



Preparing to Start a New Church

Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ

The first step in starting a new church in Southern California Nevada Conference is the completion of a Leadership Assessment process (see separate summary page). The next steps are the pre-start training of that leadership, preparation of a Ministry Plan, and project approval by the Conference Board of Directors.

Pre-Start Education:

The Assessment process is designed, in part, to identify areas where you can benefit from additional education prior to actually leading a new church start. Conference staff will work collaboratively with you to design a tailored educational experience designed to maximize the prospect of your success for the new church start. This education is available through the Conference, and consists of two general categories of learning opportunities:

1. Formal education in areas such as UCC Polity, Administration in New Churches, Boundary Training, etc.
2. On-the-job training, with a selected setting in an existing new church.

Stipends are available for this training, subject to approval by the Conference Board.

Prepare Ministry Plan:

Planting a church takes a significant amount of planning and preparation. In order for you to prepare for this undertaking with thoughtful reflection on practical issues that you might face, and to request Conference support for your plan, we require that planning result in a written document similar to a business plan. Staff can provide you with a format for this plan, and guide you in its preparation, but you will need to be its primary author. Our Board will review this plan, and will be looking for:

- A concise statement of vision and mission,
- Location and demographic research, including a description of the targeted population
- A description of other churches in the general location, with particular attention to churches with similar mission and/or target population
- Summation of your launch team's background and preparation for the development
- A biographical statement about the pastor(s) and leadership team, including a coach and/or set of advisors for the leadership team.
- A detailed time line for your planned program development and implementation,
- Your church-related goals for years 2 through 5 from the date of the proposal with attention to the "essentials" that we use to determine the viability of the church start regarding its growth or termination.
- A detailed narrative budget and financial projection for at least five years

The pre-start education plan and your project's Ministry Plan can be completed at the same time, or in series. When both are completed, your plan will be reviewed by the Conference Ministers and referred to the Conference Board. With approval by the Conference Board for your Ministry Plan, you are ready to start!

If you have any questions about these assessment exercises, contact Gary Roberts at the Conference Office (626-798-8082, ext 18) or at roberts@scncucc.org.

