

Funding the Mission

USF Study Team FAQ

WHY DOES THIS TEAM EXIST?

The USF (United Stewardship Fund) Study Team was formed of diverse leaders from different parts of The Wesleyan Church: financial experts, educational, district and general church leaders, lay and clergy.

The Study Team was formed after multiple years of USF changes were proposed by districts but not recommended or voted through. A full study requesting recommendations back to General Conference 2020 was approved at General Conference 2016 because of growing concerns that USF assessments overburdened local churches and funds didn't specifically support church multiplication.

WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR INPUT?

The team surveyed over 150 Wesleyan members broadly representing our Church - pastors, lay leaders, educators, mission workers, district and general church leaders, General Board members, and others all of whom are engaged in small, medium or large churches with dramatically-varying budgets.

WHY SHOULD I PAY ATTENTION TO THIS?

You care about The Wesleyan Church and we believe this information will help you more effectively communicate where the USF money goes when asked, as well as make an informed decision about this upcoming plan proposed to General Conference in June of 2020. With input from various stakeholders, we have come up with a proposal based on shared sacrifice and generosity.

WHAT'S THE GOAL?

The primary aim is to provide some financial relief for a typical Wesleyan Church enabling its members to invest 10% of what they contribute in assessments toward church multiplication and be able to communicate their investment to all who give in their church. This priority was identified in response to the strong survey message that funds should be more clearly dedicated to missional purposes. This desire overshadowed a preference to cut rates. We discovered that while Wesleyans want some financial relief, they want even more to know that their funds are going to reach more people and grow the church in new places. Ultimately, our goal is to align our financial investment with our ministry purpose and our kingdom expansion.

DID THE TEAM FIGURE OUT A WAY TO CUT THE STUFF I DISLIKE AND KEEP WHAT I LIKE?

The feedback we received in the survey did not advise us to "go after" one part of the church in order to benefit other parts. There was no "silver bullet" for us to change. Instead, smaller, more manageable changes, adjusted over time, was a better approach, with a reprioritization of church planting.

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

The new plan has three key ideas that emerged from survey responses:

1. It needs to be SIMPLE, so it can be clearly communicated to leaders and lay people.
2. We're recommending a 10%-cap on church assessment
3. A priority for MULTIPLICATION would devote a meaningful amount of funds for church planting.

WILL THIS AFFECT MY DISTRICT RATES IF APPROVED AT GENERAL CONFERENCE?

The General Conference does not set district assessment rates. Each district conference sets its own rates. The plan does more clearly designate funds for multiplication in your district, which is already investing in church planting at some rate. In some districts, this plan would dramatically increase what is invested from operating funds, while other districts would be unchanged. Many districts are already funding church planting, but the funds are often derived from sources that cannot always be counted on consistently; i.e. income from property sales and designated gifts, etc. The new plan will establish and provide a consistent stream of income to fund church multiplication in every district. We are recommending a 10%-total assessment rate for local churches, but that is a *recommendation*, not a directive. Your district conference will determine if that rate is right for your churches and district.

SO WHO IS GETTING "ADJUSTED" (CUT)?

We are proposing a phased in adjustment for our Wesleyan colleges and universities, our headquarters operations and our larger churches with an assessment cap. We are also recommending Wesleyan churches do not pay more than 10% in total assessments (note previous question about district rates).

Following are the current rates (**BLUE**), proposed cuts (**GREEN**) and proposed investments:

Proposed Investments (%)

General:

Current - 2.75%

Proposed - 2.475%

Education:

Current - 3.25%

Proposed - 2.775%

Multiplication:

Current - 0%

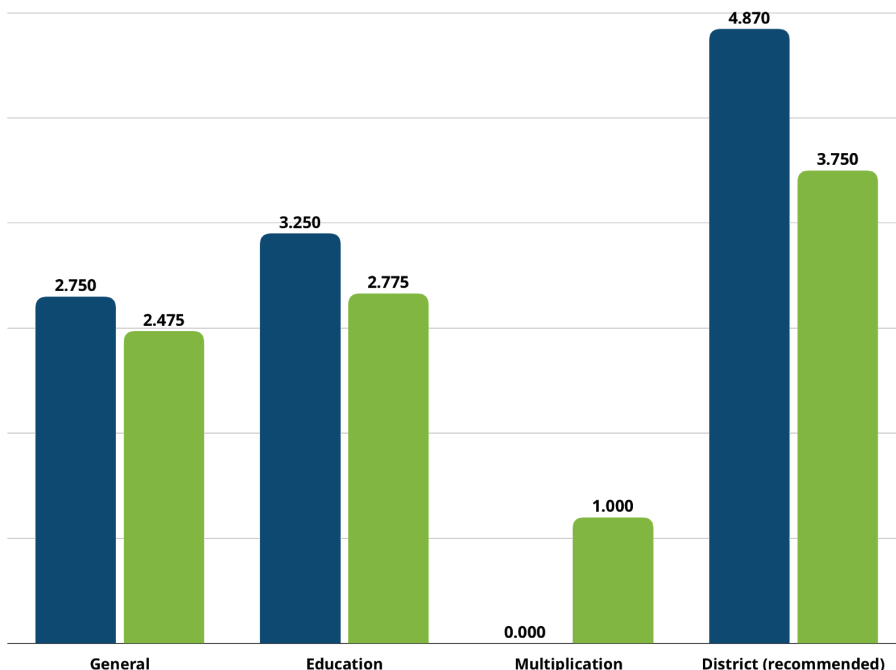
Proposed - 1%

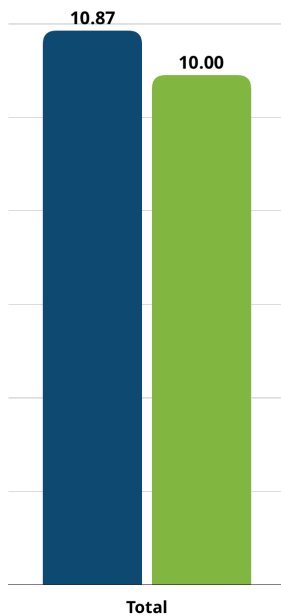
District

(determined by district conferences, not this proposal):

Current Avg - 4.87%

Recommended - 3.75%





Total:

Current Avg - 10.87%

Proposed - 10%

The plan proposes an overall decrease in USF assessment, while adding a new category for funding *multiplication*.

CAN WE JUST GO BACK AND CUT THE ONE PART OF THE PLAN I'D LIKE TO CUT AND RECOMMEND EVERYTHING ELSE STAY THE SAME?

These kinds of targeted strategies have been attempted for the last 50 years and the primary result has been a more complex denominational funding structure difficult to understand and explain. It has also failed to provide any significant missional investment to address the shrinking number of churches and/or multiplication efforts to address the growing gospel gap.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR A CHURCH IMPACTED BY THE ASSESSMENT CAP?

Since each district sets its own support at their annual district conference, we cannot be too specific for your district. We have offered a video conference call and specific data for every church in some part of the cap system, so they know the details and possibilities for their church specifically. In general, there are three categories of churches segmented by income. Their assessment is decreased at each level of the following income which would be adjusted as below and then increased after that based on CPI (and it's complimentary index in Canada) annually:

Churches with income over \$500,000 - with inflation would become \$550,000

Churches with income over \$1,000,000 would become \$1,100,000

Churches with income over \$2,000,000 would become \$2,200,000 (fully capped)

**The Wesleyan Church
USF Study Team Model Summary
Rate Tables**

Current Plan				
Tier Intervals	USF General	USF EIF	Multiplication Fund	Total

Tier 1	0-500K	2.750%	3.250%	0.000%	6.000%
Tier 2	500K-1M	2.290%	2.710%	0.000%	5.000%
Tier 3	1M-2M	1.830%	2.170%	0.000%	4.000%
Tier 4	2M+	0.000%	0.000%	0.000%	0.000%

Recommended Model					
Tier Intervals	USF General	USF EIF	Multiplication Fund	District Budget	Total

Tier 1	0-550K	2.475%	2.775%	1.000%	3.750%	10.000%
Tier 2	550K-1.1M	2.004%	2.246%	1.000%	3.750%	9.000%
Tier 3	1.1M-2.2M	1.532%	1.718%	1.000%	3.750%	8.000%
Tier 4	2.2M+	0.000%	0.000%	0.000%	0.000%	0.000%

Tier Interval Change Phase-in (4 Years)						
Current Model	Recommended Plan	Total Change	FY22 25%	FY23 50%	FY24 75%	FY25 100%

Tier 1	500,000	550,000	50,000	512,500	525,000	537,500	550,000
Tier 2	1,000,000	1,100,000	100,000	1,025,000	1,050,000	1,075,000	1,100,000
Tier 3	2,000,000	2,200,000	200,000	2,050,000	2,100,000	2,150,000	2,200,000

USF-EIF Rate Change Phase-in (4 Years)						
Current Model	Recommended Plan	Total Change	FY22 25%	FY23 50%	FY24 75%	FY25 100%

Tier 1	3.250%	2.775%	-0.475%	3.131%	3.013%	2.894%	2.775%
Tier 2	2.710%	2.246%	-0.464%	2.594%	2.478%	2.362%	2.246%
Tier 3	2.170%	1.718%	-0.452%	2.057%	1.944%	1.831%	1.718%

WHERE WOULD THE CONTRIBUTED MULTIPLICATION FUNDS GO?

The multiplication funds would be designated to plant churches in your district. The plan allows for districts to not add a great deal of administrative complexity but to merely empower future generations of church planting, as each and every church in a district is enabled to contribute a sizeable amount annually right into church planting. Money is not as important as people when it comes to closing the gospel gap, but investing these funds in our future will enable many models of church plants to get off the ground and accelerate your district's planting efforts. No fund for multiplication would be designated for the general church or other parts of the church beyond your district.

WOULD THESE CHANGES HAPPEN ALL AT ONCE?

In order to help with transition, each part of the church would make these adjustments gradually. The adjustments would be phased in beginning in 2021 and ending in 2025.

I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS, WHERE DO I ASK THEM?

For more details about funding the mission, go to wesleyan.org/usf where there is an option to contact the USF Study Team directly at the bottom of the page. You can also visit the “Funding the Mission” Facebook group at facebook.com/groups/FundingTheMission to see and engage the discussion.

We encourage you to discuss the options before us in the USF Study and to ask questions you might have, so they can be answered and everyone can be clear and understand this process before voting occurs at General Conference 2020.