



data  hub

INFORMATION GUIDE

for Conferences & Associations
on the **Data Hub Upgrade**

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



May 2014

Greetings, Conference and Association partners in ministry!

The purpose of this Information Guide is to assist you in preparing for the upgrades to the United Church of Christ Data Hub that will occur this summer, and the resulting changes in information reporting processes. We hope that it will answer some of your questions and offer you some guidance about how to best prepare current Data Hub users and potential new users of this system within your respective settings. Please read this resource carefully and let us know if you have any questions.

Blessings,

The Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD)
Local Church Ministries
United Church of Christ

Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD)
700 Prospect Avenue East
Cleveland, OH 44115-1100
1-866-822-8224 x2145
www.ucc.org/research

GENERAL FAQs

What is the UCC Data Hub?

The UCC Data Hub is the denominational web-based database that contains all records for UCC congregations and authorized ministers. Currently, the login page for the Data Hub can be found at <http://yb.ucc.org>. National staff, Conferences, Associations, Affiliated and Associated Ministries, and local churches (on a limited basis) have access to the Data Hub.

How is the Data Hub currently used?

The database is currently managed by the Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) and is used by Conferences, Associations, and local churches to report directory and statistical information for the printed Yearbook, Access UCC, and “Find a Church” on ucc.org. Conferences and Associations have limited editing privileges for records in their respective regions; and a hybrid method of reporting (paper forms and online data entry) is currently utilized.

What is the future vision for the Data Hub?

The future vision for the Data Hub is to give Conferences and Associations direct access to manage and store information, as well as build and export reports in Excel and PDF format, for all church and ministerial data within their respective areas. In essence, Conferences and Associations will have complete oversight and accountability for of their records and information, as well as the ability to view and print reports at any time.

Other increased enhancements would include the capacity to “transfer” a minister’s data record from one Association / Conference to another and to upload annual offerings information for a Conference’s congregations for Yearbook reporting purposes. CARD would monitor activity and provide support and training to Conferences and Associations for the Data Hub, but would not directly input or edit data in the system.

This would ultimately accomplish the following:

- Create one shared database across the life of the denomination
- Reduce reporting errors by eliminating steps in the data collection process
- Save money, time, and staffing resources for Conferences and Associations by eliminating duplicate databases maintained in these settings (particularly for small- to mid-sized Conferences and Associations)
- Increase shared buy-in for accurate reporting and maintenance of information for annual statistical reporting and real-time utilization

How are we making this vision a reality?

CARD has contracted with Centric Consulting, a national IT firm with presence in Cleveland, to build these desired enhancements into the existing system, ultimately creating a new and improved version of the Data Hub. Work on this project will begin soon, and the target date for the new system to go live is Tuesday, July 15, 2014.

Several individuals from Conferences are partnering with CARD to review plan documents and to test the functionality of the site throughout the building process. In addition, staff members from the Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) and the Office of Philanthropy and Stewardship (OPS) teams are involved in the review and testing phases of this project.

Members of the Data Hub Review / Testing Team include:

- Diane Ciba, Connecticut Conference
- Jo Ordway, Iowa Conference
- Dawn Hammond, Massachusetts Conference
- Campbell Lovett, Michigan Conference
- Burton Bagby-Grose, South Central Conference
- Elizabeth Dilley, MESA, Local Church Ministries
- Craig Hoffman, OPS, Office of the General Minister and President

The UCC Data Hub
will go live Tuesday,
July 15, 2014.

CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION FAQs

When will the system switch from the current Data Hub to the new and improved Data Hub?

The day that the upgraded Data Hub will go live is Tuesday, July 15, 2014. On that day, we will be hosting a Kick-Off Webinar and Live Training (details are below).

When is the last day CARD will receive paper forms and make updates to records in the Data Hub?

All people and church forms, as well as Yearbook reporting forms, will be accepted by CARD through July 30, 2014. This will allow a short window of transition time for both Conferences and Associations to gain familiarity with the upgraded system. Beginning August 1, all forms we receive will be re-directed back to the Conferences for data entry into the system.

All people and church forms, as well as Yearbook reporting forms, will be accepted by CARD through July 30, 2014.

What does this mean for how Associations will report information to the Conference?

Right now, each Conference has its own unique process for how information is communicated from Associations to the Conference itself. The two major processes used (or hybrids of these two processes) are as follows:

1. Conferences rely on their Association's registrars / regional ministers to update church and people records directly within the Data Hub, giving Associations more oversight and accountability for their information.
2. Conferences obtain updates and other information from Associations using paper forms (ones they've created or ones adapted from CARD); and then a designated Conference staff person enters all information into the Data Hub. This provides Conferences a level of oversight and accountability into what is entered in the system.

Neither of these ways is better than the other and is highly dependent on context. What is most important to know is this: Even with the Data Hub upgrade, Conferences do not need to change their information reporting processes if they don't want to do so. It really depends on what you think is best for your setting.

Our hope with this build is that your Conference will have more freedom to really decide which method is most helpful for your context. For example, after a few months of using the new and improved Data Hub, you may decide that it is user-friendly enough to grant editing access to Association registrars. Changing information sharing processes may, in the long run, be most effective. Or, knowing your setting, you may feel that using paper forms is still the best way to gather information from Associations. That is great as well!

Regardless of which process you utilize, it may be an opportune time to review these processes with your Conference Minister, other Conference staff, and Association leaders. And certainly before July 15, it would be a good idea to communicate with your Associations regarding the Data Hub upgrade and reiterate how you would like to proceed with information sharing as a whole. As has always been the case, Association registrars and other Conference staff can have viewing access to their records in the Data Hub, even if they don't have editing access.

■ Even with the Data Hub upgrade, Conferences do not need to change their information processes if they don't want to do so.

If the Conference allows editing access to Associations, how will I know if/when changes are made?

While the upgraded Data Hub will not track all changes, it will track important changes regarding ministerial standings, deaths, transfers, and church standings. Each month, you will be able to generate two reports (Excel or PDF)—a Ministerial Change Report and a Church Change Report—that will allow you to see when a change was made, and by whom. There will be more information about this feature in the training tools.

What if the Conference wants to continue collecting paper forms from Associations? Are we able to use the forms that CARD has created?

YES! CARD will transform all forms to printable PDF, remove CARD's contact information, and make them available in perpetuity on our secure link for Conferences and Associations to utilize at will. Here is the link to this site: www.ucc.org/research/secure/forms.html. New forms will be posted around June 30, 2014.

What changes can I really expect with this new system? Will it be difficult for me and others to be trained on this system?

The upgraded Data Hub will be similar in structure with a newer, more web-friendly look and feel. You will be able to do more with this system, and many of the fields will have error checking so that you won't be able to input incorrect information. (For example, if a phone number or website address is incorrectly input, the system will indicate this and will not allow you to save until it is corrected. Also, phone numbers will auto-correct to be in a certain format.) In this way, we are error-proofing the database and making it as user-friendly and streamlined as possible!

In addition, most fields will offer a helpful "Information Box" that will assist users in knowing what should be placed in a particular field. When a new person or church needs to be added, the system will automatically generate a new Church ID number. When a minister's record needs to be transferred from one Conference and Association to another, the system will offer a way to search existing records and request that the record be transferred into your Conference (on the other end, the sending Conference will receive notification that you have requested the record and will process the transfer).

We could go on...we're that excited about it! But in the end, it will actually be easier to be trained on this upgraded system than the current system because of the increased user-friendliness and the automated nature of the new database.

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What does this mean for the other databases that are maintained by the Conference?

Again, this depends on the size of your Conference and the capacity of your existing database(s).

If you are a small to mid-sized Conference, we've designed this system to possibly replace your existing database. CARD specifically designed a report generating feature to this build so that the Data Hub could really serve as your Conference's main database and you can get the most out of your information as possible. These reports include ready-to-print, stylized PDF directories of your Conference's ministers and churches.

If you are a mid-sized to large Conference, the Data Hub may not be able to replace your existing database(s) completely (especially if you use other programs that also track finances, giving, board members, and lay leaders). However, you may not need to track everything that you're currently tracking in that system and can utilize the Data Hub in ways that are most efficient for your setting. In addition, the report generating functions that will create exportable Excel spreadsheets from the Data Hub might then be able to be uploaded into your system (depending on its capabilities).

During the annual Yearbook reporting cycle, the new Data Hub will also allow bulk uploads of a Conference's giving records for churches, which can possibly occur more easily depending on a Conference's existing financial database. Ultimately, at the very least, you won't need to fill out forms, send them to CARD, wait for us to enter the information, and then verify that everything was entered correctly.

How will the Data Hub relate with other databases in the national setting?

One great feature of the upgrade is that the Data Hub will pull a minister's or member in discernment's address, phone number, and email from the Ministerial Profile/Snapshot system if the individual has updated that record more recently than it has been updated in the Data Hub. While this may be a small step in creating a shared network of information across the UCC, it provides another helpful channel for Conferences and Associations to receive updated contact information for ministers in a timely manner.

What opportunities will CARD offer for training?

On July 15, 2014, 3:00-4:00 PM EDT, CARD will host a Kick-Off Webinar for the New and Improved Data Hub. This will be a general introduction to the Data Hub providing some of the big picture changes and goals/features of the new system. It will also include some demonstrations of enhanced functionality.

On July 15, 2014, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. EDT,
CARD will host a Kick-Off Webinar for everyone.

This session is meant for everyone—Conference administrators and staff, Conference Ministers, Association registrars, and national staff.

Following the Kick-Off Webinar, there will be a Live, 1—Hour Online Training Session for Conference and Association users (specifically, those who currently and in the future will have editing access to the Data Hub) from 4:00-5:00 PM EDT.

For those who are unable to attend the Online Training Session on July 15, there will be three other sessions for Conferences/Associations at the following days and times:

- Tuesday, July 22—10:00-11:00 AM EDT
- Thursday, July 24—2:00-3:00 PM EDT
- Wednesday, July 30—3:00-4:00 PM EDT

Following the Kick-Off Webinar, there will be a Live, 1-Hour Online Training Session for Conference and Association users from 4:00-5:00 PM EDT on July 15th.

More information about joining these online trainings will be forthcoming. For now, please put July 15 or one of the other July dates on your calendars.

Ultimately, prior to and after July 15, the main training method for the Data Hub will occur through a series of video tutorials that can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on CARD's website at www.ucc.org/research. The live online sessions will offer Conference and Association users one type of method for training; but the nature of the upgrades makes video tutorials a more helpful, simpler method for training on specific tasks and functions.

Also, the Kick-Off Webinar will be recorded and available on the CARD website for those who will be unable to attend the live session.

In the fall, video tutorials will be developed and shared on the CARD website for local churches to learn about entering their annual information into the Data Hub.

Prior to and after July 15, the main training method for the Data Hub will occur through a series of video tutorials that can be accessed 24/7 at www.ucc.org/research

How will this impact annual Yearbook reporting by local churches?

Prior to and during this year's annual data collection cycle for the Yearbook, CARD communicated with Conferences, Associations, and the wider church that our office would no longer be accepting paper forms directly from congregations beyond spring 2014. As a result, most congregations that reported information this year did so using the Data Hub; and in many cases, data entry of these forms took place in Conference and Association settings and were not sent to CARD for data entry. Thank you for being so proactive in working with your local churches to communicate these changes and offer more streamlined processes for data collection!

Similar to the general information communication processes between Associations and Conferences, each Conference has its own unique process for how information is collected from local churches and ministers for annual Yearbook reporting. And, just like that former process, no data collection method is better than another and is highly dependent on context.

So similarly, even with the Data Hub upgrade, Conferences do not need to change the annual data collection process for local church Yearbook reporting if they don't want to do so. We know that some churches may not have regular internet access, and others may not be comfortable inputting data into a computer link. For this reason, just like the other reporting forms, we will post all local church Yearbook forms on our secure website to be accessed at any time: www.ucc.org/research/secure/forms.html. However, it still might be helpful for you to re-examine, in consultation with other Conference and Association staff, which of the following options is most feasible for the local churches in your setting: (a) the paper method, (b) the online/web-based method, or (c) the hybrid method (giving local churches the option of utilizing either approach).

Conferences do not need to change the annual data collection process for local church Yearbook reporting if they don't want to do so.

What can I be doing now to prepare for this summer?

Here are some helpful things to be doing/considering:

- Talk with your Conference Minister, Conference staff, and Association registrars about your current information sharing process to assess if changes need to be made in light of CARD's information processing changes and the Data Hub upgrade.
- Communicate with Associations about these changes, or reiterate existing procedures; and determine what type of access you would like Association registrars or other individuals to have prior to the upgrade on July 15 (viewing or editing access, if they don't already have this access).
- Email Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi (hajbik@ucc.org) or Destiny Hisey (hiseyd@ucc.org) if you would like to add new users or edit the existing level of access that users in your Conference and Associations have. Administrative access to add/remove users and change user types will remain with CARD as managers of this system on behalf of the wider church.
- Begin to talk with Conference staff about your existing database(s) and the feasibility of either using the Data Hub as your database of record or utilizing the Data Hub in ways that complement your current system(s), thereby increasing efficiency and reducing record keeping burdens.
- Begin to talk with Conference and Association staff, and local churches, about the current annual Yearbook reporting process to assess if changes need to be made in light of CARD's information processing changes and the Data Hub upgrade.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

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| June 30, 2014 | Deadline for edited paper forms for internal Conference/Association use to be posted on CARD secure link |
| July 15, 2014 | Launch date for upgraded Data Hub (will be accessible through both http://yb.ucc.org and http://datahub.ucc.org)

Kick-Off Webinar, 3:00-4:00 PM EDT
Live, 1-Hour Online Training, 4:00-5:00 PM EDT |
| July 22-30, 2014 | Three additional Online Trainings |
| July 30, 2014 | Deadline for paper forms to be received by CARD for processing |