

Florida Conference Policy Employment of Relatives

DISTRIBUTION: Cabinet, Extended Cabinet, Department Managers, District Superintendents

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Personnel Committee of the Council on Finance and Administration

SUBJECT: To clearly define The Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church's policy regarding the standards for close relatives working for the Conference in the same or different departments.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2010

APPROVED BY: CFA Personnel Committee

I. Policy.

The employment of relatives can cause various problems, including charges of favoritism, conflicts of interest, family discord and scheduling conflicts that work to the disadvantage of both the Conference and its employees.

However, the Florida Conference will permit the employment of *qualified* relatives of employees, or immediate family members as long as such employment does not, in the opinion of the Personnel Committee, create actual conflicts of interest.

For purposes of this policy, "qualified relative" is defined as a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, first cousin, corresponding in-law, "step" relation, or any member of the employee's household.

This policy must also be considered when assigning, transferring, or promoting an employee. The Conference will use sound judgment in the placement of related employees in accordance with the following guidelines:

II. Provisions

- Individuals who are related by blood, marriage, or reside in the same household are permitted to work in the same department, provided no direct reporting or supervisor to subordinate relationship exists. That is, no employee is permitted to work within "the chain of command" when one relative's work responsibilities, salary, hours, career progress, benefits, or other terms and conditions of employment could be influenced by the other relative.
- Related employees may have no influence over the wages, hours, benefits, career progress and other terms and conditions of the other related staff members.
- Employees who marry while employed, or become part of the same household are treated in accordance with these guidelines. That is, if in the opinion of the Conference, a conflict arises as a result of the relationship, one of the employees may be transferred at the earliest practicable time.

- Conference employment policies permit spouses or relatives of other employees to work for the Florida Conference but not in the same District Office. In addition, immediate family members of Clergy shall not be employed in the District Office.
- An external review by the Personnel Committee is required when a supervisor is considering extending an offer of employment to a relative of an employee. The Personnel Committee must complete its review and render an opinion on the hiring decision before an offer of employment is made to the applicant.

Immediate family may not be hired, however, if employment would:

- (a) Create a supervisor/subordinate relationship with a family member;
- (b) Have the potential for creating an adverse impact on work performance; or
- (c) Create either an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

This policy also applies to romantic relationships. Employees who become immediate family members or establish a romantic relationship may continue employment as long as it does not involve any of the above. If one of the conditions outlined should occur, attempts will be made to find a suitable position which one of the employees will transfer. If employees become immediate family members or establish a romantic relationship, the Conference will make reasonable efforts to assign job duties so as to minimize problems of supervision, safety, security or morale. If accommodations of this nature are not feasible, the employees will be permitted to determine which of them will resign. If the employees cannot make a decision, the Personnel Committee will decide in its sole discretion who will remain employed.

This policy will be upheld regardless of the sex of the parties involved and will be equally applied to both males and females.

We recognize that from time-to-time exceptions may be necessary to provide for effective ministry. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing, in advance of any hiring decisions, by the Personnel Committee of The Florida Conference.