

The Agency Alignment Proposal FAQ

What is being proposed?

Four agencies of The United Methodist Church – Discipleship Ministries, Global Ministries, Higher Education and Ministry, and United Methodist Communications – are proposing a unification to create a connectional ministries agency. This would unite their ministries and service functions into one organization, which would be governed by a board of directors and led by a chief ministry officer. Though currently unnamed, a suggested name that is reflective of this will be added to the proposal as development continues.

When will this proposal go into effect?

If the proposal is approved by the 2028 General Conference, the unification would be effective at the beginning of the following year, Jan. 1, 2029. That said, the agencies will begin finding opportunities for coordination and alignment immediately. For example, all four agencies have adopted a shared privacy policy and will now be migrating to one financial and accounting system.

How did the proposal originate?

Top executives and board members of several church agencies have been discussing ways to achieve greater synergy with one another for years. Those conversations intensified prior to the 2020/2024 General Conference. In 2023, two agencies, the Board of Global Ministries and the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, agreed to move toward greater alignment under one general secretary. The proposal to create a connectional ministries agency resulted from discussions that continued in late 2025 among the top staff executives and board members of each of the four agencies.

What are the implications for the areas of ministry represented by these four agencies?

A key goal of the proposed unification is to ensure that each of the four ministry areas continues – and does so in a robust way, transforming lives and advancing the work of a thriving United Methodist Church. This move would lead to better coordination of work while strengthening the viability of each area of ministry. Each of these core ministry areas will benefit from the alignment of common support services, such as human resources, information technology, finance, and travel planning. General assets will also be streamlined across these agencies.

Will the unification affect ministry with key constituents?

The agencies that comprise the proposed connectional ministries agency will continue to offer broader denominational support as they do today. In fact, the support of ministry with key partners — such as ethnic plans, the Council of Bishops, the Connectional Table, regional and annual conferences, seminaries, and universities — should be strengthened by this unification. Each partner will continue to relate to the same ministry areas in the new agency with whom they currently work. Efforts will also support better coordination of the interaction between and across the ministry areas and partners.

What impact will the unification have on agency staffing?

No immediate impact on staffing is expected as part of this announcement. More details on how jobs and staffing could be affected post-unification will become available as the proposal is

developed and planning continues. Everything will be done to minimize the stress and uncertainty that comes with such a major change, including communicating with staff as quickly and clearly as possible, while maintaining a commitment to transparency. Full unification is not anticipated before January 1, 2029 if General Conference approves the unification in 2028.

How will information be shared with staff going forward?

Each agency's executive leaders are committed to keeping staff informed throughout the process. Information will be shared via internal emails, town hall meetings, and other means.

Can employees and stakeholders have input as this proposal is developed further?

Yes. Staff and other stakeholders are invited to provide input to the general secretaries and other leadership staff. Employees are welcome to ask questions or share concerns at any time. Your input is particularly encouraged between now and July 1, as work gets under way on drafting the proposal and legislation.

How will the culture of the new agency be developed?

One of the top priorities of the chief ministry officer and executive staff will be to lead the development of the new agency's culture — engaging all staff in identifying core values, sharing best practices, building transparency, and fostering a spirit of teamwork. In so doing, the new agency can celebrate the best practices of all four predecessor agencies, while setting a unified vision for the future.

Where will the new agency be based?

The location of the new agency has not been determined. The component agencies are currently based in Atlanta, Georgia, and Nashville, Tennessee, with additional offices in other countries. Today, all four agencies have remote staff that work across the U.S. and in many countries globally.

What is next in the process?

With the proposal now approved by the governing boards of all four agencies, the next step is to begin communicating about the vision for unification across the denomination through a comprehensive communication plan to key constituents. Concurrently with this communication, work will begin to draft legislation for General Conference, which meets May 8-18, 2028, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As the top lawmaking assembly of the denomination, General Conference decides matters regarding church structure and must approve the proposed unification.

Could other United Methodist agencies join this agency in the future?

The top executive leaders of the other general agencies are aware of this proposal, and it has been discussed at the General Secretaries Table. Other agencies will continue to discern the best structure and partnerships for their effective ministries in the future.

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