

Michigan Conference 2026 Budget Process

The mission of the Michigan Conference is to “equip its local churches and ministry settings and connect them through Christ-centered Mission & Ministry, Bold & Effective Leaders, and Vibrant Congregations.

In 2022, the Conference Leadership Council affirmed the work of the Bishop’s 2020 Strategic Planning Task Force which identified four priorities, grounded in our mission:

- Developing Leaders, equipping them in relation to the conference’s priorities.
- Sharing God’s Love, inspiring renewed passion for personal faith formation and sharing and increasing congregational vibrancy.
- Building Beloved Community, moving toward intentional equity and the dismantling of systemic racism.
- Financial Sustainability, redirecting our resources to achieve sustainability.

As we begin the 2026 budget process, Bishop David Bard reminds us to remember our mission and the four strategic priorities with **a particular emphasis on how they relate to our local churches**. How do our shared ministries equip our local churches to:

- develop bold and effective leaders;
- share God’s love in ways that encourage personal faith formation and congregational vibrancy;
- build beloved community especially via the work of intentional equity and the dismantling of systemic racism;
- establish their own foundations of financial sustainability?

As was the case for the 2025 budget, the budget process for 2026 is zero-based. This means we ask each agency, department, and staff member submitting a budget proposal to begin from “zero,” building their proposal from the ground up rather than from the previous year’s budget. What are they planning to accomplish and what budgetary support do they need to carry their plans out?

In addition, the 2026 budget process includes more opportunities for agencies, departments and staff members to identify how their work equips local churches to carry out the Conference’s mission and priorities. We ask for Expected Outcomes: What difference does an activity make?

A glossary of the titles and acronyms used in the Budget Process Steps, along with references to their respective roles and responsibilities follows after it.

Budget Process Steps	Timeline
1. CLC reviews and refines the Strategic Priorities that relate to the Conference’s mission for use in budget preparation.	2024 September 19
2. Budget letter and forms are distributed to leaders and staff by the DCM and/or CFO.	September 23
3. Staff members and agency leaders determine priorities and develop preliminary budgets for 2026. They do so by considering what has or has not been effective in the past, what should be eliminated, and whether new approaches are needed. They articulate the following, as each relates to the Conference’s mission and four priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Current ministries, programs, and/or tasks that must remain, b. The new ministries, programs, and/or tasks that they are planning for 2026. 	October 1 through November 30
4. The CFA, in conjunction with the CFO, generates an “Anticipated Income Budget” which projects Ministry Share remittances and total receipts for 2026.	November 8
5. The Anticipated Income Budget is shared with the CLC by the CFO and the President of the CFA.	November 8
6. Staff members and agency leaders submit their 2026 budget proposal (using the provided Excel template) to the CFO.	November 30
7. The CFO, DCM, and the CFA and CLC budget subcommittees review the revised “Preliminary Expense Budgets” as submitted.	December 15
8. Communication between the CFA and CLC budget subcommittees and agencies and staff regarding adjustments to budget proposals.	December 15 to January 15, 2025
9. Final budget proposals submitted to the CFO by staff and agency leaders.	2025 January 31
10. The CFA receives any Resolutions to Annual Conference that have budgetary implications over \$1,000 along with 5-year cost projection. (Plan of Org. 5.1.2.4)	February 1
11. The 2026 Preliminary Budget Proposal is forwarded by the CFO to the CFA for approval and/or adjustment.	February 15
12. The CFA issues the approved 2026 Budget Proposal	March 31
13. The CFA in conjunction with the CFO merges the Anticipated Income Budget and the Preliminary Expense Budget to create the 2026 Conference Common Budget which is posted on-line and presented to Annual Conference 2025 for approval.	April 15 (See plan of Org. 5.1.3)

Glossary

- The Conference Leadership Council (CLC) is tasked with “implementation of the vision and direction of the annual conference. “Michigan Conference Plan of Organization,” ¶ 3.1.2.1
- The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) is tasked with recommending “to annual conference for its action and determination budgets of anticipated income and proposed expenditures for all funds that provide for annual conference clergy support, annual conference administrative expenses, and annual conference benevolence and program causes.” The Book of Discipline, 2016, ¶ 613.1
- The Conference Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is tasked with preparing “at regular intervals such financial statements and reports as may be required by . . . the [Council on Finance and Administration] . . .” The Book of Discipline, 2016, ¶ 619.5.c
- The Director of Connectional Ministries (DCM), has a responsibility “. . . to serve as the steward of the vision of the annual conference...and to ensure alignment of the total resources of the conference to the vision.” The Book of Discipline, 2016, ¶608.6.c.1 & 3

Explanation of terms used in the 2026 Budget Template

- Strategic Objective: Identify which of the four Strategic Priorities this activity supports. Some activities support more than one Strategic Priority; please identify only the primary one.
- Justification: Details related to the amount being requested (travel, meals, supplies, etc.)
- Expected Outcomes: How does this activity equip our local churches to live out the Conference’s mission? What will have happened, or what will be different, as a result of this activity? In other words, please describe more than the output (an event will be held, e.g.). **Describe the effect your group hopes this activity will have in the church, the community, the conference, and/or the world.**

Questions? Please contact Angie Anger at aanger@michiganumc.org or 517-347-4030, ext. 4130

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