

INUMC POLICY: SUPPORT OF PERSONS DEALING WITH THREATS, HARASSMENT AND/OR STALKING

As the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church, we are committed to living out the connectional nature of our ministries and callings. We are also committed to having people live out those callings in environments that are safe and supported. Further we name, and stand against, the sin of harassment of any form or expression. To that end, we offer this policy as a way to live out these values.

1. The Indiana Annual Conference (“Conference”) will adhere to the principles of the Book of Discipline ¶161 concerning the nurturing community with this support policy (the “Policy”) specifically addressing incidents of harassment, including stalking, which have arisen because of ministry.
2. Should an individual serving under assignment or appointment through the Conference experience harassment and/or stalking they are encouraged to contact their Conference Superintendent to apprise them of the situation.
3. Upon notification of the concern, the Conference Superintendent will assist clergy in understanding the resources available to them and their family. In addition, the Superintendent will inform the Bishop and cabinet.

Resources available to clergy shall include:

- a. A resource guide for the purpose of providing information about seeking legal aid and other urgent assistance (to be developed by the Conference Chancellor following the adoption of this Policy)
- b. Assistance with legal fees or other costs directly connected to threats, harassment and/or:
 - The Conference will establish a fund with the United Methodist Foundation of Indiana (the “Foundation”) with the stated purpose of providing financial assistance to people who are experiencing any threat, harassment or stalking as a result of the person’s ministry (the “Fund”).
 - An award from the Fund may be recommended by a majority vote of the cabinet to the Foundation. The Foundation will have the ultimate discretion when making any awards from the Fund provided that the cabinet has the authority to direct and modify the guidelines used for such awards.
 - The Conference will ensure that the Fund is seeded in coordination with Council on Finance & Administration (“CFA”) in the amount of \$30,000.
 - After the initial year of funding, the Conference will continue to deposit \$10,000 per year in the Fund until the balance reaches \$100,000.

- Thereafter, when the Fund goes below \$100,000, the Annual Conference will, again, deposit \$10,000 per year into the Fund until the balance reaches \$100,000.
 - The Cabinet will undertake a quadrennial assessment of the appropriate amount to maintain in the Fund in consultation with CFA. The above thresholds may be altered at the discretion of the cabinet in accordance with the Fund Agreement between the Conference and the Foundation.
- c. Consultation with Conference Superintendent for supervisory support as appropriate to the circumstance. The Conference Superintendent will help the clergy person access Clergy Care Services and other support systems.
 - d. With guidance from counsel, the Conference may offer additional assistance to persons as necessary and advisable.
4. Conference and district communications or reports accessible to the public will not include residential and phone information for clergy, conference staff, or other individuals seeking to avail themselves of the benefits of this Policy.
 5. Nothing in this policy supersedes or replaces an individual's reporting obligations under Indiana law, including but not limited a person's obligation to report immediately (1) suspected child abuse or neglect and (2) suspected harm of a vulnerable adult to the appropriate authorities.

We commit to teaching about the signs and best practices for safety as well as the resources listed here at all quadrennial healthy boundaries trainings.

Definitions

Stalking*

- Repeated and unwanted communications by phone, mail, email, text, social media, etc.
- Following or lying in wait at places such as home, school, work, or a place of recreation
- Repeatedly leaving or sending unwanted items or presents
- Making direct or indirect threats of harm against the victim, the victim's children, relatives, friends, or pets
- Damaging or threatening to damage the victim's property
- Harassment online
- Obtaining personal information about the victim by accessing public records and searching online, hiring private investigators, going through the victim's garbage, or contacting the victim's family and peers

*This definition was developed in consultation with GCOSROW and resources provided by Becky Posey Williams.

Sexual Harassment: Any unwanted sexual comment, advance, or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. (*Book of Discipline*, 2016, ¶161.J)

Nothing in this policy should be construed as legal advice or referral.