

MINISTRY SEARCH PROCESS

for congregations and ministers in settled search for August 2025

Phase 1: Concluding a Ministry Well			
Dates	Task	Whose Is This?	Notes
Feb-Mar 2023	Minister announces departure	Outgoing minister	Ideal dates for announcement
Feb-Mar 2023	Congregation submits Notice of Ministerial Transition	Board	https://uua.wufoo.com/forms/notice-of-ministerial-transition/
Feb-Mar 2023	Consultation with Regional Congregational Life Staff/UUA Transitions Team	Board	Reach out to UUA regional staff Primary Contact and transitions@uua.org
Feb-Aug 2023	Church website update	Board/ staff and volunteers	Updated to reflect changes; website becomes a source of information for potential ministerial applicants
Mar-Aug 2023	Exit interviews	Board/outgoing minister/ UUA Primary Contact	Board works with UUA regional staff Primary Contact to arrange
Mar-May 2023	Interim ministry application and search	Board	more information here: https://www.uua.org/files/pdf/transitional_ministry_handbook.pdf
Aug 1st, 2023	Interim ministry begins	Board, congregation, and interim minister	Some congregations doing developmental or contract ministry may also be doing settled search
Phase 2: Education and Preparation for Search			
Dates	Task	Whose Is This?	Notes
Winter 2024	Board review congregational by-laws for UUA search process alignment	Board	Please consult with Congregational Transitions Director if there is not alignment
Feb-April 2024	Congregational Transitions Director reviews search process with Board	Board, UUA Congregational Transitions Director	Board should schedule a meeting or drop into office hours to review the search process
Feb-April 2024	Consultation with Compensation Consultant	Board, person who administers benefits to employees	Board sets the compensation; resource information at https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/congregational-salary
Spring 2024	Approve budget for search	Board	should happen after 2 previous tasks for better data
Spring 2024	Church website review	Board/ staff and volunteers	Updated with an eye toward search in mind
Apr-June 2024	Search team selection	Board	nominations, slate, congregational vote/approval
By June 1, 2024	Sign up for UUA search support	Board	https://uua.wufoo.com/forms/request-for-settled-ministry-search-coaching
June 2024	Search team reviews Settlement Handbook	Search team	https://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/transitions/settlement-handbook
Phase 3: Building the Structure to Search			
Dates	Task	Whose Is This?	Notes
Spring/ Summer 2024	Search team shares availability for summer retreat programming led by UUA facilitator	Search team, Congregational Transitions Director	Search team sends availability to cpurcell@uua.org
June 8, 2024	UUA Transitions Team hosts overview of search process	UUA Transitions Team	for boards/search teams/transitional ministers in either year of search; information up in mid-May at www.uua.org/transitions
June-Aug 2024	Search team retreat	Search team	In consultation with UUA retreat leader
June 20-Aug 31, 2024	Congregational record/search profile initiated	Search team requests of UUA staff	All search team members are added to transitions email list; establishes covenantal agreement to rules of search process with UUA
July 15-Oct 15, 2024	Submit "Break Barriers, Build Beliefs" (B4) application	Search team	https://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/transitions/b4
July-Sept 2024	Congregational survey	Search team	Template available from the UUA
Aug-Sept 2024	Negotiating team selected	Board/search team	One search team member, one board member, one other member selected by the board
Sept-Oct 2024	Search team reserves weekends for pre-candidating in February-March	Search team	Pre-candidating weekends will be from Feb. 7 - Mar. 23
Sep-Nov 2024	Cottage meetings & focus groups	Search team	Cottage meetings are more likely open to anyone; focus groups have specific parts or ideas about the congregation to discuss
Sep-Nov 2024	"Break Barriers, Build Beliefs" (B4) congregational survey (launch 2 weeks before workshop)	Search team	Survey focus: widening the circle of potential ministers for the congregation.
Sep-Dec 2024	Break Barriers, Build Beliefs (B4) Workshop	Search team	A complete update of the previous workshop, Beyond Categorical Thinking
Oct-Dec 2024	Documents packet	Search team	A collection of documents about the congregation to be shared with applicants; includes items like by-laws, budgets, etc; full list in Settlement Handbook
Oct-Dec 2024	"Break Barriers, Build Beliefs" (B4) follow-up packet	Search team	For copying: newsletter, worship and coffee hour resources to keep widening the circle of potential ministers congregation can welcome.
Oct-Nov 2024	Recommendations for ministerial agreement and compensation made to board	Negotiating team	Negotiating team recommends, board approves, search team adds agreement to documents packet. Only minimum compensation figure should be shared with applicants.
Oct-Nov 2024	Copy of Draft Agreement and Draft Compensation Figures sent to Transitions Office	Search team	Link for agreements: https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/employment-agreements Link for comp calculator: https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/congregations-as-employers/compensation-benefits
mid-November 2024	Congregational record/search profile completed	Search team	All questions must be answered
Phase 4: Opening Up the Search			
Dates	Task	Whose Is This?	Notes
Mid-late November 2024	Review of congregational record/search profile	Transitional minister, regional staff, Congregational Transitions Director	Search profile reviewed by at least 2 people who give feedback, ask for clarifications, offer suggestions
Dec 2, 2024	Congregational record/search profile approved and published. Search team may request publication as late as Dec. 9 if they are not ready on the 2nd.	Congregational Transitions Director	get approval for any changes made after publishing
December 1-20, 2024	Documents Packet submitted for approval	Search team, Congregational Transitions Director	list of documents needed at https://www.uua.org/files/pdf/transitional_ministry_handbook.pdf
December	Consultations with Congregational Transitions Director and approval to receive applicants	Search team schedules consultation with Congregational Transitions Director	to establish uniform protocols with all ministerial applicants and have a chance to ask questions before discernment phase begins
December	Search team plans for applicant interviews	Search team	The search team may set aside times for hold open for interviews and conduct a mock interview with their transitional minister
Phase 5: Discernment/Mutual Selection			
Dates	Task	Whose Is This?	Notes
January 2nd	Release of names of initial applicants	UUA Transitions Team	If congregational materials have been approved
Jan 2-16	Review of applicants, sharing of documents packet with all applicants, receiving references from applicants	Search team/applicants/ Transitions Office	Search team reviews applicant records and shares documents packets by VIEW-ONLY access link with applicants. Team asks applicants for references (of applicants' choosing). New applications may come in until Jan 16th
Early Jan-late Jan	Video interviews of applicants	Search team	Suggested interview questions are available in Settlement Handbook
January 16th	Last day of applicant name release	Transitions Office	Search team may request extension
January 23th	Pre-candidating offers extended	Search team	Offers may be extended beginning at midnight local time; some congregations may not be ready
January 24th	Pre-candidating offers accepted	Applicants	Offers may be accepted by applicants
Feb 7-Mar 23rd	Pre-candidating weekends	Search team and ministers	Friday-Sunday; search team hosts
Feb-Mar	Developed references	Search team	search teams must get permission from applicants before reaching out; search teams also schedule research calls with UUA regional staff
Mar 24-30	Discernment and follow up week	Search team and ministers	chance to do follow up interviews or ask questions
Monday, March 31st	Submit ranked yes/maybe/no list to Transitions Office	Search team/ministers	due by 11:59 pm local time
Tuesday, April 1st	UUA Transitions Team distills matches	UUA Transitions Team	UUA Transitions Team will notify congregation and ministers if there is no match, and will verify everything but mutual #1 matches
Wednesday, April 2nd	UUA Transitions Team confirms matches	UUA Transitions Team	UUA Transitions Team contacts both search teams and ministers
Thursday, April 3rd	Offers can be made and accepted	Search team	Noon Eastern/11 am Central/ 10 am Mountain/9 am Pacific
Phase 6: Finalizing the Offer			
Dates	Task	Whose Is This?	Notes
Beginning April 3rd	Agreement negotiations	Negotiating team	Candidate minister can be turned over to negotiating team after offer is accepted; agreement not executed until successful call vote
April 3-April 17th	Background checks	Search team	Criminal background and sex offender check only
April 6-20	Announcing the candidate	Search team	Must be done before announcement: minister should tell their own congregation first (if they are serving with a congregation), agreement is fully negotiated, background check is initiated
Phase 7: Entering Into a New Ministry			
Dates	Task	Whose Is This?	Notes
April 26-May 4	Candidating week and vote to call!	Search team, candidate, board, and whole congregation	UUA dates are negotiable; the listed date range is a recommendation. The content and structure of the week should be mutually agreed to by candidate and search team
May	Congregation submits notice of call form	Search team, board, or anyone familiar with details of compensation package	https://uua.wufoo.com/forms/notice-of-ministerial-call-or-hire/
May-July 2025	Preparation for August start of settled ministry	Board	Good good-bye to interim, office prepared for new minister; remind congregation that minister's start date is not until August 1
Aug. 1st, 2025	Arrival	Minister, leaders, congregants, congregational benefits manager	Make sure minister is enrolled in all compensation and benefit plans
Aug-Nov 2025	Starting together	Congregation and minister/ UUA regional staff	Be intentional and relational in starting well. Plan a new ministry start-up with UUA regional staff.
If No Match Occurs: Moving to What's Next			
Dates	Task	Whose Is This?	Notes
Friday, Apr. 4th	Board and search team decide and prepare to move to contract or interim search or continue in current transitional ministry for another year	Board, in consultation with search team	UUA Transition Team will provide significant support in the planning process should a pivot be needed
Monday, Apr. 7th	Ministers can begin applying for congregations which pivoted from a settled search to a contract search. The interim search has its own calendar and plays out in late April to mid-May.	Ministers	