

# National Association of Congregational Christian Churches



8473 S. Howell Avenue – PO Box 288 – Oak Creek, WI 53154-0288  
(414) 764-1620 – (800) 262-1620 – FAX (414) 764-0319 - [naccc@naccc.org](mailto:naccc@naccc.org) – [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org)

## NACCC Disclosure Protocol and Policy For Clergy Using NACCC Services

**The goal of this policy is to provide a service of support to member churches as they make informed choices for pastoral leadership and to do so in a way that does not erode the autonomy of the local church to determine its destiny as they perceive the Spirit at work among them.**

Use of NACCC services for the purposes of seeking a pastoral position is considered a privilege and not a right. We believe that healthy relationships between a pastor and parish are built not just with attention to ethical confidentiality but also with appropriate transparency. This policy creates a reasonable standard for the privilege of using the NACCC network when a minister is seeking a pulpit. It also provides additional tools to member churches to aid in making healthy decisions when looking for new pastoral leadership. It provides an avenue for self-disclosure with dignity and for documentation of reconciliation. It allows appropriate communication of group findings so that an abusive personality exposed in an NACCC church in one region can't easily go to another region and repeat the harmful behaviors. This policy is established as a service to member churches. This is not a "credentialing" policy. The NACCC does not guarantee the accuracy or veracity of the file contents.

### POLICY

1. No minister will be allowed to register a Minister Information Form (MIF) without registering a Minister Disclosure File with the NACCC. In addition, clergy seeking ecclesiastical endorsement from the NACCC must complete the disclosure process. The minimum required includes:
  - proof of graduation for degrees claimed (transcripts, official letters or equivalent documents) and the accrediting body of the educational institution.
  - proof of ordination and type of ordination if claimed as ordained.
  - proof of or verifiable references for claimed significant continuing education (i.e., Lay Ministry Training Program; professional development seminars, etc.).
  - a signed Statements of Understanding which includes an option to sign a Personal Code of Professional Practice for Ministers.
  - a signed Background Check Release Form.
  - a statement of reference from judicatory that the minister is leaving, if applicable.
2. These disclosure files will not be confidential, neither will they be open to general inspection. With the exception of the Background Check Release Form, they will be available to search committees when they have narrowed their choices to their top candidates of consideration. They will *not* be open to inspection by individuals except for the Executives and support staff responsible for helping churches in the search process as well as the individual whose file it is.

3. Additionally, this disclosure file may be a repository for two kinds of documents.
  - personal, individual disclosure of an occurrence of indiscretion and steps taken for correction/healing/reconciliation.
  - statements of regional associations, vicinage councils, churches, and/or their **designated** committees who feel they must register a negative finding. Complaints or concerns from individuals will not be filed; only findings by a duly constituted Congregational body will be allowed. Such letters may be made known to the individual and the individual may file a letter of response which will also become part of the file. *No letters from individuals other than the person who has set up the file will be placed in the file.*
4. The Background Check Release Form will not be shared. The NACCC will, upon request from a search committee, initiate the criminal background check on a candidate and have the results forwarded to the inquiring church. The church will be responsible for the background check fee. A background check will be initiated each time a minister seeks ecclesiastical endorsement from the NACCC. The individual seeking endorsement will be responsible for the background check fee.
5. An individual may always inspect his or her file and is free to add documents identified in this policy. That person may remove only what he or she has provided. That person may also opt to have the NACCC remove the entire file at which point the individual loses privileges to seek a church through the NACCC system. An individual may not remove the minimal constituting documents without losing privileges of access.
6. Whenever the NACCC sends a disclosure file, the NACCC will remind the search committee of its responsibility to review and verify the contents of the file.