



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

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

October 2025

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.

Table of Contents

- 1. INTRODUCTION..... 1**
 - 1.1. EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES..... 1**
 - 1.2. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES..... 1**
- 2. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION 2**
 - 2.1. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY 3**
 - 2.2. WORKPLACE HARASSMENT PREVENTION..... 4**
 - 2.2.1 Sexual Harassment4
 - 2.2.2. Nonsexual Harassment.....5
 - 2.2.3. Bullying5
 - 2.2.4. Duty to Report and Consequences7
 - 2.2.5. Retaliation is Prohibited.....7
 - 2.3. SAFE CONDUCT POLICY CONCERNING ABUSE PREVENTION 7**
 - 2.3.1. Policy Prohibiting Abuse, Exploitation, and Harassment7
 - 2.3.2. Conduct of our Employees and Volunteers8
 - 2.3.3. Consensual Romantic or Sexual Relationships8
 - 2.3.4. Requirements for Commencing and Continuing Employment or Volunteerism8
 - 2.3.5. Additional Requirements for Child and Youth Ministry9
 - 2.3.6. Definitions9
 - 2.3.7. Complaint Procedures10
 - 2.3.8. Child Abuse11
 - 2.3.9. Clergy11
 - 2.3.10. Confidentiality12
 - 2.4. WORKPLACE ANTI-RACISM/ANTI-DISCRIMINATION & DEI EDUCATION . 12**
 - 2.5. ACCOMODATING DISABILITIES..... 12**
 - 2.6. PRIVACY OF MEDICAL INFORMATION..... 13**
 - 2.7. INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY 13**
- 3. SEARCH GUIDELINES AND WORK CLASSIFICATIONS 14**
 - 3.1. SEARCH AND ANNOUNCEMENT/POSTING GUIDELINES..... 15**
 - 3.1.1. Position Announcements15
 - 3.1.2. Inactive Positions15
 - 3.1.3. Announcement/Search Guidelines15
 - 3.1.4. Upgrading a Position15

3.1.5. Screening/Interview/Selection.....	16
3.1.6. Offers of Employment	16
3.1.7. Background Checks	16
3.2. EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS.....	16
3.2.1. Exempt Employees	16
3.2.2. Non-Exempt Employees:.....	16
3.2.3. Lay Employees	16
3.2.4. Clergy Employees.....	16
3.2.5. Full-time Regular Employees:	16
3.2.6. Part-time Regular Employees:	17
3.2.7. Introductory Period Employees:	17
3.2.8. Temporary Employees.....	17
3.2.9. Independent Consultants (Contractors).....	17
3.3. RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS.....	18
3.4. TELEWORK.....	18
3.4.1. Deployed Employees	18
3.4.2. Hybrid Employees:	18
3.5. Home Days.....	19
4. WAGE AND SALARY ADMINISTRATION AND WORKWEEK/PAY PERIODS	20
4.1. WAGE AND SALARY ADMINISTRATION.....	21
4.1.1. Wage and Salary Bases.....	21
4.1.2. Crisis Pay	21
4.1.3. Honoraria	21
4.2. WORK WEEK, PAY PERIODS AND OVERTIME	21
4.2.1 Pay periods	22
4.2.2 Overtime.....	22
4.3. TIMEKEEPING AND ATTENDANCE	22
4.3.1. Basic procedures	22
4.3.2. Reporting Absence.....	22
5. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT	23
5.1. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT	24
5.1.1. Employment-at-will	24
5.1.2. Resignation	24
5.1.3. Discharge	24
5.1.4. Reduction in Work Force.....	24

5.1.5. Severance.....	24
5.1.6. Normal Retirement Benefits	25
5.1.7. Early Retirement Benefits.....	25
6. EMPLOYEE LEAVES, TRAINING, AND PERFORMANCE.....	26
6.1. HOLIDAYS.....	27
6.2. EMPLOYEE LEAVES	27
6.2.1. General Policies	27
6.2.2. Vacation.....	27
6.2.3. Personal Leave.....	29
6.2.4. Sick Leave	29
6.2.5. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).....	30
6.2.6. New Child Parenting Leave	33
6.2.7. Leaves of Absences – Exceptional.....	34
6.2.8. Military Leave	34
6.2.9. Jury Duty Leave.....	34
6.2.10. Voting Leave	35
6.2.11. Sabbatical Leave	35
6.2.12. Study Leave	37
6.2.13. Bereavement Leave.....	37
6.2.14. Severe Winter Weather	37
6.3. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT.....	38
6.3.1 Education Assistance.....	38
6.3.2 Staff Development.....	38
6.3.3 United Church of Christ Office Support Staff Network	38
6.3.4 United Church of Christ Office Support Staff Network Attendance	39
6.4. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW	39
6.5. HIGH LEVEL ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS	39
6.6. LONGEVITY BONUS	40
7. OTHER BENEFITS.....	41
7.1. SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE: LAY AND ORDAINED EMPLOYEES..	42
7.2. WORKERS’ COMPENSATION	42
7.3. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	42
7.4. HOUSING ALLOWANCE DESIGNATION.....	42
7.5. EMPLOYEE INSURANCE COVERAGES.....	42
7.5.1. Employee Eligibility	42

7.5.2. Health and Dental Benefits	43
7.5.3. Life Insurance	43
7.5.4. Short-Term Disability	43
7.5.5. Long-Term Disability	43
7.5.6. Flexible Benefits Program	43
7.5.7. Travel Accident Insurance	44
7.5.8. Individual 24-Hour Extension of Accident Coverage.....	44
7.6. ANNUITY FUND (PENSION PLAN).....	44
7.7. DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE.....	44
7.8. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	44
8. CONCERN, COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES.....	45
8.1. OBJECTIVE OF CONCERN, COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE POLICY	46
8.2. INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS.....	46
8.3. DEFINITION OF A GRIEVANCE	46
8.4. GRIEVANCE RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES.....	46
8.5. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE.....	46
8.5.1 Grievance Form	46
8.5.2 Grievance Appeal	47
8.6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS.....	47
9. DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE.....	48
9.1. USE AND DISTRIBUTION PROHIBITED	49
9.2. PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES.....	49
9.3. TESTING	50
10. CORRECTIVE ACTION.....	51
10.1. HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANCE	52
10.2. CONSULTATION.....	52
10.3. CORRECTIVE ACTION	52
10.4. REASONS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE.....	53
10.5. REASONS FOR DISCHARGE FOR MISCONDUCT.....	53
11. GENERAL INFORMATION	54
11.1. OPEN DOOR POLICY	55
11.2. EMPLOYEE RECORDS.....	55
11.3. VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT	55
11.4. EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS.....	56

11.5. DRESS FOR OFFICE/PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF EMPLOYEES	56
11.6. EMPLOYING RELATIVES	56
11.7. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT	56
11.8. PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS	56
11.9. SUBSCRIPTION BUDGETS	56
11.10. WORK ENVIRONMENT	56
11.10.1. Safety and Health	56
11.10.2. Smoking, Vaping, Electronic Cigarettes	56
11.10.3. Children in the Workplace	57
11.10.4. Lactation Breaks:	57
11.10.5. Prayer	57
11.10.6. All Staff Community Outreach.....	57
11.10.7. Individual Community Outreach	57
11.10.8. Unauthorized Audio or Video Recordings	57
11.10.9. Weapons.....	58
11.11. GENERAL SYNOD AND ATTENDANCE	58
12. TRAVEL AND RELOCATION AND MOVING EXPENSES	59
12.1 TRAVEL POLICIES	60
12.1.2. Travel-Related Expenses	60
12.1.3. Non-exempt Employees.....	60
12.1.4. Membership in Airline Clubs	60
12.1.5. TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry.....	60
12.1.6. Replacement Luggage.....	60
12.1.7. Corporate Credit Cards	60
12.1.8. Additional Support for Travel.....	60
12.2. RELOCATION AND MOVING EXPENSES	61
12.2.1. Covered Expenses.....	61
12.1.2. Tax Implications	61
12.1.3. Moving Quotes	61
12.1.4. Search Visit.....	61
12.1.5. Temporary Lodging Upon Arrival.....	61
12.1.6. Transportation at Time of Move	61
13. E-MAIL, INTERNET, AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS	62
13.1. Email, Internet, and Social Media Communications	63

13.2. Cybersecurity Awareness	64
13.3. Hardware and Software Procurement	64
13.4. Social Media	65
13.5. Media Inquiries and Contact.....	66
13.6. Patents and Copyrights	66
14. WHISTLEBLOWER.....	67
14.1. WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY.....	68
14.1.1. Process for Reporting Suspected Improper Behavior or Activities	68
14.1.2. Safeguards.....	69
15. CONFLICT OF INTEREST	71
15.1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY	72
15.1.1. Prohibited Activities	72
15.1.2. Identification of Conflicts of Interest.....	72
15.1.3. Resolution of Conflicts of Interest.....	73
15.1.4. Business Transactions with the NMUCC or the UCCB.....	73
15.1.5. Violations of the Policy	74
16. COPYRIGHT HANDBOOK	78
NMUCC COPYRIGHT COMPLIANCE HANDBOOK.....	85
17. GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE	87
GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE POLICY	88
18. CONTRACTS	90
CONTRACT POLICY	91
Appendix	93
A. Equal Employment Opportunity/AA Checklist.....	94
B. Business and Travel.....	96
C. COVID-19 Exposure	105
Receipt for Copy of Employee Handbook	106

1. INTRODUCTION

This Employee Handbook sets forth the Common Policies and methods of work for employees of the National Ministries United Church of Christ (NMUCC)¹. 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.

NMUCC employees perform their work from different states and may have certain protections under the laws of those states. Required postings for all states are available on UConnect and by this reference are incorporated into the handbook. No provision of this handbook is intended to contradict how the law of any state applies to a particular employee and NMUCC will comply with the applicable law for all employees. 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 are not subject to these policies and are guided by a separate set of policies and procedures through Global Ministries.*

1.1. EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 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

- 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
- 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.

¹ 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 employment 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; pet names or terms of endearment;
- 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 Chief Human Resources Officer. 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 Chief Human Resources Officer 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 Chief Human Resources Officer 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 Chief Human Resources Officer 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 Chief Human Resources Officer. 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.
- 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.

- e. All employees will be required to complete mandatory training on “Promoting a Safe Environment” 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

The NMUCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God’s love. In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines in addition to the general requirements for ministry.

- a. All volunteers who regularly work with children and youth will complete and submit a disclosure document.
- b. 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.
- c. All volunteers, independent contractors and employees who regularly work with children and youth will receive orientation regarding the abuse prevention policy and procedures.
- d. 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.
- e. Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor will be required for all NMUCC 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 Chief Human Resources Officer will lead the investigation into and respond to any complaints under this policy. The Chief Human Resources Officer 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 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 Chief Human Resources Officer.
- b. The Chief Human Resources Officer and the Office of General Counsel (“the fact- finding team”) 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 elected officer 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 elected officer 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 elected officer, 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 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.

2.3.10. Confidentiality

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 the persons involved.

2.4 WORKPLACE ANTI-RACISM/ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND DEI EDUCATION

- 2.4.1.** The NMUCC shall provide required anti-racism education programs that contain, at minimum:
- a. anti-racism education designed to address issues of privilege, stereotypes, and bias and the development of skills around these issues.
 - b. periodic meetings and/or forums to discuss these topics
 - c. An overview of diversity and inclusion practices during new hire onboarding.
 - d. A mandatory 5-week SC2ER Training for all employees
 - e. 4 hours of on-going regularly scheduled follow-up racial equity training for all employees.
- 2.4.2.** All employees are required to participate in the anti-racism and the diversity & inclusion education. 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 need a reasonable accommodation, it is the responsibility of the individual to report these facts to the Chief Human Resources Officer. The Chief Human Resources Officer will work with the employee and the employee's healthcare 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 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 Chief Human Resources Officer 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 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.

Position	Internal Posting (National Offices)	UCC Website Posting	UCC Ministry Opportunities	Search Committee	National Search	Local Search
Elected officer*						
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. When conducting background checks, the NMUCC will comply with the law of the state in which the work will be performed.

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.

- 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.

- 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

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 hire an independent contractor must contact Human Resources prior to extending a contract offer.

3.3. RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS: All employees of the NMUCC are required to live within daily commuting distances (up to 90 minutes one way) 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 General Minister and President/CEO may, on a case-by-case basis, assign certain employees to work from an area other than the Cleveland National Offices. Determinations on which positions 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. Convenience of the employee shall not be a factor. Deployed employees work outside of Ohio (and if DC staff, outside of DC) and are subject to the Common Policies outlined in this handbook.

For deployed employees: When attendance is required for new employee orientation, staff meetings as approved by the respective Elected officer, 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

3.4.2. Hybrid Employees:

The NMUCC permits flexible work solutions when approved by the employee's supervisor in consultation with the appropriate elected officer. Flexible solutions include a hybrid schedule that requires at least three days/week in the office. 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.

- a. Employees approved for telework are guided by these Common 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 used for business

3.5. HOME DAYS

All employees will be required to be present in the Cleveland office for three consecutive days twice per year. The Home Day requirement will allow for community building and collaboration and will consist of activities such as: self-care workshops, training and development, mini-strategic planning retreats/team meetings, food, fun, and fellowship.

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 of an office closure, payroll will continue for an undetermined period of time. During this time period, the General Minister and President/CEO 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**

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 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.

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

4.2.2. 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 other than the supervisor 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 weeks' 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 5.1.5 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 5.1.5 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 Elected officer 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 Officer is considered to be retiring if they are drawing from the UCC pension account within three months of the end of their term.
- 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 paydays 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 age 65 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 the 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 14 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 1st. These employees shall be permitted to use earned vacation for the December holidays or carry over any accrued but unused vacation. Human Resources must approve any carryover 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. An 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 workdays 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 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 7.5.4) 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

pension plan and continuation of any voluntary benefit contributions during any unpaid FMLA.

- Vacation and sick leave will not be earned during any period of STD or unpaid FMLA.
- i. Administration - All questions about leaves of absences should be directed to the Human Resources Office. Leave of absence requests and medical certification forms are available from the Human Resources Office.
- j. Military Family Leave
- Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the spouse, domestic partner, son, daughter, or parent of the employee on active duty, will be granted up to 12 work weeks of Family Medical Leave. See 6.2.5.b. for eligibility.
 - An eligible employee who is the spouse, domestic partner, son, daughter, or parent, or next of kin of a covered service member who is recovering from a serious illness or injury sustained in the line of duty on active duty is entitled up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member. See 6.2.5.b. for eligibility. An employee and spouse or domestic partner employed by the same ministry may not take more than 26 weeks of leave in the aggregate to care for the service member.

6.2.6. New Child Parenting Leave

- a. The NMUCC will provide up to twelve weeks of paid new child parenting leave to employees as set forth in this policy. New child parenting leave may be used for: (1) the birth of (a) a biological child, (b) the child of a domestic partner/or civil union, or (c) a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis, or (2) the adoption of a child. New child parenting leave may be taken intermittently but must conclude within 12 months from the date of the child's birth or adoption.

The employee must provide their supervisor and the Human Resources Office with notice of the request for leave at least 30 days prior to the proposed date of the leave (or if the leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible). The employee must complete the necessary HR forms and provide all documentation as required by the HR Office to substantiate the request.

- b. Eligibility – eligible employees must meet the following criteria:
- Have been employed with the NMUCC for at least one full year of service (the 12 months do not need to be consecutive).
 - Have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the date the leave would begin.
 - Be a full- or part-time, regular employee (temporary employees and interns are not eligible for this benefit).

- c. Amount, Time Frame and Duration of Paid New Child Parenting Leave
- 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 supervising Elected officer, 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 Elected officer. 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 months (44 work days) 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 at 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 NMUCC 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 Chief Human Resources Officer, and the employee's Elected officer 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 Elected officer. The Elected officer 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 to replenish physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual resources. It is expected that the sabbatical is a time of rest and change of routine during which the employee may set aside regular responsibilities. Such leave from regular work is expected and should be incorporated into the design of one's sabbatical, although 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, or a designed period of refreshment and rejuvenation. Each employee will have different needs for sabbatical, and these should be considered in consultation with the supervisor. 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 and writing /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 month (22 work days) 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 NMUCC 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 Elected officer 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 relationship This policy also covers pregnancy loss and failed adoption within six weeks of loss. Medical documentation may be requested by HR.

6.2.13.1. Extended Family, Friends, and Pets Bereavement Leave

The NMUCC will provide 2 days of paid bereavement leave for the death of loved ones in this category.

Employees requiring bereavement leave should first notify their supervisor; then contact the Chief Human Resources Officer as soon as possible to request the leave. 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 training 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 NMUCC 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 ministry will be responsible for the payment of individual's expenses. 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, 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 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 submit requests, only five (5) individuals will be approved for attendance.
 - 3) The employee's Elected officer, 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 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 record. Each employee may submit a written response to the evaluation which will also become a permanent part of the employee's record.

The General Minister and President/CEO evaluates the performance of Associate General Ministers. The General Minister and President/CEO receives a performance evaluation as described in 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 **HIGH LEVEL ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS**

The NMUCC has set an objective for all employees to work as a collective community toward published high level goals. We expect that the goals will always be measurable and ultimately will make a positive difference in the life of the church. Employees may be eligible to receive a bonus, subject to funding, for the completion of these high-level goals and other stated criteria.

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/CEO.

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 because 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, along with most other states, 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 severance benefits that are made available to employees should they be affected by a reduction in force.

7.4. HOUSING ALLOWANCE DESIGNATION

- Each year the NMUCC 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.
- All exempt lay employees shall receive a taxable housing adjustment in the amount identified by the NMUCC.

7.5. EMPLOYEE INSURANCE COVERAGES

The NMUCC shall provide 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 NMUCC.

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 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 and Dependent 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** – Short-Term disability benefits are available 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 – All eligible employees may, at their own expense, enroll in this benefit.

7.6. ANNUITY FUND (PENSION PLAN)

- Enrollment – All eligible employees shall be enrolled in the Annuity Fund administered by The Pension Boards effective the first day of employment. The NMUCC shall make regular contribution payments on behalf of the employee.
- 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.
- Employee Contribution to Annuity – On the basis of a signed agreement, an employee may contribute to the Annuity Fund offered by the NMUCC on a tax-sheltered basis, thereby increasing the employee's ultimate retirement benefits. An employee interested in this option should contact Human Resources.

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 Chief Human Resources Officer, without fear of retaliation. The Chief Human Resources Officer 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:

- Application of the NMUCC's policies, practices, and procedures believed to be unfair;
- Treatment considered unfair by an employee, such as coercion, reprisal, harassment or intimidation;
- 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
- 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 Chief Human Resources Officer and the General Counsel, and the employee will be notified of the status of the investigation within two weeks of submission. The employee 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 Elected officer 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 Elected officer may submit a letter of appeal to the Chief Human Resources Officer who will then present the complaint and appeal letter to the General Minister and President/CEO for review, discussion, and final determination.

In the event the grievance pertains to an Associate General Minister, the Chief Human Resources Officer and the General Counsel shall work cooperatively in the fact - finding process and will report their findings to the General Minister and President/CEO. In the event the grievance pertains to the General Minister and President/CEO, the Chief Human Resources Officer 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 pertains to the Chief Human Resources Officer or the General Counsel, the General Minister and President/CEO 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 the 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) is prohibited. The use of alcohol is prohibited at the NMUCC but may be permitted at certain UCC gatherings or events, including evening receptions or dinners, with the express written permission of the General Minister and President/CEO. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner as representatives of the UCC at gatherings or events where alcohol may be permitted.

In accordance with federal, state and local law, NMUCC prohibits any employee from the use of Cannabis in any form, including but not limited to, smoke, vapor, consumed, inhaled or applied topically while on NMUCC property regardless of whether the employee has a medical Cannabis card or a prescription for medical Cannabis. Cultivation, manufacture, dispensation, sale or storage of Cannabis while on NMUCC property or engaging in NMUCC business is prohibited.

The NMUCC includes any office, building or property it owns or operates, or any site at which an employee is to perform work for the NMUCC.

9.2. PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES

- a. Working while under the influence of any drug or alcohol is prohibited. Any employee who tests above the cut-off levels for illegal drugs and legal drugs that are abused or used without a prescription including but not limited to the following drugs will be considered to have a positive test and be in violation of this policy:

10 Panel	EMT Screen (ng/nl)	GC/MC Confirmation (ng/nl)
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 Chief Human Resources Officer 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. Failure to cooperate in an investigation of substance abuse may be subject to disciplinary action. Refusing to submit to a drug test when requested to do so is subject to disciplinary action, including termination. 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).

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. Instances of employee misconduct that call into question the fitness for ministry of any Authorized Minister and/or breach the four-way covenant will promptly be forwarded to the Association where the Authorized Minister has standing.

- 10.1. HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANCE** – All levels of the corrective action process shall require prior assistance from the Chief Human Resources Officer 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 the Chief Human Resources Officer, 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 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 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 HR should be contacted before any action is taken.
 - 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.

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. EMPLOYEE RECORDS

The HR Office maintains a file on each employee. The employee 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. Employee files are the property of the NMUCC, and access to the information contained therein is restricted. Generally, only the employee and management of NMUCC who have a legitimate business reason to review information in a file may do so. Employees may provide documents to the Chief Human Resources Officer, that they would like added to their files (for example, letters of appreciation).

11.3. VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- 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.
- External Organization/Agency
No verification of employment will be given to an external organization/ agency without signed authorization from the employee.
- 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. Employees should not under any circumstances respond to requests for references, recommendations, or employment information regarding another current or former employee. Employees also should not 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 (e.g., 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 employee file to verify that they are legally employed.
- 11.5. DRESS FOR OFFICE/PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF EMPLOYEES** – Each employee represents the National Ministries in appearance as well as actions. Employees are expected to dress in a manner that is normally acceptable in an office environment – business casual is the standard. Clothing should be neat and not ripped, frayed, disheveled, revealing or otherwise inappropriate. Flip flops are not acceptable in the workplace. Please know that jeans are appropriate in the office on Fridays only. Additionally, staff are expected to practice appropriate daily hygiene and if using colognes or lotions with a fragrance, please keep to a minimum recognizing that there are colleagues with scent sensitivities in the workplace.
- 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** – Employees should not purchase will be responsible for allocating a budget for subscriptions. Ministry teams 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 may engage as a full staff in community outreach 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 the NMUCC's faith values in our communities through ongoing service and advocacy. Full-time employees will receive 7.5 hours (one day) per quarter to use for service in the community. Part-time employees, 20 hours or less, will receive 3.75 hours (half day) per quarter to use for service in the community. Specific time away for community service activities is subject to supervisor approval and with at least two weeks' notice.

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 do 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.

Recordings that may be necessary to measure the quality of service is acceptable as long as the parties are 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, a 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.

11.11. GENERAL SYNOD AND ATTENDANCE

The General Synod is an electing body, a business meeting governed by Standing Rules, and an occasion for worship and inspiration. General Synod is currently held every three years and is the place for leadership and policy setting of the Church. General Synod speaks to and not for other settings of the church, but the actions, decisions, and advice should be held in the highest regard by every local church. The United Church of Christ Board (UCCB) meets at least twice annually and may act as the General Synod ad interim. General Synod may ask the UCCB and the NMUCC to carry out specific work on its behalf. The General Synod is the representative body of the United Church of Christ and is composed of delegates chosen by the Conferences, from among the members of its Local Churches. For more information, please visit ucc.org and refer to the UCC ByLaws.

Employees may attend General Synod as a registered visitor using their vacation time at their own expense, or as an employee if approved by the elected officer of their ministry. Employees of the NMUCC may not under any circumstances serve as a Synod delegate.

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.
- 12.12. 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. The 50% will be charged to the travel budget and subject to the approval of the Team Leader or appropriately designated person. The employee will pay 100% of the membership and request reimbursement for the remaining 50%.
 - 12.15. TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry – Upon request, each ministry will reimburse up to 50% of the TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry costs for employees that travel for the NMUCC. The employee will pay 100% of the membership and request reimbursement for the remaining 50%.
 - 12.16. The cost a passport for travel will be reimbursed when required as a specific and necessary condition of the work-related travel assignment.
 - 12.17. Replacement Luggage - 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 \$300 toward the purchase of new luggage once within a two-year period. Authorized employees shall make a personal purchase and submit for reimbursement. The allowance will be charged to the ministry travel budget. Luggage reimbursements will require HR approval beyond the supervisor. Employees are eligible for a replacement allowance after two years of employment.
 - 12.18. Corporate Credit Cards – Each elected officer 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 elected officers and team leaders to determine the other employee positions for which the card is necessary. Employees who have been issued a corporate card must use it for business related expenses only.
 - 12.19. Additional Support for Travel
 - a. Travel Advances – Employees who are not provided with 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, 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. 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 Covered Expenses

- a. 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 required to move for employment with the NMUCC. Qualified moving expenses will be included in employees' wages, subject to income and employment taxes. Covered expenses include packing, shipping, unpacking, and insuring of up to 15,000 pounds of household goods and personal effects.
- b. Transportation of the employee and their family at the time of the final move.

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

12.2.3. Moving Quotes – New employees approved for relocation are to obtain quotes from the designated NMUCC provider. Employees may contact Human Resources or visit the HR website at ucc.org for moving providers.

12.2.4. 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.

12.2.5. Temporary Lodging Upon Arrival – If warranted by unforeseen circumstance, temporary living expenses for up to fourteen (14) days will be provided. Arrangements will be made through our offices.

12.2.6. 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

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 and review of IT to determine if there is or should be a business-wide contract.
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 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 served 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.

- The NMUCC purchases Dell computers for all employees as a standard practice. Any exceptions to this policy will require special approval from the respective Associate General Minister or the General Minister and President/CEO.

13.4 Social Media

Includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including but not limited to, on work-related social media accounts owned by the NMUCC, 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 work-related social media accounts which are the property of the NMUCC. 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. Employees may not send email blasts or create marketing material without prior approval and may not use marketing materials without prior approval. An employee may not post content on social media on behalf of NMUCC without prior authorization from the employee's Team Leader or Elected Officer. All content must comply with the Content Guidelines.

Content Guidelines

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 Content Guidelines. 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.

This social media policy also applies to the personal use of social media 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. Any 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 on personal social media 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. 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.

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 Marketing and Communications 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 Privacy Policy and Digital Millenium Copyright Act Notice

This privacy policy explains our privacy practices and how the NMUCC treats your information. The SMS policy is also included [Privacy Policy - United Church of Christ](#).

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 Policies section 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 Policies section 8 must report the behavior to the Elected officer, 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 Elected officer, named on page 72, 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

General Minister and
President and CEO
Karen Georgia A. Thompson
1300 E. 9th Street
Cleveland, OH 44114
thompsonk@ucc.org
216-736-2101

Chair of the Audit Committee
Gregory Sato
999 Bishop Street Suite 2600
Honolulu , 96813, US
gregorymsato@gmail.com
808-225-0752 (Mobile)

!

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 of Staff, Chief Human Resources Officer, 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. Volunteer Service

Employees may not serve on boards of organizations that provide services to NMUCC, or on organizations where the GMP/CEO serves pursuant to the UCC Bylaws.

Employees engaged in fundraising may not serve the best interests of two related partners simultaneously.

15.1.6. 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.

16. COPYRIGHT HANDBOOK

NMUCC COPYRIGHT COMPLIANCE HANDBOOK

I. PURPOSE

All NMUCC employees are responsible to follow copyright laws and to prevent copyright infringement. Copyright is a social justice issue for owners of creative works, who deserve to be justly credited and compensated. Infringement can also result in monetary and reputational damage to the NMUCC.

II. APPLICATION

A. The Handbook applies to all employees.

The policies and procedures in the NMUCC Copyright Compliance Handbook (“Handbook”) are mandatory for all staff. Failure to adhere to the Handbook may result in discipline up to and including termination per the Common Personnel Policies.

B. The Handbook policy applies to all content produced or hosted by NMUCC, as well as to merchandise sold by NMUCC.

The policies and procedures in the NMUCC Copyright Handbook are mandatory for all content produced or hosted by the NMUCC, including but not limited to: web pages, social media, digital/downloadable resources; printed materials and mailings; webinars; General Synod-related programming (including workshops and optional events that are hosted through our accounts or systems); concerts; worship services; and meetings. The policies and procedures also apply to any item or resource that is sold by the NMUCC, including but not limited to books, gift items, and jewelry. Collectively, the foregoing are referred to in this Handbook as “**Content.**”

III. DEFINITIONS

- **Work:** any creative work of authorship including but not limited to musical composition, liturgical work, photograph, artwork, video, poem, book, sermon, speech, computer program, and/or graphic
- **Content:** see definition in II.B.
- **License:** permission to use a Work granted by the copyright owner. A license may be limited in purpose and duration. Attribution is not a substitute for a license.
- **Copyright:** the exclusive right of an owner of a Work to reproduce, distribute, perform, publicly display, or make a derivative Work
- **Public domain:** a Work is in the public domain when its protection under copyright laws has expired or if it failed to meet the requirements for copyright protection. When a Work enters the public domain varies based on the when it was created and/or registered and the laws in effect at that time.
- **Attribution:** citing the ownership of a Work in Content; attribution is not a substitute for a license and is not sufficient to avoid copyright infringement.

IV. USING WORKS IN NMUCC CONTENT

You must treat every Work as though it is protected by copyright unless you can verify that it is in the public domain. Works are not required to be registered with the U.S. Copyright Office to be protected by copyright laws. Works that appear to be available freely and without attribution on the internet are still likely protected by copyright.

A. General Requirements for Using Others’ Works

- Allow sufficient time to develop your Content, recognizing that copyright compliance is a team effort and may involve employees from several different ministries who have other work obligations.

- Recognize that every meeting, event, web page, video, song, and nearly all other content may be recorded by others without express permission or knowledge and live forever on the internet. Our use of others' Works will be judged accordingly.
- Assume every Work is copyrighted unless you can verify it is in the public domain.
- If you cannot identify the copyright owner, choose a different Work.
- Pay attention to the scope and expiration dates of license agreements; if we exceed the scope or the license expires, that is still copyright infringement. Takedown dates should be calendared.
- Use links to original sources instead of embedding original Works in our digital content, unless you have a license to do so.

B. Using Musical Works

In general, a license is required to use any musical Work for any purpose, including but not limited to streaming, reproducing (including sheet music), recording, and broadcasting.

A license is not required to perform (live by musicians/choir or via an audio-only recording) a musical Work for an in-person worship service that is not recorded and is not broadcast by any means, including not transmitting to remote attendees. Be aware, however, that learning the music often requires downloading the lyrics, chord chart, and perhaps other materials, and this does require a license.

A license is also not required for any use of a Work in the public domain. The Team Leader of the team producing/hosting the content is responsible for ensuring the Work (tune, arrangement, and lyrics) is in the public domain. If there are questions about this, please consult with the Office of General Counsel. Please note that copyright protection applies anew to different arrangements, so different arrangements of the same tune may be protected differently.

Additionally, audio recordings of performances of works in the public domain are separately protected by copyright and are likely not in the public domain. For information on video recordings of musical performances, please see **E. Using Videos** below.

A license is not required for musical Works if the copyright to the work is owned by NMUCC.

C. How to Obtain a License for a Musical Work

1. Blanket Licenses

NMUCC maintains blanket licenses that cover 1) most published hymnody and praise music, and 2) secular music in the ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC catalogs. The licenses are maintained by the Office of General Counsel. It is the responsibility of the Team Leader of the team producing/hosting the content to consult with the Office of General Counsel to ensure in advance 1) the exact Work is included in the catalog; and 2) the terms of the license cover the way the Work will be used. Use the Office of General Counsel Music Copyright License Request Form on SharePoint to provide details about the music to the Office of General Counsel. OGC will confirm the use is covered by a blanket license or will request further information. Following the use, the Team Leader will report the exact use to the Office of General Counsel, who will report it to the licensing company. Questions about whether the terms of the license cover the way the Work will be used should be directed to the Office of General Counsel. Copies of the available licenses are available for review in the Office of General Counsel. The following licenses are available:

- OneLicense: reproduction and streaming of traditional hymnody
- CCLI: reproduction and streaming of contemporary praise music
- CCS PERFORMmusic: live performances (not streamed/recorded) of non-church music in church settings

- CCS WORSHIPcast: streamed performances of non-church music in church settings
- Convergence Music Project: broad licensing of progressive Christian music

2. Other Licenses

If a Work is not covered by a blanket license, the Team Leader must obtain a written license from the copyright owner giving the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ permission to use the Work. This provision applies even if the copyright owner is performing the music. The license must include permission to use the Work for the specific intended use. For example, if a Work will be used in a webinar that will be recorded and available in perpetuity on the NMUCC website, the license must indicate permission to use the Work in a recording that will be made available on the NMUCC's website in perpetuity. A copy of the written license must be provided to the Office of General Counsel before using the Work, and must be included in the electronic file where the Work and the content in which the Work is used is stored. A template for a written license agreement is provided on SharePoint. In consultation with the Office of General Counsel, the template agreement may be altered for particular licensing needs. Any deviation from or alteration of the template agreement must be approved in advance by the Office of General Counsel. Agreements provided by the copyright owner must be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel prior to using the Work pursuant to the Contract Policy.

D. Hymnals

This section applies to all hymnals, including *The New Century Hymnal* and *Sing! Prayer and Praise*. Hymns are subject to the same copyright laws as other musical Works. Ownership of a hymnal provides no license other than what is specifically granted in the hymnal; a license must be sought for any other use as provided in IV.C. Copyright information for hymns can be found in the hymnals. The Pilgrim Press does not own the copyright to all hymns in United Church of Christ hymnals. OneLicense licenses hymns owned by The Pilgrim Press.

E. Using Videos

NMUCC must own or have a license for all Works included in any video prior to any use of that video. Video licensing can be complex and layered. For example, a video may include graphics, a montage of photographs/video stills, music, and video footage, all with separate copyright owners from whom separate licenses must be obtained. If the NMUCC owns the Work, a license need not be obtained. It is likely that NMUCC owns the Work if it was created by a NMUCC employee in the scope of their employment.

1. Use NMUCC Created and Owned Videos Whenever Possible

It is strongly recommended that any videos used in producing and/or hosting content be created and owned by the NMUCC using owned and/or properly licensed Works. It is a best practice to avoid using videos from third-party platforms or videos owned by others without a written agreement that the owner owns all Works that are used in the video and has the right to license the use of those Works to others. An indemnification agreement may be required; please consult with the Office of General Counsel.

2. Uploading Videos to Third-Party Platforms (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.)

Uploading videos to third-party platforms without appropriate licenses has a copyright infringement risk as well as a terms-of-service violation risk. If the terms of service for third-party platforms are violated, the NMUCC risks losing the ability to use those platforms, which are a critical means of communication with the public. Videos should not be uploaded to third-party platforms without securing all licenses in advance. Copies of the licenses must be kept in the electronic file where the video is stored, provided with a copy of the video file to MarCom, and provided to third-party platforms upon request.

3. Using Videos from Third-Party Platforms

Currently YouTube's terms of service permit personal use only and videos should not be streamed, broadcast, or played from YouTube other than in a personal setting. Team Leaders must check the terms of service for any third-party video platform to determine appropriate use.

If the NMUCC owns and/or has a license to all Works in a video that is uploaded to YouTube, the video may be played from the NMUCC's copy of the video.

In addition to potentially violating the terms of service of the third-party platform, be aware that obtaining permission from a person who uploaded a video to YouTube may not be a sufficient copyright license to use the video. The uploader may not own or have a license for all the Works used in an uploaded video sufficient to grant permission for NMUCC's use of that video. NMUCC bears the risk of copyright infringement for using the video without a proper license. For example, a musician may upload a video to YouTube that contains audio of the musician performing music to which that musician owns the copyright, but the video may also contain graphics, artwork, or other visual elements that the musician does not own. Even if the musician obtained a license to use the graphics in their video, that license may not extend to giving others a license to use the Work. If the use of a video on a third-party platform is critical to our content, please consult with the Office of General Counsel.

F. Using Photographs

Only photographs owned or licensed by NMUCC shall be used in NMUCC's content. A photograph is likely owned by NMUCC if it was taken by an employee in the course of their employment.

1. Stock Photo Licenses

MarCom maintains a stock photo service subscription and can assist with any needs for licensed stock photography; the terms of the stock photo license must be adhered to, including license expiration dates. The Team Leader must keep a copy of the license in the file with the photograph.

2. Photographs provided by Local Churches, Ecumenical and Missions Partners, Covenant Partners, and Church Members

Any photographs that are not owned by NMUCC must have a written license for use that assures the NMUCC that the person providing the photograph is the copyright owner of the photograph and has the right to license it to others. A template for a written license agreement for photographs is provided on SharePoint. In consultation with the Office of General Counsel, the template agreement may be altered for particular licensing needs. Any deviation from or alteration of the template agreement must be approved in advance by the Office of General Counsel. Agreements provided by the copyright owner must be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel prior to using the Work pursuant to the Contract Policy.

3. Photographs Used on Web Pages

Whenever a photograph is used on a web page, the policies above apply, and the web page must include the following statement: *Photographs are published pursuant to the National Setting's license agreements with the copyright owners and should not be published elsewhere without seeking permission from the copyright owners.*

G. Using Art, Poetry, Speeches, Sermons, and Literature

1. Art

Art shall not be used in content without the permission of the copyright owner. Photographs of artwork used for the purpose of representing or depicting the artwork itself may infringe on the artwork owner's copyright, even if NMUCC owns or has a license to the photograph itself. For example, a photograph taken of a sculpture that is used to illustrate content about the sculpture itself may infringe on the sculpture owner's copyright, even if permission is granted by the photograph owner. A written license must be sought from the artwork's copyright owner; please contact the Office of General Counsel to discuss this particular situation.

2. Poetry, Speeches, Sermons, and Literature

The text of poems, speeches, sermons, and other literary works shall not be used in NMUCC content without a written license agreement from the copyright owner. In the absence of any agreement to the contrary, sermons by a pastor given in the ordinary course of the pastor's employment belong to the employer and not to the pastor; in this circumstance, a license must be obtained from the Local Church. A template for a written license agreement is included on SharePoint.

These Works shall not be performed at NMUCC events, recorded or otherwise, without written permission of the copyright owner.

Excerpts and quotations from longer Works that are used for the purposes of critique or to illustrate a point being made may qualify under the fair use doctrine; please consult with the Office of General Counsel for more information.

H. Using the Bible

Many translations of the Bible are protected by copyright. Some translations may provide a limited license to use a certain amount of text in content. For example, the publisher of the New Revised Standard Version gives a license for up to 500 verses to be quoted under certain circumstances. Any use beyond what is granted in the limited license must have a written license. Contact the publisher for license requirements; any license must be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel prior to signing.

I. Using the Book of Worship

The Book of Worship, copyrighted in 1986 and reprinted in 2006 and 2012, is intended for use by all congregations and pastors of the United Church of Christ. Two types of liturgical material are contained within the Book of Worship:

1. Liturgies Under UCC Copyright

These liturgies have been commissioned by the UCC and are copyrighted by the UCC. The license granted by the publishers as printed in the book is as follows: the publishers of this book

hereby grant, to any local church affiliated with the United Church of Christ, permission to reproduce these services for distribution to members of the congregation, provided that no part of such reproduction is sold or is distributed beyond services held in the local church, and provided that the following credit line be used: Reprinted from the Book of Worship (c) 2012 by United Church of Christ, Cleveland, Ohio. All rights reserved.

This license is broad enough to include streaming this material.

Within some of these liturgies under UCC copyright, however, are prayers copyrighted by ecumenical sources for which a license may need to be sought.

2. Individual Prayers Licensed by the UCC

The UCC has paid a licensing fee for these prayers, and the prayers cannot be further reproduced without a license from the writer.

A copyright source index is included in the Book of Worship. Refer to this index when using the Book of Worship materials in Content. Please note that permissions for the Book of Worship are handled through The Pilgrim Press.

V. FAIR USE DOCTRINE

Some uses of copyrighted material do not require a license because they fall under the “fair use” doctrine. This may include uses of copyrighted material for criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. The criteria used by courts for determining whether a use is “fair” and thus does not infringe on copyright include an analysis of:

- The purpose and the character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- The nature of the copyrighted work;
- The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
- The effect of the use on the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Fair use is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and includes a fact-specific inquiry. Thus, whether a use is fair can only be determined by considering all the facts and circumstances of the use.

In general, short quotations used to illustrate a point in a sermon or speech are more likely to be fair use. Not every non-profit use is a fair use. Not every educational use is a fair use. If you have questions about whether an unlicensed use of copyrighted material is fair, please consult with the Office of General Counsel.

VI. HIRING THIRD PARTIES (NON-EMPLOYEES) TO CREATE WORKS AND CONTENT FOR NMUCC

A written contract, license agreement, and/or copyright transfer agreement is required for all content that third parties are hired to create for the NMUCC. All third-party agreements must contain representations by the third party that the Works they create are original and do not infringe on the works of others.

A. Graphic Design and Artwork

Any contract with a third party, whether an individual or a firm, to create graphics, designs, or other artwork to be used in NMUCC content must include a copyright transfer agreement that provides that NMUCC will own the Works that it has hired the third party to create. A template independent contractor agreement is provided on SharePoint. Any deviation from or alteration of the template agreement must be approved in advance by the Office of General Counsel, and the Chief Human Resources Officer, if applicable, and must be reviewed according to the Contract Policy.

B. Music

Any contract with a musician, whether an individual, band, or agency, to create musical works or to license musical works must include a perpetual nonexclusive license agreement that allows the National Setting to use, reproduce, distribute, create derivative works of, publicly perform and publicly display such works (whether solely or jointly with others) in any media now known or hereafter known for noncommercial, educational and worship purposes. A template musician agreement is provided on SharePoint. Any deviation from or alteration of the template agreement must be approved in advance by the Office of General Counsel, and the Chief Human

Resources Officer, if applicable, and must be reviewed according to the Contract Policy.

It is a best practice to 1) work with experienced independent church musicians and 2) consult with employees of the National Ministries who have worked with musicians before for their recommendations and advice as to particular musicians.

C. Literature, Educational Curricula, Devotionals, and other Works

Contracts with third parties to these Works may be negotiated individually. All agreements are subject to approval by the Office of General Counsel.

VII. WORKS CREATED BY NMUCC EMPLOYEES

A. Copyright Ownership

Consistent with federal law, the NMUCC owns the copyright to all works produced by NMUCC employees in the course of their employment. The NMUCC reserves the rights to all such works and any use without permission is prohibited. If you are considering creating a work that is related to your employment and have questions about ownership, consult with your supervisor and Human Resources to resolve questions in advance.

B. Copyright Notice and Registration

Works created by NMUCC employees that are available to the wider church or outside users, either through UCC Resources or downloadable from the UCC website, may contain a copyright notice like the following example: “© 2024 by Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ). All rights reserved.” A copyright notice may also reflect a limited license to others to use the work in accordance with policy; for example: “© 2024 by Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ). Permission granted to UCC settings for noncommercial use. All other rights reserved.” The copyright notice tells users the source, ownership, and age of the work. Only include a copyright notice on original works that are fully owned by the NMUCC or for which the NMUCC has a license.

The entity in the copyright notice should be a NMUCC business entity, such as a Covenanted Ministry, the United Church of Christ Board, or Local Church Ministries Church Building and Loan Fund. The appropriate business will depend on the subject matter of the work. The copyright notice should not be in the name of “United Church of Christ.” Consult with your supervisor and Office of General Counsel if you need assistance with copyright notices.

Certain works, like books, films/videos, music, artwork, and/or games, may be registered with the U.S. Copyright Office. Registration is not required to use a copyright notice, to license a work to others, or to sell or reproduce a work owned by NMUCC. Registration confers certain legal benefits, like a presumption of ownership and the ability to enforce the copyright by suing an infringer. Registration is not automatic. Consult with your supervisor and the Office of General Counsel to determine whether a work should be registered. The Office of General Counsel is responsible for the copyright application.

In general, works that may be registered must not be created with the substantial use of generative artificial intelligence. Refer to the Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy for more information on registration of works created with generative artificial intelligence.

C. Rights to Works Produced Using NMUCC Resources

If works are to be created by others outside of the NMUCC using significant NMUCC resources, a license agreement must be negotiated at the time the resources are provided giving the NMUCC royalty-free rights to

the work. A license agreement is a contract. Refer to the Contract Policy and consult with your supervisor and the Office of General Counsel for assistance.

D. The Pilgrim Press

The Pilgrim Press, a dba of Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), publishes books under the following imprints: The Pilgrim Press, United Church Press, Open Waters Publishing, and the Stillspeaking Writers' Group. Notwithstanding other provisions of this Handbook and policy, The Pilgrim Press team is responsible for copyright registration and permissions for books published under its imprints. Publication decisions are made by The Pilgrim Press publisher, consistent with The Pilgrim Press's business strategy.

VIII. THIRD-PARTY REQUESTS FOR PERMISSION TO USE NMUCC WORKS

Third parties may request permission to use NMUCC works in films, books, videos, and educational materials. These requests often come directly to teams from authors, universities, publishers, film producers, nonprofits engaged in special projects, libraries, and others. Supervisors can grant or deny permission in their discretion using the following guidelines:

- Do not rely on the third party's representation that the NMUCC (generally identified as a Covenanted Ministry or a predecessor to a Covenanted Ministry, such as United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, American Missionary Association, etc.) owns the work they are seeking permission to use. Ownership must be verified. Consult with Archives or the Office of General Counsel for assistance. If ownership cannot be verified, permission cannot be granted.
- Do not agree to any terms of permission by email or sign a permission agreement without review by Office of General Counsel. These agreements may constitute legally binding contracts and often have clauses where the copyright owner—here, the NMUCC—agrees to be responsible for claims of infringement against the third party.
- Do not grant permission to use any musical works without consulting the Office of General Counsel. Licensing for hymns owned by The Pilgrim Press in the United Church of Christ hymnals, including the New Century Hymnal and Sing! Prayer and Praise, are handled through OneLicense.net.

17. GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The Policy describes the risks of using generative artificial intelligence (“genAI”) in the NMUCC and the requirements for using genAI to ensure the use is in line with the NMUCC’s values and to manage the risk.

II. BACKGROUND

GenAI tools and services are increasing in popularity and accessibility. These tools can be used to generate content, assist in drafting documents, enhance productivity, and automate many tasks. NMUCC encourages the safe, responsible, transparent, and ethical exploration of the ways that genAI may enhance the work of NMUCC employees.

Using genAI has risks, some of which are not yet fully understood. Many genAI applications have been trained on data that has been scraped from the internet without permission. Some of these risks include the production of content that is inaccurate, biased or discriminatory, or which violates the intellectual property rights of others. Another risk includes the NMUCC’s inability to protect its intellectual property created using genAI, because laws and regulations on the ownership of works created using genAI are not settled and the law currently prohibits copyright ownership of content created by artificial intelligence. Data privacy is also a risk, because uploading content into some genAI applications trains the application on that data, which may then be used to produce content for users outside the NMUCC. These are only some of the risks that may be present in the use of genAI.

III. SCOPE

The Policy applies to all NMUCC employees. Independent contractors and vendors are subject to the provisions in their contracts and not to the Policy.

IV. DEFINITION

Generative Artificial Intelligence (“genAI”): any generative artificial intelligence application, including without limitation large language models, music generators, code generators, and image generators. Some examples are Open AI’s ChatGPT, Microsoft Bing Chat, Google Bard, DALL-E 2, Artbreeder, DeepAI, Aiva, and Soundful. GenAI modules or technology may also be included in services like Shutterstock, Canva, Microsoft Office 365, and other applications commonly in use. GenAI also includes note-taking assistants that run during meetings (virtual or otherwise) that create transcriptions, summarize content, and/or generate follow-up tasks.

V. POLICY

General

Employees bring unique and valuable skills, insights, and judgment to their roles in the NMUCC. Employees should use their expertise, experience, and judgment to make informed decisions about how to use genAI in their work.

The use of genAI applications is subject to the Common Personnel Policies, including without limitation Section 1.2.5, which prohibits the disclosure of confidential information learned while working for NMUCC.

NMUCC will make every effort to provide applications that do not use NMUCC’s data (including intellectual property and information about people) to train genAI for the benefit of non-NMUCC users.

Only use genAI applications that are approved by NMUCC. In general, these will be applications that are obtained following the protocols in the Common Personnel Policies, including without limitation Section 13.

Do not upload any NMUCC-owned content (including without limitation member, donor, or employee information and NMUCC intellectual property) or content owned by others to any genAI application that is not approved by NMUCC. If there is a need for a particular tool, please have your Team Leader provide a description of the tool and the business case for it to the Technology Steering Committee.

Do not include sensitive content when querying a genAI application, such as personally identifiable information, personal health information, and/or member, donor, or employee information.

Using GenAI Applications to Create Content

Employees must carefully review AI-generated content for inaccurate or incomplete information and potential infringement of the rights of others, including copyright, by cross-referencing the reliable sources that would typically be used to produce content. Generated content must not be used if it is misleading, harmful, offensive, discriminatory, or defamatory. Employees are ultimately responsible for all content produced using genAI as if the employee was the original creator.

When using genAI to create “first drafts” of content that will be published or distributed for users outside of NMUCC, including without limitation Conferences, Associations, Local Churches, and other church setting stakeholders, an employee must disclose to their supervisor they used a genAI application and maintain a copy of the unedited work produced by the genAI. The length of time such a copy should be maintained depends on how long the final version will be in use or relied upon by others.

Consult with the Office of General Counsel prior to seeking legal protection for any intellectual property (copyright, trademark) created using genAI. In general, content that is expected to be registered with the U.S. Copyright Office or the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office should be generated by employees only.

Using GenAI in Meetings

Be aware that genAI note-taking and meeting assistants (“meeting assistants”) may produce notes that are inaccurate, improperly transcribe names or acronyms, attribute statements to the wrong individual, and state “take-aways” or “to-dos” that do not reflect the priorities of the meeting.

The use of genAI meeting assistants is considered an audio recording under Common Personnel Policy 11.10.8. Employees should use only NMUCC-approved meeting assistants to take notes in meetings, and only after notifying and obtaining the consent of others in the meeting. Employees are responsible for understanding meeting assistant technology, including how to remove it from a meeting.

Notes generated by meeting assistants are the employee’s personal notes and are not an official record of the meeting. Employees are responsible for not relying on inaccurate meeting notes.

If the meeting host wants to share meeting-assistant generated notes, the meeting host or their designee must carefully review and correct inaccuracies in the generated notes within two business days of the meeting date prior to sharing the notes with all attendees.

An employee must not permit their meeting assistant to attend a meeting where the employee is not present.

Do not rely on meeting assistants to take minutes for any official bodies including without limitation the United Church of Christ Board and its committees.

18. CONTRACTS

CONTRACT POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The Policy (“Policy”) ensures that contracts and agreements entered into by the NMUCC are legally and financially sound and are authorized in accordance with the United Church of Christ Board’s grant of authority to the General Minister & President to delegate signing authority consistent with the needs of the church.

II. BACKGROUND

The General Minister and President is authorized to enter into contracts and agreements on behalf of the NMUCC corporations. The GMP is authorized by the United Church of Christ Board to delegate signing authority to employees of the NMUCC, in writing. The Policy is consistent with that grant of authority and operates as written delegation.

III. SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

The term “Contract” means any written or oral commitment, which when made and accepted by the NMUCC and a third party, obligates both parties to perform without further negotiation, discussion, or execution of other documents. Contracts include amendments, extensions, or modifications. Some examples of Contracts are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vendor or supplier agreements• Hotel/event agreements• Service and/or maintenance agreements• License agreements (including software license and copyright license agreements)• Lease/rental agreements (including real estate leases where the NMUCC is landlord or tenant)• Non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broker representative agreements• Consulting agreements• Independent contractor agreements• Settlement or release agreements• Insurance claims and policies• Certifications, acknowledgments, affirmations, representations, or other similar terms that require NMUCC to certify compliance with a law, standard, or other contractual terms
--	--

Documents which are not intended to create, and do not create, legally binding obligations of the NMUCC, like ecclesiastical covenants, letters of interest or intent, or memoranda of understanding, may not be covered by the Policy; however, the Office of General Counsel must review these documents to determine they are not legally binding.

The Policy excludes most purchase orders/invoices for goods in the ordinary course of business, like the purchase of office supplies and books. But purchase orders that by their terms impose continuing obligations on the NMUCC, or for capital additions like furniture or equipment, are subject to the Policy.

IV. POLICY

A. General

Contracts must be in writing.

Contracts must be within the Team’s budget. Multi-year contracts require approval by GMP.

Generally, the Team requesting the Contract is responsible for negotiating the business terms of the Contract, such as price, effective dates/duration, and the scope of services. If the other party engages legal representation during negotiations, notify the Office of General Counsel for assistance.

Contracts must be negotiated following the Common Personnel Policies, including without limitation the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Copyright Handbook, and thus may require additional approvals or consultation with Human Resources, Financial Services, and/or Information Technology.

B. Approval

All proposed Contracts, regardless of amount, must be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel prior to signing for compliance with best legal practices for the protection of the NMUCC. OGC may require changes to legal terms of the Contract. Allow adequate time. Business terms should be internally approved prior to sending to OGC.

C. Signature Authority

The following schedule represents the authorization limits for various positions in the NMUCC for signing contracts. No other employees are delegated contract signing authority.

Amount	Signing Authority	Further Approval
Up to \$10,000	Team Leader, Director	AGM
\$10,001 to \$25,000	AGM, CoS, CHRO., CFO, GC	GMP
\$25,001 to \$100,000	AGM	GMP
Above \$100,000	GMP	None

D. Independent Contractor Agreements

Independent Contractor Agreements must be prepared and approved by Human Resources in accordance with Common Personnel Policies 3.2.9.

E. Consequences

Failure to adhere to the Policy will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Common Personnel Policies, up to and including termination.

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 (NMUCC) 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 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 intranet. 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 Elected officer not travel to the same event on the same plane. Similar 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 work 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 and details of the expense, e.g., purpose, date, and location included in the comment section of Concur. Expense reports for the month should be filed within 10 calendar days of the end of the month in which charges are incurred. If not submitted within the deadline, 3 business days will be granted during which you will be notified by Financial Services that on the 4th business day following the deadline, access to using your credit card will be suspended and employee will be grounded. There is a 7-day grace period for a card to be re-issued. Any purchases made on a personal credit card during the period of suspension will not be reimbursed. Exceptions need to be approved by the supervisor and then the elected officer.
2. Employees are not required to submit receipts for expenses under \$25.
3. In the case of a lost receipt, or when none is given for the purchase or payment, employees may utilize the Concur missing receipt affidavit and include the amount, purpose, date, and location of the expense with their documentation. Excessive missing receipt affidavits will be noted and could be grounds for corrective action.
4. Lost receipts totaling, in excess of \$100 per monthly report, will be forwarded to the attention of the Chief Financial Officer
5. All submitted expense reports must be approved and in Financial Services within 15 calendar days of the end of the month.
6. Any employee's out of pocket reimbursable expenses must be submitted within 10 calendar days following the end of the month they were incurred.
7. In normal circumstances, 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. An employee may use a personal credit card for family airfare purchases and seek reimbursement for their portion of the ticket. Requests to purchase a spouse, dependent, or other individual ticket who accompanies staff on a business trip, must be communicated to the Team Leader in advance of travel for approval.

Non-Allowable Expenses

The following list is presented 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 written permission of the General Minister and President/CEO). Maximum of one drink per person, and the occasion must be related to a UCC event or activity. The permission should be attached, along with receipts.
- Expenses incurred by an employee's failure to monitor flight changes or to cancel flight or hotel reservations except under conditions outside of the person's control.
- Passports and vaccinations when NOT required as a specific and necessary condition of the work-related travel assignment.
- Commuting between home and office
- Portion of travel for personal use, including spousal or other companion travel
- Personal entertainment expenses including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theatre movies, social activities, music/audio and subscriptions 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, e.g.. shower gifts, wedding gifts.
- 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. cell phones and headsets, jewelry.
- Beats and Echo speakers and the like.
- Water fountains, personal décor, and personal miscellaneous items for the office

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 \$100.00 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, and other National events and constituency gatherings.
- Ministry team programs and involvements at conferences, associations, clergy or church clusters, consultations.

Travel to UCC 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. A copy of the Conference's invitation and confirmation of costs should be attached as part of your receipt for your travel.

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 elected Officers or Acting Officers 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 to the United Church of Christ.

Corporate Cards

NMUCC Corporate Cards are issued on the Team Leader's recommendation with the approval of the elected Officer and HR

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 suspension or cancellation may be fraudulent and may cause NMUCC to take legal action against the cardholder.

Lost Cards and Fraudulent Charges on Corporate Card

It is the employee's responsibility to immediately contact the card issuer to report fraudulent charges. In addition, the employee must notify HR and the Chief Financial Officer to report the fraudulent charges.

Separation of Employment

When a cardholder separates, terminates, or retires from the NMUCC, they are 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 subject to the approval of the General Minister and President/CEO.

Corporate Card Abuse

The corporate card is to be used for business-related purposes. Personal use of the corporate card is prohibited. The use of a personal credit card for business-related purposes is also prohibited. Abuse of the NMUCC Corporate Card will result in revocation of the card and appropriate disciplinary action 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 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. Personal or inappropriate expenses not reimbursed to the NMUCC by the end of the month following the month in which the expense was incurred will also be included within the employee's 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.

Any items purchased using an NMUCC issued credit card become property of NMUCC and need to be returned prior to separation of employment, e.g., textbooks, equipment, headphones etc.

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 10 calendar days in the month following when the charge was incurred.

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 two weeks prior to travel.
2. Must be \$250 or more.
3. May not be used to purchase any modes of transportation (cars, scooters, etc.)
4. Must be cleared within 10 calendar days of returning from travel. Unreconciled advances will be included in the employee's W-2 as income for the year.
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.

Basic economy fares, with their many restrictions and limitations, are not in the best interest of our employees. 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 required to ensure lowest available fare.
3. If less than a 15-day advance purchase, or for emergency travel, the purchase must be preauthorized by the Team Leader, or designee in writing and included in the receipt's documentation supporting the expense.
4. Staff should not purchase travel insurance when booking flights. Air travel booked (paid), but not taken, should be immediately reported to the CFO and your team leader to maximize use on a subsequent trip.
5. Membership in airline clubs shall have approval of the Chief Financial Officer on recommendation of the elected Officer. In accordance with current policy, 50% of the airline club annual fee will be reimbursed per the Common Policies. Authorized employees shall make a personal purchase and submit 50% of the airline club annual fee to be reimbursed.
6. The NMUCC will reimburse up to 50% of the TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry. Authorized employees shall make a personal purchase and submit for 50% of the TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry to be reimbursed. NMUCC does not reimburse any other easy access fees, e.g., Clear.

Luggage

Reimbursement for airline luggage fees is limited to one checked 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 \$300 toward the purchase of new luggage once within a two-year period. Authorized employees shall make a personal purchase and submit for reimbursement. The allowance will be charged to the ministry travel budget. Luggage reimbursements will require HR approval beyond the supervisor. Employees are eligible for a replacement allowance after two years of employment.

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, Shuttles, and Ride Sharing Services

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

Tolls and Parking Fees

1. Tolls and reasonable parking charges will be reimbursed.

Personal Automobile

Travel using privately owned vehicles may be desirable for local travel, or to save time, transport equipment, or reduce costs when several persons are traveling together. Employees must provide HR with a copy of a current driver's license, registration, and auto insurance coverage prior to using their personal automobile for work. Reimbursement for travel using a privately-owned vehicle will be the lesser of the IRS rate or the average airfare to the location.

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.

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.

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 taxis should be evaluated against the rental car fees and parking expenses.

Additional Policies for Rental Cars

1. A midsize or small vehicle 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 people sharing a vehicle, or equipment being transported. Employees should list themselves (or other employees as necessary) as the authorized drivers of the vehicle. Under no conditions should the employee allow an unauthorized person or non-employee to operate the vehicle.
2. Employees should decline the 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 Chief Human Resources Officer at humanresources@ucc.org within 24 hours and immediately when any accident results in personal injury or towing of a vehicle. The employee should also follow the rental agency accident report procedures.
4. Corporate travel insurance, domestic, is provided through the United Church Insurance Board and Mastercard.
5. Rental cars are to be returned to the rental company with the amount of gas stipulated

by the rental car company.

Cell Phone 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 Policies. This allowance is to offset the cost of using a personal cell phone for business purposes.

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 Inc. as their rental policies do not align with General Synod resolutions.
- 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 that are within the employee's control.
- Personal charges listed on a hotel bill must be paid directly to the hotel before checking out.
- There may be an occasion when employees who travel for an extended period 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 expenses/multiple rooms should be on contract and not billed to the corporate card. A direct bill with the hotel should be arranged through Hospitality Ministries and Event Services and forwarded to Financial Services.

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 8:00 a.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 General Minister and President/CEO as stated in the Common 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.

A five (\$5) per day for incidentals is included in the daily GSA rates and includes tips for hotel housekeeping and fees.

Parking in the City of Office Location

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 or ride share) to and from the airport, if readily available or convenient, might be considered for longer travel.
4. Daily parking in the employee’s city of work is not reimbursable. If for business purposes one must park in the city of work 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 business 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 case¹ of COVID-19 and/or:
- It is reported to Human Resources that other work-related individuals have 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 are symptom-free.
 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 Chief Human Resources Officer and not return to 1300 or the Washington, D.C. office until they are symptom-free and have a negative home test.
 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 for 5 days or until they are symptom-free. Contact HR regarding how to account for time off.
 - The employee will be asked by the Chief Human Resources Officer to identify all employees and other work-related individuals who worked in close proximity with them in the previous 14 days.
 - Those identified employees may also be sent home for 5 days, and if they begin experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 may not return to the office until they are symptom-free.
 - 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 Chief Human Resources Officer will notify the employers of identified work-related individuals of the exposure to the infected employee.
 - The affected workspaces will be cleaned and sanitized, and employees exposed will be required to mask when in the presence of others.

¹ “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.

Receipt for Copy of Employee Handbook
(Common Policies)

October 2025

Please complete this page and return to Human Resources

Last Name (Please Print)	First Name	Middle Initial
------------------------------------	------------	----------------

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 _____