Overview

The dissolution of the four associations and transfer of their ministry to the conference arose out of desire from several association leaders to ensure we used volunteer energy effectively. Finances did not drive this decision and in fact the net outcome will be financially neutral (i.e., we're not "saving" money). The needs of ministry, not the reality of money, drove this move.

Dues and OCWM

In our new structure, congregations will still contribute "Dues" and "OCWM."

- "Membership Dues" (formerly, association dues), will cover the administrative costs for the congregation to be part of the United Church of Christ. Dues covers much of the operational costs of the new conference budget, expenses like legal representation, printing and communication, technology, and staff travel to local congregations. Dues will be assessed at $5.00 per member of the local church.
- "OCWM Wisconsin Impact" (also known as "OCWM Basic Support") will fund the wider mission and ministry of the congregation, supporting programs to strengthen local congregations (including grants to churches), conference staff to support local church vitality, and partners like UCCI, the National Setting of the UCC, and regional missions previously supported by the associations. Each congregation will decide their own level of OCWM Wisconsin Impact. On average, congregations in the conference give 3.89% of their local church expenses to support the wider mission of the UCC.

FAQ on Association Budgets

Q: How will the conference operating as an association release money for new efforts?

A: The associations each held annual meetings and incurred other expenses that will go away in the consolidation. We'll redeploy these funds for new regional and affinity gatherings ($15,000) and further support for youth programming ($2,700).

Q: What happens to the grants to congregations provided by the SEA and NWA?

A: The two associations provided $5,000 to congregations through their respective mission or executive teams. This support of congregational initiatives will continue as an additional $5,000 in Catalyst Grants each year.

Q: How will the mission partners supported by my association continue?

A: The mission and ministries of each association will carry on through the conference budget. SEA supported Frieden's, Guest House, and the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee. SWA supported the UEK Partnership. All the associations provided UCCI Scholarships. These mission projects will now be supported from the conference budget through gifts to OCWM Wisconsin Impact. Additionally, the SWA provided social concerns grants; these are now part of an expanded "general partnerships" budget line that will continue to offer social concerns grants.

Wider Church Ministries ***Based on 2024 Numbers***		
UEK Partnerships	$ 500.00	SWA
Freidens	$ 5,000.00	SEA
Guest House	$ 2,000.00	SEA
Interfaith	$ 15,500.00	SEA
General Synod	$ 20,000.00	
General Partnerships	$ 75,000.00	SWA – Social Concerns
UCCI (Scholarships & Awesum Volunteers)	$ 155,000.00	NEA, NWA, SEA, SWA
National Setting Support	$ 300,000.00	
Wisconsin Council of Churches	$ 30,500.00	
Council on Health and Human Services	$ 32,000.00	
Total Wider Church Ministries	**$ 635,500.00**	

Q: How will people request grants for their congregations or for partner organizations?

A: Congregations can apply for grants via the conference website - https://wcucc.org/conference-giving/grants/. The Catalyst Team and Creation Care Team will decide on grants to congregations. Grants to partner organizations, including the former SWA social concerns grants, will be decided by the conference Board of Directors. As we move into our new structure, the Board may delegate this authority to a new committee.

Q: How will the Division on Church and Ministry be funded?

A: The associations provided significant funding for the Division on Church and Ministry. This support will continue at similar levels in the conference budget.

Q: What happens to the faith formation scholarships NEA provided?

A: The commitment of NEA to faith formation will continue through additional resources to the Damascus Project ($1,000) and youth faith formation support ($4,800).

Q: What happens to the $50 annual checks NEA provided retirees?

A: The small checks to retirees will be discontinued but the strong support of ministerial assistance will continue in the conference budget. Additionally, the NEA support of an annual clergy retreat will be expanded (from $650 to $6,225).

Q: How do people volunteer to serve on a Conference Board, suggest a new affinity or regional gathering or team, or otherwise get involved?

A: We welcome the ideas, energy, and thoughts of people who want to volunteer and engage in our common life. People can start with a call to Andrea Vik, the conference's office coordinator, 1-608-846-7880 or avik@wcucc.org.