

01-GS-30 VOTED: The Twenty-third General Synod adopts the resolution “Program for Essential Conference Ministry.”

PROGRAM FOR ESSENTIAL CONFERENCE MINISTRY

The Twenty-third General Synod affirms as basic policy that all Conferences should have essential Conference ministry to be able to accomplish the basic responsibilities in the United Church of Christ as outlined in the Bylaws. Further, the General Synod affirms that establishing and providing financing for the Essential Conference Ministry Annual Fund is a basic strategy for assisting all Conferences to maintain adequate Conference ministry.

CRITERIA, GUIDELINES, AND PROCEDURES FOR FUNDING ESSENTIAL CONFERENCE MINISTRY

The purpose of this resolution is to assist small membership, large geographical Conferences of the United Church of Christ to provide staff leadership for Conference ministry. This fund will enable Conferences to provide the capacity to engage in their necessary ministries.

1 Each Conference board of directors is to be responsible for determining its own staffing pattern and needs. If, after careful, genuine, and prayerful reflection, exploration and analysis, a Conference determines that it has the financial resources to fund only a portion or not any of an additional Conference minister, but that its ministry requires additional staff, the Conference shall then be eligible to apply to the Essential Conference Ministry Annual Fund to assist in its additional staffing needs.

2. The Essential Conference Ministry Annual Fund is solely for the purpose of finding additional or associate Conference ministry staff; it is not to be used for program, meetings, support staff, or general budgetary items.

Proposals to the Essential Conference Ministry Annual Fund shall be written by the respective Conference seeking the Funds. They shall gather and assemble all the necessary documentation they deem appropriate. The proposal should include information about the resources the Conference itself brings. The request for funds would then come from the Conference and be reviewed, first by their region,¹ to garner support.

2 Following these steps, the proposal would be forwarded to the Cabinet of the Council of Conference Ministers, the Office of General Ministries, and Local Church Ministries. The Cabinet and the national ministries, working together, shall be the decision-making body. The Cabinet is responsible for initiating and overseeing these activities. They shall review, discuss, and make further inquiry, if necessary, about each proposal. They shall review and award each grant, if approved, in a timely manner and expedient fashion.

3 The Council for Conference Ministers shall act as treasurer. Initially, the highest grant awarded will be \$45,000 annually.² Grants may be five-year renewable grants upon evaluation and recommendation by the region.

The General Synod requests the Office of General Ministries, Local Church Ministries,³ and the Conferences to participate in securing and/or providing \$100,000 for the Essential Conference Ministry Annual Fund in addition to the \$100,000 provided currently.

The primary implementing body is the Council of Conference Ministers with financial and other forms of assistance from the Office of General Ministries and Local Church Ministries.

The General Synod requests the Council of Conference Ministers, as implementers of the Fund, to report on its activities in its biennial report to the General Synod.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

Notes:

- 1 The six regions vary greatly throughout the United Church of Christ. Therefore, it is suggested the Conference ministers of each region assume responsibility for determining how the region will fulfill its responsibility.
- 2 Depending on the economy, this figure may need to be revisited from time to time.
- 3 The procedure for review to be determined by the Executive Minister of the Ministry.