertise the job description in publications which direct their news towards the protected categories as listed.
  - d. Special help is secured from others who are working in the above communities or who might have access to those communities.
  - e. If the committee finds that there is a lack of sufficient persons from the protected categories during the interview process, the committee re-opens the search and goes back to all of the above groups to invite them to suggest candidates.
  - f. The Committee exercises conscientious and rigorous follow-through to assure that there is a representative pool of candidates.
- 7. Screening of Profiles/Applications:** Resumes and/or profiles are reviewed and screened carefully to highlight those applicants who have demonstrated abilities or qualities as per the position description.
- 8. Interviewing:**
- a. Job-related interview questions and evaluation tools are developed by the committee. Questions are developed primarily from the job description and in advance of conducting interviews to foster an atmosphere of openness. All applicants are asked the same questions in a structured interviewing style.
  - b. All committee members are to review the guidelines on questions that are legally permissible to ask and fully understand what questions not to ask before the interview.
  - c. A role play of the interview may be held by the search committee before the search process begins.

## **B. Business and Travel**

### **Our Understanding**

All travel expenses incurred by employees while carrying out their duties and responsibilities for the NMUCC require proper documentation and timely accounting. It is understood that all expenses be reasonably necessary to the travel, and employees utilize the most cost-effective means that is appropriate to the nature and objectives of their assignments.

All employees are expected to be good stewards in the use of church funds and be mindful that the funds being expended have been given by persons of faith with the intention and understanding that their gifts would be used to further the ministry of Jesus Christ. As faithful stewards of the resources, employees should strive to use available resources in the most effective way possible. An ethic of parsimony—conscious caution in spending – should govern all business and travel expenses. As stewards, however, our concern is not simply to keep costs to a minimum, but to effectively use our resources to ensure our ability to effectively accomplish the work.

Changes to the policies and procedures may be made from time to time and will be communicated via broadcast email or NMUCC portal. The information herein supersedes all previous travel policies and procedure documentation.

### **Administration**

Team Leaders manage each team's budget and, as such, are responsible for approval of all reimbursable ministry expenses incurred by members of their teams. This includes determining the need and time for trips, selection of appropriate staff, and review and approval of expenses charged to the ministry. The Chief Financial Officer, or their designee, has the right to review and provide final approval of business and travel expenses for compliance with these policies.

### **Coordination of Travel**

Travel to the same event by multiple Officers or staff should be the exception and not the rule. Consideration must be given to the long-term administration of the Church when multiple Officers or staff are planning travel. While not always practical, it is advised that more than one Officer of the Church not fly to the same event on the same plane. The same consideration should be given when multiple staff are traveling to the same event. Once a trip has been booked, staff will be expected to enter their itinerary on the NMUCC Travel Calendar. This master travel calendar is to help coordinate travel to events and to optimize the travel budget.

### **Receipts**

1. All expenses must be documented. Employees shall submit any and all original receipts as they pertain to their travel or other reimbursable expenses within 30 days of the expense, except as otherwise noted in this policy.
2. Employees are not required to submit receipts for expenses under \$25.
3. In case of a lost receipt, or when none is given for the purchase or payment, employees should submit the amount, purpose, date, and location of the expense with their documentation.
4. Lost receipts in excess of \$100 will be forwarded to the attention of the elected officer.
5. Due to accounting and tax reasons, it is important to have expenses received in Financial Services in a reasonable amount of time, no later than 30 days after the expense was

incurred. Any employee reimbursable expenses are expected within the 30-day time limit. Employee Reimbursable expenses received beyond 45 days will not be paid.

6. Travel expenses for a spouse, dependent, or other individual who accompanies staff on a business trip are not reimbursable expenses and should not be charged to the corporate card.

### **Non-Allowable Expenses**

The following list is presented only as a guide and is not intended to be a complete list of expenses which are not allowable by the NMUCC.

- Airline ticket upgrades
- Alcohol (only permitted with the express permission of the appropriate Officer)
- Expenses incurred by an employee's failure to cancel transportation or hotel reservations in a timely fashion
- Passports and vaccinations, when NOT required as a specific and necessary condition of the travel assignment
- Commuting between home and office
- Portion of travel for personal use, including spousal travel
- Personal entertainment expenses including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theatre movies, social activities, etc.
- Child-care, baby-sitting, house-sitting, pet-sitting / kennel charges
- Subscriptions, books, magazines, and newspapers for personal use
- Flowers
- Gifts
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Spa charges
- Shoeshine services
- Birthday party gifts, cakes, or other treats that are personal in nature, i.e. shower gifts, wedding gifts, where there is no related business purpose
- I-Tunes purchases
- In-flight phone calls
- Annual fees for reward programs
- Personal auto repairs, traffic fines, parking violations, court costs
- Theft, loss, or damage of non-business-related personal property, e.g. iPods, headsets, jewelry.

### **Allowable Expense for Civil Disobedience**

Contact the elected Officer to obtain clearance for any civil disobedience action. Civil disobedience must be issue-based, nonpartisan, nonviolent, and carried out in collaboration with trusted partners. If an action is approved by the elected officer, employees may be reimbursed for "post and forfeit" charges up to \$75 with documentation.

### **General**

When invited to participate in meetings sponsored by other entities, it is the employee's responsibility to request reimbursement for all or a portion of the expenses incurred for that meeting. The following should be considered:

- Primary areas of responsibility based on employee's job description, portfolio or assignment

- Liaison assignments and designations (COREM, UBC, PAAM, Ecumenical Partnerships, etc.)
- Attendance/participation in church-wide events such as General Synod, NYE, National Women's events and constituency gatherings.
- Ministry team programs and involvements at conferences, associations, clergy or church clusters, consultations

### **Travel to NMUCC Conferences**

When employees are invited by a Conference to make a presentation, conduct a workshop, or preach, it is understood that the Conference will cover the full cost of housing and meals and should be clarified in advance of the trip with the host Conference. The cost of airfare is covered by the NMUCC. When employees that are invited to do work in a Conference by invitation other than by the Conference itself, the Conference Minister must be informed in advance that National staff will be present in their Conference.

### **Honoraria**

Honoraria paid to staff while performing the ministry of the NMUCC are to be remitted to Financial Services. Elected Officers of the Church are considered to be representing the UCC and performing the ministry of the UCC at all times. All payments for speaking engagements and appearances of Officers of the Church must be remitted to Financial Services.

Financial Services will provide a W-9 form to the payor upon request so that payments can be appropriately directed.

### **Corporate Cards**

NMUCC Corporate Cards are issued at the discretion of the Team Leader with the approval of the elected Officer.

### **Ownership and Cancellation of the NMUCC Corporate Card**

The NMUCC Corporate Card is considered property of the NMUCC and the cardholder bears responsibility for the card. It may not be transferred to, assigned to, or used by anyone other than the assigned cardholder. The card issuer or NMUCC may suspend or cancel cardholder privileges at any time for any reason. The cardholder will surrender the NMUCC Corporate Card upon request, to any authorized agent of NMUCC or the card issuer. Use of the NMUCC Corporate Card or account after notice of its cancellation may be fraudulent and may cause NMUCC to take legal action against the cardholder.

### **Separation of Employment**

When a cardholder separates, terminates, or retires from the NMUCC, they will be required to return the card to Human Resources prior to departing. In addition, any outstanding receipts and documentation for expenses on the card must be submitted prior to departure.

### **Spending Limits**

Each NMUCC Corporate Card will have a preset limit. This amount can be increased or decreased depending on the buying needs of the ministries or individuals' travel requirements.



### **Corporate Card Abuse**

The corporate card is to be used for business-related purposes. Personal use of the card is prohibited. Abuse of the NMUCC Corporate Card will result in revocation of the card and appropriate disciplinary action that up to and including termination of employment.

The Chief Financial Officer may suspend the NMUCC Corporate Card if the cardholder fails to submit a monthly reconciliation report by the monthly deadline (including valid receipts and documented business purpose). After no more than three documented violations of this policy the NMUCC Corporate Card will be permanently cancelled and all undocumented expenses will be included in the employee's Form W-2 as income. The NMUCC reserves the option to cancel the card after one documented violation of the policy if it deems it appropriate under the circumstances.

### **Policy violations include, but are not limited to:**

- Non-compliance with the NMUCC Travel Policies
- Purchasing items for personal use
- Failure to return the NMUCC Corporate Card upon separation of employment, or upon request
- Failure to maintain proper records in accordance with NMUCC guidelines after 30 days from the date of the charge on the Corporate Card (i.e., a Corporate Card charge incurred on June 2 must be included on an expense report filed no later than July 2).

### **Card Reimbursement**

- NMUCC pays MasterCard directly for the employees' expenses. Cardholders will submit all expenses using the Concur software/apps.
- Expenses lacking documentation or inconsistent with NMUCC Policy will be included in the employee's W-2 as income for the year.

### **Travel Advances**

Generally, travel advances are only issued to employees who do not have corporate credit cards, or employees travelling internationally. Travel advances require Team Leader's approval.

Advances are:

1. Only issued one week prior to travel.
2. Must be \$250 or more.
3. May not be used to purchase primary modes of transportation.
4. Must be cleared within 30 days of returning from travel. Unreconciled advances will be charged to the employee's departmental budget, and as required by federal law, the amount will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service as taxable compensation.
5. Employees may only have one travel advance outstanding at a time.

### **Air Travel**

The "lowest" fare should be booked in normal instances. Air travel should be economy class or equivalent, any exceptions should be approved by the Team Leader in consultation with the elected officer in advance of the trip. Employees shall avail themselves to special rates offered by airlines or travel agencies. However, with the reduced or special fares, airlines frequently

assess penalties for changing or cancelling your ticket, so employees should take this into consideration when booking tickets. Any cost associated with an upgrade is the responsibility of the employee.

New “basic economy” fares, with their many restrictions and limitations, are not in the best interest of our employees and have been removed as an option from your travel profile. Employees should be aware of inadvertently booking one of these fares when making travel arrangements through a discount web site, airline booking site, or some other agency besides Mastercard. These fares may cost more in the long run and may result in unimaginable travel issues.

Other considerations when traveling by air:

1. Realizing that time is a valuable commodity, airline layovers to achieve cost savings is not necessarily required; best judgment should be exercised in such a case.
2. Advance purchase, at least 15 days in advance, is encouraged to ensure lowest available fare.
3. If less than a 15-day advance purchase, or for emergency travel, the purchase must be pre- authorized by the Team Leader, or designee in writing.
4. Air travel booked (paid), but not taken, should be immediately reported to the NMUCC designated travel agency or the office in order to maximize refund potential or use on a subsequent trip.
5. Membership in airline clubs shall have approval of the Chief Financial Officer on recommendation of the Team Leader. In accordance with current policy, 50% of the airline club annual fee will be reimbursed per the Common Personnel Policies.
6. The NMUCC will reimburse up to 50% of the TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry costs for employees that travel for the NMUCC. The original receipt and a check requisition should be submitted to Financial Services.

### **Luggage**

Reimbursement for airline luggage fees is limited to one bag per trip for trips lasting less than six days. However, if a trip exceeds six days, or there is a specific business reason for checking a second bag, the additional fee will be reimbursed for the second bag.

Employees who travel extensively, as defined by their position description and travel budget (minimum six times per year) are eligible for a replacement luggage allowance. The employee will be reimbursed up to \$200 towards the purchase of new luggage once within a two-year period. The allowance will be charged to the ministry travel budget.

### **Ground Transportation**

Land travel to and from appointments, meetings, conferences etc. should be by the most economical mode. Use of public transportation or shuttle services is encouraged. Taxi fares, including tips, are reimbursable where public transportation is not practical. This includes taxis between hotels and airports or railroad stations, between appointments or between hotels and places of temporary duty. Uber, Lyft and other similar transportation services are permitted options, and may include surcharges and fees. These surcharges and fees may be reimbursable provided the total cost is comparable to other ground transportation options and must be clearly documented to substantiate reimbursement.

### **Taxis and Shuttles**

1. The cost of shuttles and cabs should be evaluated against the rental car fees, parking, and valet expenses.
2. Tips for taxis and shuttles should be in the range of 15% - 20%.
3. Employees should use their Corporate Credit Card to pay the fare.

### **Personal Automobile**

Travel using privately owned vehicles may be desirable to save time, transport equipment, or reduce cost when a number of persons are traveling together. Reimbursement for travel using a privately owned vehicle will be the lesser of the IRS rate or the average airfare to the location.

The rate of reimbursement is based on the United States Federal Government reimbursement rates. The reimbursement covers all fuel, maintenance, insurance, and operating costs. Damage to a privately owned vehicle used for NMUCC business is covered by the individuals' private insurance. The NMUCC does not assume responsibility for deductibles or other uninsured losses to a privately-owned vehicle.

### **Tolls and Parking Fees**

Tolls and reasonable parking charges will be reimbursed in addition to the mileage allowance. No reimbursement will be made for the cost of repairs to a privately-owned vehicle whether they result from an employee's actions or actions of others. Costs for parking and moving violations are not reimbursable.

If, primarily for the convenience of the employee, a privately-owned vehicle is used for approved travel to points more than 300 miles beyond the point of origin, the following applies:

- Reimbursement will not exceed the lesser of the cost of the mileage reimbursement plus tolls, or
- The least expensive round-trip air fare between the nearest commercial airport serving the origin and destination cities, plus associated transportation costs to and from the airport.

### **Car Rental**

The NMUCC has a corporate membership with National Car Rental and Enterprise rent-a-car for business travel. Employees may receive up to a 5% discount on car rental when using the following code: OSMB39A. Rental car usage should be weighed against the cost of other transportation. In addition, the cost of shuttles and cabs should be evaluated against the rental car fees, parking, and valet expenses.

### **Additional Policies for Rental Cars**

1. Compact, Economy, or Midsize vehicles should be rented. Other size vehicles may be approved by the Team Leader, in consultation with the elected officer, on a case-by-case basis; examples would include several employees sharing a vehicle, equipment being transported, or transportation of donors. Employees should list themselves (or other employees as necessary) as the authorized drivers of the vehicle. Under no conditions should the employee let an "unauthorized" person or non-employee operate the vehicle.
2. Employees should NOT purchase a collision damage waiver (CDW) from the rental car company in the United States.

- a. If you are traveling internationally, using a MASTERCARD, you are covered worldwide with the exception of Australia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, and New Zealand. CDW must be accepted in six aforementioned countries when using MASTERCARD.
  - b. If you are uncertain regarding your coverage, please contact the Chief Financial Officer for clarification.
3. All automobile accidents must be reported to the Human Resources Director at [humanresources@ucc.org](mailto:humanresources@ucc.org) within 24 hours and immediately when any accident results in personal injury or towing of a vehicle. The employee should follow the rental agency accident report procedures.
4. Corporate travel insurance, domestic, is provided through the United Church Insurance Boards and Mastercard.
5. Rental cars are to be returned to the rental company with a full tank of gas; only original receipts are accepted for gas purchases.

### **Telephone Charges**

1. Employees may receive a cell phone allowance in the amount of \$50 per month as approved by their team leader and as per the Common Personnel Policies. This allowance is to offset the cost of using a personal cell phone for business purposes.
2. Employees who do not receive an allowance and that use their phone for occasional business purposes may submit detailed phone records outlining business calls for reimbursement.

### **Hotels**

- Employees are encouraged to stay at moderately-priced, but secure hotels. Employees should use the GSA rates as a guideline in selecting hotels. However, the NMUCC does recognize that it might not be possible to stay within these guidelines given the location of meetings, conferences, or other circumstances beyond the employees' control. All employees should be prudent and use their best judgment in selecting a hotel.
- The NMUCC does not support the use of AirBNB.
- All hotel stays should be booked utilizing the "guaranteed late arrival" on the NMUCC issued credit card. Employees are responsible for canceling directly with the hotel if travel plans change. There will be no reimbursement for cancellation fees.
- Personal charges listed on a hotel bill must be paid directly to the hotel before checking out.
- There may be an occasion when a traveler covered by this policy may need the services of a hotel laundry. Such circumstances will need to be documented when the travel costs are reconciled.
- The use of the corporate credit card for group hotel travel expenses is prohibited. A direct bill with the hotel should be arranged through Financial Services for group travel.

### **Meals**

1. Only original detailed restaurant receipts (along with the credit card receipt) will be considered for reimbursement. Tips should be between 15% - 20%.
2. It is strongly recommended that room service only be used if there are extenuating circumstances such as illness, or safety concerns.
3. Under normal circumstances, meals are not reimbursed for travel while in the traveler's home city (for example, Cleveland airport). However, on travel days if an employee

leaves before 8:00a.m. or returns after 5:00 p.m. they would be entitled to breakfast or dinner respectively for that day. Exceptions are made for flight delays and/or health-related concerns.

4. Alcohol is only reimbursed with the express permission of the elected Officer as stated in the Common Personnel Policies.
5. Planned group meals shall have prior supervisor approval or be part of a ministry team planned event. Receipts for group meals must include the names of the attendees and the business purpose of the meal.

### **Using Federal GSA web sites as a Guideline for Meal Costs**

The NMUCC has elected to use Federal GSA per diem rates to provide employees guidelines for meal cost when traveling. All employees should keep in mind these are guidelines for actual expenses and NOT a per diem. Travel budgets within the various ministries are limited and employees should spend according to their available balances within their budgets.

The daily rates for the Continental United States (CONUS) can be found using the following link <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. The rates are established by the General Services Administration and are searchable by city/state or zip code. We would recommend employees use the zip code lookup for their travel destination to help identify the applicable daily rate. To find specific rates for breakfast, lunch, and dinner click on the “M&IE Breakdown” tab on left side of the website. In addition, there is another tab that includes details about a free mobile app for your phone.

If a city is not listed, check to see if the county is listed. To determine the county of your destination, employees should check the website <http://www.naco.org/Pages/default.aspx>. Once you determine the county, return to the GSA website listed in the previous paragraph; if the county is listed, then the daily rate posted is for the entire county. If the city and county are not listed, then that area is considered to be a standard location which would provide up to \$50 for that day’s meals. If you are traveling internationally, the following web site can provide guidance in terms of daily meal costs [https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp).

A five (\$5) per day for incidentals is included in the daily GSA rates and includes tips for hotel housekeeping, luggage tips, coffee, tea, soda, snacks, bottled water, etc.

### **Parking in the Cleveland Area**

1. Use of the economical long-term parking facilities in the airport area is recommended. However, accessibility or safety concerns (e.g., early morning, or late-night travel) may warrant parking in a lot adjacent to the airport).
2. Long-term parking is defined as overnight or longer.
3. Alternative transportation (taxis) to and from the airport, if readily available or convenient, might be considered for longer travel.
4. Daily parking in the downtown Cleveland is not reimbursable. If for business purposes one must park in downtown Cleveland on the weekends, parking may be reimbursed with the approval of the Team Leader.

### **Deployed Staff Travel**

Deployed staff will be reimbursed for all travel related business expenses. This includes travel from your home office to your local airport when traveling to the National Offices. Examples of reimbursable expenses: Uber, taxi, tolls, parking, hotel, airfare.

### **Employee Gifts**

The IRS has very specific guidance regarding taxable income of gifts given to employees which are paid by the employer. Due to the complexity of this regulation as well as the cost to regulate the policy, the NMUCC has taken the position that NO gifts (both tangible and monetary, including gift cards) can be purchased using NMUCC funds. The only exceptions would be gifts given as part of a function sponsored by Human Resources (across the organization, or as part of an elected officer approved plan for employee recognition). Examples include, but are not limited to: *Employee Length of Service Programs*, *Employee monthly birthday celebrations*, *memorial flowers* for an employee or their immediate family member, *Official Retiree* recognition gifts presented to employees may be subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes.

### **NMUCC Travel Calendar**

A public calendar is used to log travel of NMUCC employees. All employees who travel are expected to enter their travel on the calendar. Employees may create, edit, and delete their own entries but cannot modify another person's entries.

## C. COVID-19 Exposure

The objective of this policy is to prevent exposure of the NMUCC workforce to the COVID-19 virus and to preserve the confidentiality of any individual infected by or exposed to COVID-19.

This policy applies to the following circumstances:

- An employee has tested positive for COVID-19;
  - An employee has a suspected but unconfirmed case of COVID-19;
  - An employee has come into contact with an individual who has a presumptively positive case<sup>1</sup> of COVID-19 and/or:
  - It is reported to Human Resources that a tenant employee or a visitor to 700 Prospect Ave. or the Washington D.C. office (collectively “work-related individuals”) has a presumptively positive case of COVID-19.
1. All employees who become ill at work with COVID-19 symptoms must notify their supervisor and remain at home until they have a note from their doctor to return to work.
  2. All employees who, while outside of work, begin experiencing symptoms, are exposed to someone exhibiting symptoms, or test positive for COVID-19 must contact the Director of Human Resources and not return to 700 Prospect Ave. or the Washington, D.C. office until they have a note from their doctor to return to work.
  3. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, has a suspected but unconfirmed case of COVID-19, or self-reports in accordance with Paragraph 2 of this policy that they have come into contact with an individual with a presumptively positive case of COVID-19 (collectively, “infected employee”), the following protocol will apply:
    - The employee will be sent home immediately and asked not to return to work until they have a note from their doctor to return to work.
    - In the case of a positive test for COVID-19, the local health department will be notified and guidance followed.
    - The employee will be asked by the Director of Human Resources to identify all employees and other work-related individuals who worked in close proximity with them in the previous 14 days.
    - Those identified employees will also be sent home for 14 days, and if they begin experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 may not return to work until they have a note from their doctor to return to work.
      - Those identified employees WILL NOT be told the identity of the infected employee.
      - Those identified employees will be notified of the actual status of the infected employee: positive test, suspected but unconfirmed, or exposure to presumptively positive case.

- The Director of Human Resources will notify the employers of identified work-related individuals of the exposure to the infected employee. In some cases, the Director of Human Resources need to contact a work-related individual directly (if, for example, that individual is not a tenant employee).
- The affected workspaces will be deep cleaned and sanitized.

<sup>1</sup> “Presumptively positive” should be interpreted broadly and generally means that the individual was exposed to and is now exhibiting symptoms of the virus, and may also mean that the individual presented with visible symptoms of the virus even if previous exposure cannot be determined.



## **D. COVID-19 Building Safety**

The U.S. is experiencing an increase in Coronavirus and hospitalizations, in fact, it is the highest increase in months. The country is clearly in a new wave of the virus and it is important more than ever that the public health safety protocols be followed to protect yourselves and others. Anyone who is planning to enter the building must adhere to the following safety protocols:

### **Temperature Checks**

All employees will be asked to self-check (screen) themselves daily and have a normal reading (under 99 °F) before leaving their homes to come to either the 700 or DC office buildings. If an employee does not have a normal reading, they must remain home, call their doctor immediately and/or schedule a Teledoc visit. Employees will also be required to contact their supervisor and HR to report their absence as sick time. An employee may return to work after:

- The employee has had NO fever for at least (3) days without taking fever reducing medication; AND
- The employee has no respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath); AND
- The employee has received a fitness for duty release from their doctor.

### **Health Questionnaire**

All employees will be asked to respond to a four-question health assessment which will probe for information related to their physical health, recent travel, exposure to COVID-19, and daily temperature reading. The assessment may be accessed from a computer or smart device and should be taken daily prior to entering the buildings. The health information is considered protect-ed medical information that will be safeguarded in HR. Employees who answer false to any of the questions will need to provide more information to Human Resources before being permitted to enter the building. The following link to the questionnaire should be saved on your device for daily use.

### **[Health Questionnaire](#)**

### **Face Coverings**

All employees will be required to wear face coverings in the buildings at all times. This policy must be followed unless a medical professional has advised that wearing a face covering may pose a risk to the employee for health reasons. In the event an employee is unable to comply with this requirement, the employee must inform HR and discussions about an appropriate accommodation will take place.

Anyone entering the building without a face covering will be reminded of this policy and will not be permitted beyond the front lobby desk. For the protection of the front desk staff, face coverings are required upon building entry. The UCC will stock masks and make them available to employees while supplies last.

### **Physical Distancing**

COVID-19 is highly contagious and spreads from person to person through droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people

are in close contact with one another (i.e., within 6 feet). All employees must adhere to the following physical distancing protocols:

- Only one employee should ride an elevator at a time
- The copier rooms/kitchens should be occupied by one employee at a time
- Avoid in-person visits to another employee's office space or cubicle
- Avoid person-to-person contact such as shaking hands
- Avoid congregating in the staff lounge and other common gathering places
- Videoconferencing should be used in lieu of in-person meetings as much as possible
- Conference rooms may also be locked to discourage in-person meetings

To the extent supervisors would like to have periodic face time with a small group of staff, the safety requirements must be followed at all times (e.g., 6' distancing, regular hand washing, sanitizer use, face coverings).

Use of the 9th floor open space or the Chapel is recommended for such meetings where it is possible to spread out.

### **Cleaning Practices**

The building is being cleaned using EPA disinfectants effective against SARS-CoV-2. Cleaning is performed frequently on touched surfaces, such as workstations, counter tops, railings, door handles and knobs. The workplace is stocked with hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes for all employees. Employees are asked to practice healthy hygiene by washing hands regularly for 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer regularly; cleaning areas regularly touched with sanitizer wipes (e.g., phones, keyboards, refrigerator handle, coffee equipment).

According to health experts, COVID-19 has a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Employees with the following symptoms or combination of symptoms may have COVID-19 and should contact their doctor immediately.

- Cough
- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

### **Reporting Concerns and Investigating Complaints**

All employees are required to follow the COVID-19 Exposure Policy. The exposure policy includes guidance on steps to take if employees become ill at work or have been exposed to COVID-19.

The HR office will receive COVID-19-related inquiries and complaints, as well as making sure relevant policies contain clear reporting instructions. HR is prepared to investigate and address any complaints and situations promptly and effectively.

## **Communications**

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor public health communications about COVID-19 and provide updates and recommendations to ensure that employees have the most up-to-date information.

## **E. COVID-19 Telework Resources**

### **Employer Property**

Employees may have been given authorization to transfer equipment from the office to their homes. Supervisors are asked to complete an Equipment Checkout Form to document any employer equipment being used by employees in their home offices. Note: During hybrid work arrangements, laptops may be transported from home to office; however, other equipment such as second monitors, printers, scanners should not be transported back and forth. This and other equipment meant to be stationary will be made available for shared use in the office. Follow the link to the Equipment Form.

### **Purchasing Office Supplies**

Where possible, Office Admins are encouraged to continue to order miscellaneous office supplies when needed on behalf of team members; notifying employees when supplies are available for pick up. In the event office supplies are needed beyond the miscellaneous category, employees should notify their team leader who will authorize the use of the corporate credit card to purchase office supplies. This does not include electronics, computers, devices, printers, hardware, or software. If supplies exceed \$50, employees should notify their team leader. If an employee does not have a corporate card, their Team Leader should be notified of supplies needed. Reimbursement requests may be submitted for supplies up to \$50.

### **IT Equipment and Support**

Purchases of all hardware and software require IT involvement prior to purchase. Purchases of peripherals (hard drives, adapters, mice, keyboards, monitors etc.) require IT engagement prior to purchase to ensure compatibility with systems and to obtain the best price on purchases. Employees who used a second monitor at 700 Prospect may be assigned a second monitor for work from home as authorized by a Team Leader. Any requests for second monitors that were not previously approved must be authorized by an elected officer.

### **Internet Service and Reimbursement**

Effective April 16th the internet reimbursement of \$25.00/month will be handled as taxable income through payroll, and therefore, it will no longer be necessary to submit the expense and receipt of the expense through the Concur Reporting system. Employees without a hotspot may receive the allowance for the use of their home internet also for business. As such, it will be necessary for employees receiving the allowance to obtain and maintain internet service.

In lieu of the taxable internet allowance employees who are unable to obtain internet service in their area, or whose ISP is unreliable, may be issued a hotspot.

### **Reimbursement for Home Workspace Furnishings**

Effective July 1, 2020, employees will be eligible for a one-time reimbursement of up to \$500 for documented and eligible expenses, other than IT equipment, associated with supporting the home workspace (i.e., chairs, chair mats, desks, lamps), upon proof of purchase. This is available to employees as a reimbursement or by contacting HR. Home workspace furniture purchased as part of this reimbursement plan will be considered property of the employee and not the employer, and to be eligible for reimbursement, purchases should be made by September 30, 2020. To request reimbursement, please submit your expense in Concur along with your proof of purchase. NOTE: The deadline to make purchases has been extended through

November 30, 2020. New employees will receive this benefit and will have four months from their date of hire to make their purchases if needed under this policy.

### **Business Phones (Ring Central)**

All employees should now have access to the digital phone system from your home workspace. To begin using the digital device, download the Ring Central app and follow the instructions on UConnect.

<https://www.ringcentral.com/download.html>.

To learn more about Ring Central, visit: [university.ringcentral.com](http://university.ringcentral.com).

### **Securing Confidential Information**

Employees must take special care to secure all confidential information. Confidential physical documents should remain at 700 Prospect. Those who must reference hard copies of confidential documents must access these onsite.

### **Checking Out Workplace Resources**

A sign-out log has been uploaded to UConnect for those who need to remove a shared work resource (i.e., Books, videos, etc.) from 700 Prospect. The log will request employee name, item, check out date and anticipated return date.

For your convenience, please use the following link to access the log.

<https://d284978.tryinvision.com/topic/780-sign-out-log-for-shared-resources/>

## **F. COVID-19 Relief Benefits**

### **Health and Dependent Care FSAs— Temporary Relief Bill**

On December 27, 2020, the latest COVID relief bill, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021, was signed into law. The law includes several provisions that provide relief for health and dependent care flexible spending accounts. Effective January 1, 2021, unused FSA funds, with no dollar limit, from 2020 may roll into 2021, and funds from 2021, may roll into 2022.

### **FFCRA Sick Leave and Emergency Family Medical Leave**

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which provides for COVID-19 related paid leave, including paid sick leave and emergency family and medical leave, expired on December 31, 2020. There has been no congressional action to extend the deadline. Given the current COVID-19 climate and the increase in cases and hospitalizations across the country, the UCC National Ministries will go above and beyond the law and continue offering these benefits through the end of 2021. If action is taken by the government to extend these benefits, the offerings by the employer will convert to the FFCRA requirements.

### **COVID-19 Sick time in addition to regular sick hours**

Full-time employees may receive a one-time allotment up to 75 hours of sick leave, and a part-time employee is eligible for the number of hours of leave that the employee works on average over a two-week period. This sick pay does not carry over into the new year if unused. COVID sick time is managed by Human Resources, so please contact HR if you have a need for time away due to COVID-19. Employees are eligible for additional paid sick time if they:

- are subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
- have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
- are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and are seeking a medical diagnosis;
- are caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2).

### **COVID-19 Family Leave**

All employees are eligible for this leave after 30 days of employment. COVID family leave can only be taken to care for a child under the age of 18 if schools or daycares are closed and the employee is unable to work (or telework) due to a need for leave to care for their child. Contact HR to learn more.

### **Emergency Relief**

Employees experiencing a hardship due to COVID-19 are directed to contact Human Resources at [humanresources@ucc.org](mailto:humanresources@ucc.org). HR will review and discuss available resources.

### **COVID-19 Funeral Assistance**

FEMA is providing financial assistance for COVID-19-related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020. Contact the Funeral Assistance helpline at 844-684-6333. Also included is an informative [funeral assistance video](#) and a link to [FAQ's](#).

## **G. COVID-19 VACCINE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **Purpose**

The NMUCC is committed to the health and safety of our employees, their families, and the community at large. COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory virus that can cause a range of symptoms, from mild to severe, including death for high-risk individuals. To combat this virus, a number of COVID-19 vaccines have shown to be safe and highly effective at reducing illness and the spread of the virus. Based on the success of the vaccines and to protect against serious illness resulting from infection, all employees will be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

### **Scope**

All employees are required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine now that at least one vaccine is FDA approved. Employees will be given two weeks from today's date to obtain the vaccine and must follow-up with appropriate steps to become fully vaccinated, if selecting a two-dose vaccine such as Pfizer or Moderna, as per the CDC's guidance. For more information, please review:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/prepare-for-vaccination.html>.

All staff will need to be fully vaccinated by **November 22nd**.

New employees must provide valid proof of full vaccination after accepting an employment offer. Employees will receive compensable time to obtain the vaccine and/or to recuperate. Employees who believe they qualify for an exemption under this policy should follow the appropriate procedure below to request an exemption.

### **Procedures**

Employees may receive any of the COVID-19 vaccines available at the time of vaccination. Acceptable documents serving as verification of COVID-19 vaccination include:

- A completed CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card
- A medical record signed by a licensed health care provider indicating vaccine name and dates of vaccine administration

Note: Proof of vaccination is considered a medical record and will be collected by the Director of Human Resources and not the employee's supervisor.

**Use this link to submit your proof of vaccination to HR for both first dose and second dose vaccinations, if applicable. [Proof of vaccination link](#)**

The COVID-19 vaccine requirement is in place to protect the health and welfare of all employees, therefore, only two exemptions may be requested: a medical exemption or a religious exemption. Medical exemptions may be granted for a documented medical reason. Religious exemptions may be granted on the basis of a sincere and genuine religious belief prohibiting immunization. Employees must contact HR to request an accommodation. To qualify for an exemption review, employees must submit one of the following to HR:

- **Medical exemption:** A medical exemption must be written by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner and include their medical license number and their phone number. The exemption must specify which immunizations are contraindicated, and why and how long the medical contraindication will last.
  
- **Religious exemption:** A religious exemption is a written and signed statement of objection to immunization due to the employee's religious beliefs. The statement must address all of the following elements:
  - Explanation of why the employee is requesting the religious exemption
  - Description of the religious principles that guides the objection to immunization.
  - Indication of whether the employee is opposed to all immunizations, and if not, the religious basis that prohibits particular immunizations.

Employees who have received approval for an exemption will be required to obtain a weekly COVID-19 test and must submit their negative tests to HR prior to the beginning of the work week.

Employees must comply with this COVID vaccine mandate policy as a condition of employment. Employees who are not in compliance with this policy will be placed on unpaid leave pending review. Following that review, employees who continue to be unable to provide proof of vaccination and who have not been approved for an exemption will be terminated from their position.

The following are ongoing protocols to ensure a safe work environment:

- Face masks are required in the office at all times when in common space and among other staff.
- A health questionnaire is required to be completed by all staff prior to entering the building. Anyone who feels sick or has a temperature in the morning before coming to work, should stay home, follow the sick time reporting procedures, and then contact the Director of Human Resources who will advise on next steps.

#### [Health Questionnaire](#)

- All employees must practice healthy hand hygiene at all times by engaging in frequent handwashing and sanitizing. Cleaning products are provided in the office and employees are asked to keep personal workspaces clean as well as any areas frequently touched.
- All employees must maintain appropriate distance (six feet) between themselves and the next person.



Employees who suspect that they have been exposed to COVID-19 must contact the Director of Human Resources to report the exposure.

### **COVID-19 Travel**

#### *Fully Vaccinated, Domestic Travel (within the United States or to a U.S. territory)*

- Employees do not need to take a COVID-19 test before or after domestic travel unless testing is required by local, state or territorial health authorities.
- Employees do not need to self-quarantine following domestic travel.

#### *Fully Vaccinated, International Travel*

- Employees do not need to get tested before leaving the United States unless required by the destination country. Employees must determine such requirements before travel.
- If tests are required by the airline, destination country, or host for that travel, the test is considered a reimbursable expense to the extent not available cost-free under the health insurance plan.
- Employees do not need to self-quarantine in the United States following international travel.
- Some destinations may require travelers to quarantine upon arrival, which would likely make short-term travel to that destination unnecessary. Employees must determine and evaluate such requirements before booking travel.
- Employees coming to the United States from abroad are required to have a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before boarding a flight to the United States. Make sure you will be able to get tested at your destination before returning to the United States. Keep a copy of your test result with you during travel in case you are asked for it. Check and follow destination testing requirements—specific types of tests may be required.
- Employees arriving in the United States must take a COVID-19 test three to five days after travel regardless of vaccination status.

**Please note that at this time domestic and international travel for business is restricted unless an elected officer has authorized an exception.**

Exceptions require thoughtful review by the officer, and the staff person making the request, to determine if travel is essential.

Any questions related to these protocols should be directed to the HR Office.

Please acknowledge receipt that you have read and understand these policies by signing below.

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Employee Signature

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Date