

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EEO GUIDELINES

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 Offices of the United Church of Christ has adopted a voluntary Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity 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 and EEO 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 do this, the plan calls for all position openings to be advertised widely to diverse audiences. Thus, 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 of the UCC 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.

Equal Employment Opportunity & Protected Groups: There are many federal, state and local laws and regulations that govern employment practices. These laws prohibit discrimination based upon a person's inclusion in a "protected category," including, but not limited to the following groups:

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| a. Race | b. National Origin/Ethnic identity |
| c. Persons with Disabilities | d. Color |
| e. Gender | f. Religious affiliation |
| g. Veterans | h. Persons over the age of 40 |
| i. Marital Status/Domestic Partner | |

The UCC National Offices goes above and beyond the law to include sexual orientation and transgender as protected categories.

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:

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION CHECK LIST FOR SEARCH COMMITTEES (continued)

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 search committee recognizes and affirms the United Church of Christ's commitment to being a multicultural, multiracial open and affirming, accessible to all, equal opportunity employer. The search committee has reviewed the UCC's Guidelines on Affirmative Action/EEO.*

4. Qualifications and Criteria for Positions:

- a. For the National Offices, 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 Offices, 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 as listed on page 1.

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 (teens 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
- UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns
- UBC - United Black Christians
- United Samoan Ministries
- Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries
- UCC MHN – UCC Mental Health Network

6. Recruitment Procedures:

- a. A Review of recruitment resources ensures that sources of personnel known specifically by and for the protected categories as listed on page 1.
- b. Special efforts are made to advertise the job description in publications which direct their news towards the protected categories as listed on page 1.
- c. Circulations efforts are made to advertise the job description in publications which direct their news towards the protected categories as listed on page 1.
- 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.