

Instructions for Petitions to the 2016 General Conference The United Methodist Church

“Any organization, clergy member, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference....” (§1507, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2012*)

Format for Petition Submissions

1. All petitions should be submitted digitally by e-mail, CD, USB drive, or through the General Conference website. Petitions not submitted digitally shall be in typed or printed form following the format below. Handwritten or hand printed submissions will not be accepted.
2. Petitions must be typed, double-spaced. Microsoft Word or any other software that allows files to be saved as rich-text format (RTF) may be used.
3. Do not use “Track Changes” at any point in the preparation of a petition. Do not use subscript or superscript, as is commonly used for footnotes and endnotes. Instead of footnotes and endnotes, use in-text citations.
4. The top of the first page of the petition should read as follows:
Total Number of Pages:
Suggested Title: (i.e., “Establish Quorum”);
Discipline Paragraph or *Resolution* Number, if applicable: (i.e. “*Discipline* ¶ 506” or “Resolution #42”);
General Church Budget Implications: (i.e. – “General Church Budget Implications: None or Yes”);
Global Implications: (i.e. – “Global Implications: None or Yes”)
(See Frequently Asked Questions – page 2 - for more information on Budget or Global designations)
5. The bottom of the final page of the petition should include:
Date:
Signature of the Petitioner:
Identification of the Petitioner: (i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”; etc.)
Phone:
Fax Number: (if applicable)
E-mail Address: (if applicable)

“Each petition must be signed by the person submitting it, accompanied by appropriate identification, such as address, local church, or United Methodist board or agency relationship.” Telephone numbers must also be included. *“Each petition submitted by fax or electronic mail must identify the individual submitting it, accompanied by identification as above, and must contain a valid digital electronic mail return address or return fax number by which the submitter can be reached. Electronic signatures will be accepted in accordance with common business practice (§1507.3, The Book of Discipline).”*

Content of Petition Text

“Each petition must address only one issue if the Discipline is not affected; if the Discipline is affected, each petition must address only one paragraph of the Discipline, except that, if two or more paragraphs in the Discipline are so closely related that a change in one affects the others, the petition may call for the amendment of those paragraphs also to make them consistent with one another.” (§1507.2, *The Book of Discipline*)

1. State action desired, i.e., “Amend ¶ No. ___”; “Add new sub-paragraph after ¶ ___”; “Delete ¶ ___ and substitute the following...”; “Add new paragraph...”; etc.”
2. Use single underlines for proposed additions and ~~strike through~~ for proposed deletions.
3. Do not use “Track Changes” at any point in the preparation of a petition. Do not use subscript or superscript, as is commonly used for footnotes and endnotes. Instead of footnotes and endnotes, use in-text citations as illustrated in the quote from the *Book of Discipline* above.

Supporting Material

1. Anticipated financial requirements are to be included as an appendix to the petition text and should follow the final page of the petition text.

“All petitions submitted to the General Conference, except those submitted by individual members of The United Methodist Church and local church groups, which call for the establishment of new programs or the expansion of

existing programs will be invalid unless accompanied by supporting data that address the issue of anticipated financial requirements of the program.” (§1507.4, The Book of Discipline)

2. Submitter may submit a rationale of any length, but only the first fifty (50) words of the rationale will be printed in the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate* or available in the online CALMS web site for each petition. The rationale should be a separate text file.

Sending Petitions to the Petitions Secretary

1. Petitions may be sent to the Petitions Secretary beginning **April 1, 2015**. Petitions without digital media must still be typed, double-spaced, and be submitted by **July 1, 2015** to allow time for transcription. Handwritten or hand printed submissions will not be accepted. *“Petitions must be postmarked by a national postal service no later than 210 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference (§1507.5, The Book of Discipline).”* *“If petitions are transmitted by a means other than a national postal service, they must be in the hands of the Petitions Secretary no later than 210 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference (§1507.6, The Book of Discipline).”* This includes overnight carriers. The final deadline date is **October 13, 2015**.
2. Petitions should be submitted within the GC2016 website www.gc2016.umc.org/petitions submission or by email to petitions@umpublishing.org (This email address should be used for petition submission only.)
3. Petitions submitted by email should have a subject line which identifies the submitter by last name and the content of the petition. (i.e. Martin – resolution 12) The petition text should be in an attachment and the rationale, if included, should be a second attachment. Only one petition should be submitted per email.
4. All other correspondence, including questions about the petition process or about the status of particular petitions may be sent to petitionsquestions@umpublishing.org after April 1, 2015.
5. Petitions (1 signed hard copy and CD or USB drive) may also be submitted via:

U.S. Postal Service to: Gary W. Graves, Petitions Secretary United Methodist General Conference <i>(Address to be released at a later date)</i>	or Overnight Carriers (FedEx, UPS, DHL) to: Gary W. Graves, Petitions Secretary United Methodist General Conference <i>(Address to be released at a later date)</i>
---	---
6. Petitions from annual conferences should be submitted by the annual conference secretary within 30 days of the close of the annual conference session.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does it mean to say a petition has or does not have “General Church Budget Implications”?

A petition that causes the need of funding (i.e.; creation of new program, staff position, requirements of support, etc.) through the general Church apportionments has “Financial Implications” for the procedural purposes of General Conference. This requires a review by the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) to verify if the funding has already been included under the recommended quadrennial budget or if this requires new funding not currently in the quadrennial budget. A petition that does not cause the need of funding, or that causes the need of funding from some other source (local congregation, district, annual conference, jurisdiction, etc.) than general church apportionments does not have “Financial Implications”.

What does it mean to say a petition has or does not have “Global Implications”?

A petition that causes a change to the *Book of Discipline* or the *Book of Resolutions* or otherwise takes some action or position for the denomination has “Global Implications” if it:

- Is a constitutional amendment.
- Has a direct effect on the global work of general agencies.
- Places requirements or expectations on all annual conferences, districts, or churches regardless of whether they are located in jurisdictions or central conferences.
- Speaks to universal societal concerns, regardless of the particular form of secular government or cultural differences.