

The Search and Call System
New York Conference, United Church of Christ
Policies and Procedures
June 7, 2013

Preface

Profiles

Any UCC candidate seeking a church first must have the Office of Local Church Ministries: Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) forward a current profile to our Profile Coordinator. Only official ministerial profiles of UCC authorized ministers distributed by the MESA profile office will be circulated to search committees in the New York Conference. The Conference Office will send profiles to the Chair of the Search Committee (or his/her designee) via mail or electronically. Profiles are sent with the consent of the candidate and only at his/her request. The New York Conference will not withhold a UCC profile from a search committee unless the Conference has knowledge of an impending fitness review. The New York Conference requires that an Oxford Documents Criminal Background Check (CBC) accompany all profiles that circulate in New York. The New York Conference will not circulate any profile with a CBC that is more than eighteen months old. Profiles are confidential documents and should not be shared outside the search committee. At the conclusion of the search process, a search committee should keep a summarized record of the number of profiles received and a description of gender and racial distribution of potential candidates. With the exception of the profile of the final candidate, all other profiles should be destroyed.

Procedures Unique to the New York Conference

1. The New York Conference requires each local church to complete the Local Church Profile (LCP) developed by the Office of Local Church Ministries: Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA). The local church is to provide the Placement Team with an electronic version of their completed profile. The Placement Team will circulate the local church profile to interested candidates.
2. The New York Conference serves local church search committees through the ministry of its Placement Team. The Placement Team consists of the Conference Minister, the Associate Conference Ministers, and the Profile Coordinator. One of the ministers is assigned to work with each local church search committee.
3. When a local church search committee requests that the Placement Team set up a neutral pulpit for the purpose of experiencing a candidate's worship leadership, the Placement Team will place an internal and temporary hold on forwarding ministerial candidates' profiles so that the search committee can focus upon evaluating the neutral pulpit candidate. Forwarding of new ministerial profiles will resume when the search committee informs the Placement Team that the neutral pulpit candidate is no longer under consideration.
4. The New York Conference follows a policy regarding conference staff services requested from congregations which do not contribute to Our Church's Wider Mission. (Please see Policy regarding fees for service for Congregations which do not contribute to OCWM)

References

All search committees and all candidates must have on file in the Conference office a signed consent form, which allows each party to seek information regarding the other. No profiles—including interim profiles—will be circulated without a consent form. At the request of a search committee, a Placement Team member will complete a reference check with the Conference in which a candidate has his or her standing, in an effort to discern whether there exist any known issues regarding fitness for ministry. The information shared in this reference check is confidential.

We encourage all clergy seeking a call in the New York Conference UCC to speak with a member of the Placement Team regarding employment openings in the Conference, thereby learning whether any positions might be a particularly good fit given a candidate's experience level.

Non-UCC Clergy

With the exception of Ordained Ministerial Partners of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Formula of Agreement Partners (Reformed Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) it is the policy of the New York Conference to not circulate non-UCC credentials to our search committees; as a general rule, the Conference also does not conduct reference checks on non-UCC/DOC clergy. Non-UCC/DOC clergy wishing to seek placement in New York Conference UCC must apply for "privilege of call" in the geographical location where they currently reside.

Exceptions to this policy may occur when a local church is not able to find a suitable candidate. Exceptions to this policy are also made during searches for interim ministers. The New York Conference will circulate the credentials of non-UCC candidates for ministry positions at the discretion of the Placement Team, provided that a candidate has completed an official New York Conference Non-UCC Ministry Profile and has a current Oxford Documents Criminal Background Check on file in the New York Conference. In all cases, the Conference is unable to provide references or information on non-UCC clergy unless a UCC Statement of Consent and a Background Disclosure Statement are signed by the authorized minister and on file in the Conference office. Even in situations where the Conference helps gather information on non-UCC clergy, it must be understood that Association Church and Ministry Committees possess final responsibility for determining whether a minister can be authorized to perform ministry within their Association(s) on behalf of the United Church of Christ. A church with UCC insurance whose pastor lacks UCC ministerial authorization may have its coverage terminated.

Interim Ministers

If you wish to be considered for interim ministry in the New York Conference you must forward to the Conference's Profile Coordinator a copy of either a UCC Profile or the New York Conference Non-UCC Ministry Profile. It is available on the New York Conference website www.uccny.org/ . It must have a signed UCC Statement of Consent form with it. Non-UCC ministers will be considered for interim positions. It is our policy to give to a congregation a limited number of interim profiles that we think match the

particular needs of the church in transition. For example, in some cases, it may be preferable to send the profiles of individuals who have had formal interim training and previous interim experience. In other cases, these characteristics are not critical. Congregations are free to request certain candidates' profiles if they are not included in those documents originally provided by the Placement Team.

Small Churches

Because we are a Conference with many small churches—many of which employ only limited part-time pastoral assistance—we do not always follow the standard policies and procedures of the United Church of Christ Search-and-Call process. If we did follow standard procedures in all instances, many of our small churches would not receive any profiles. If you are interested in doing part-time ministry, you should have either a MESA profile—or, if you are a student, a resume—on file with the Conference. In addition, a signed Statement of Consent, signed Background Disclosure Form, and an Oxford Documents Criminal Background Check (CBC) is required for every candidate. If you learn of an employment opportunity in New York that sounds interesting, you should inform the Placement Team member who is working with the church's search committee of your interest. In order to learn which Placement Team member is working with the church, phone the Conference Office and speak with the Conference Profile Coordinator.

Thank you for your interest in serving the churches of the New York Conference, UCC. We at the Conference wish you the best in your search-and-call endeavors and look forward to working with you!