

Does The UMC fund...

One of the more frequent questions the UMC receives is about whether The United Methodist Church funds particular non-United Methodist organizations. We also find some people are surprised by the United Methodist-related entities their apportionments fund partially or not at all.

Understanding the UMC Budget

The United Methodist Church budget supports seven general apportioned funds. Local church giving to these funds provides for the global mission and witness of our church.

[Understanding the UMC Budget](#)

General Apportioned Funds

- 1) Africa University Fund - Supports education efforts on the continent of Africa
- 2) Black College Fund - Supports 11 historically Black church-affiliated schools
- 3) Episcopal Fund - Supports active and retired bishops in their episcopal leadership for the denomination
- 4) General Administration Fund - Supports General Conference, the Judicial Council, Archives and History and the church's finance agency
- 5) Interdenominational Cooperation Fund - Supports the church's ecumenical work
- 6) Ministerial Education Fund - Supports United Methodist seminaries and clergy development
- 7) World Service Fund - Supports the diversity of mission through the work of church agencies and the Connectional Table

General Conference approves a budget to support vital international, national, and regional missions and ministries. The general church budget is proportionally allocated (apportioned) to annual conferences, which in turn ask each local church to contribute a portion of its tithes and offerings to support these ministries. In this way, each congregation gives a fair share to support the church's work worldwide.

Here are some of the non-UMC organizations asked about most frequently, listed in alphabetical order.

Does The UMC fund... these non-related entities?

Advocacy groups (such as Good News, Institute on Religion and Democracy, Methodist Federation for Social Action, Reconciling Ministries Network, The

Confessing Movement): No.

These are independent organizations funded by their members and participants.

Black Lives Matter organizations: No.

The United Methodist Church addresses anti-racism work primarily through the [General Commission on Religion and Race](#) and annual conference commissions on religion and race. The apportionment your congregation sends to your annual conference funds both your annual conference commission on religion and race and the General Commission. The denominational budget funds no Black Lives Matter organizations.

March of Dimes: No.

The United Methodist Church has never funded this organization.

World Vision and Samaritan's Purse: No to both.

The United Methodist Church has never funded these organizations.

National Council(s) of Churches (and similar ecumenical bodies outside the US): Yes.

The United Methodist Church, through its predecessor bodies, was a founding member of the [National Council of Churches](#) and its predecessor, the Federal Council of Churches. The ecumenical commitment of The UMC, however, extends beyond the United States, and includes a financial commitment to support these bodies that bring Christians of many denominations together in common efforts.

Planned Parenthood: No.

The United Methodist Church has never funded this organization.

Political Parties or Political Candidates: No.

The United Methodist Church does not fund political candidates or political parties. This is a prohibited activity under U.S. non-profit law for churches and other charitable organizations which qualify for exemption from federal income tax. Churches may jeopardize or even lose this status if they engage in “political campaign activity.” Learn more about the [Church’s involvement in politics](#).

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice: Not as of 2017.

The United Methodist Church was a founding member of this coalition and advocated for the Church’s life-centered position on abortion in dialogue with other member bodies, many of whom hold choice-centered ethics. The 2016 General Conference instructed The UMC to exit the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and eliminate all funding for it.

World Council of Churches: Yes.

The United Methodist Church, the largest Protestant denomination that functions as a worldwide church, is committed to witnessing to the gospel and extending the mission of Christ in partnership with Christian bodies on a worldwide basis. As a founding member

of The [World Council of Churches](#) through its predecessor bodies, The United Methodist Church continues its presence, witness, and collaborative work in the World Council of Churches through the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, one of the apportioned funds. United Methodist funding supports the participation of United Methodists and Christians of many denominations from developing countries in the worldwide assemblies of the Council, as well as the Council's ongoing work of promoting initiatives to build justice and make for peace. See pages 35 and 38 of the [Financial Commitment Booklet](#) for more information.

Does The UMC fund... these UM and UM-related entities?

United Methodist General Agencies: Varies

Among the agencies primarily funded by the general church budget are Archives and History, Church and Society, Communications, Discipleship Ministries, Finance and Administration, Global Ministries, Higher Education and Ministry, Religion and Race, and the Status and Role of Women.

Some United Methodist agencies are **not** funded or not fully funded through local church giving to the general church budget.

Mission and Mission Support

- [The General Commission on United Methodist Men](#) is partly supported (up to 20%) by local church giving through the World Service Fund. The majority of its funding comes from its members.
- [United Methodist Women](#) is 100% supported by its own membership. It receives no funds from the General Church budget.
- While the [World Service Fund](#) underwrites part of the work of [Global Ministries](#) and its international relief unit, [UMCOR](#), much is funded through additional giving by individuals and annual conferences through the Advance, a way to direct support to specific missionaries, mission projects, and disaster relief. UMCOR often provides grants to and collaborates with other partner relief organizations on the ground, especially in areas where there are few or no United Methodist congregations present.

Publishing

- Discipleship Resources and [Discipleship Resources International](#), the publishing units of [Discipleship Ministries](#), are funded with support from the World Service Fund.
- [The United Methodist Publishing House](#) receives no funding from the General Church budget. Instead, it is funded through subscription services and sales of their

publications and other items. The United Methodist Publishing House is required to produce and publish the official documents of the denomination (including the Book of Discipline, Book of Resolutions, all official materials of the General Conference, and the hymnal and ritual of the Church) and to return profits from its overall operations to support retirement funds for United Methodist clergy.

- [Upper Room Ministries](#), like United Methodist Publishing House, is funded entirely through sales and subscriptions. It receives no funds from the general church budget.

Retirement and Health Benefits

- [Wespath](#), the church's pension and health benefits agency, is funded by those who participate in its benefit plans and through returns on investments using those funds. It is not supported through the General Church budget.

United Methodist-Related Institutions: Varies

Higher Education and Clergy Formation

- *Directly Funded Colleges and Universities*
The general church budget provides some direct funding through [The Black College Fund](#) for eleven Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) related to The United Methodist Church. It also provides substantial funding for Africa University, founded by the 1988 General Conference, through [The Africa University Fund](#). This fund also enables bishops in Africa to provide a limited number of full scholarships to students in their episcopal areas each year.
- *Seminaries in the United States*
Thirteen United Methodist seminaries offer graduate-level programs for those called to ordained ministry, Course of Study for local pastors, and continuing-education opportunities for pastors across the connection. Scholarship support for these students comes through [The Ministerial Education Fund](#).
- *Seminaries and Theological Education Institutions outside the United States*
[The Central Conference Theological Education Fund](#), created by the 2012 General Conference as a part of the [World Service Fund](#), supports theological schools, courses of study, libraries, scholarships, and faculty development for the training and educational support of clergy outside the United States.

Hospitals and Health Care Systems

- *Within the United States*

United Methodist-related hospitals within the United States were originally started by annual conferences. Some annual conferences own or have oversight over such hospitals through participation in their boards of directors. Most maintain an ongoing relationship through a variety of other means. None are funded by the General Church budget.

- *Outside the United States*

Global Ministries has helped launch and continues some funding for many hospitals and health care sites, in part through the World Service Fund and in part through individual and conference giving to the Advance ([Abundant Health](#)).

Children's Homes and Eldercare

- *Within the United States*

As with hospitals, most United Methodist-related children's homes and older adult facilities in the United States were founded by annual conferences, and some remain owned by the annual conference. For the most part, they are independent institutions that maintain a relationship with their founding conference, but raise their own funds through the services they provide. Some annual conferences provide some funding in their budgets. None of these facilities are supported by the General Church budget.

- *Outside the United States*

Some children's homes, orphanages, and related ministries outside the United States are supported in part through the World Service Fund under the direction of Global Ministries. Most, however, receive funding from individuals or conferences through the Advance under the [Impact Area of Education](#).

Surprised by what The United Methodist Church does or does not fund through your local church offerings?