

ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
CONFERENCE ADVANCE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

**VISION:** The Advance exists to share the love of Jesus Christ by offering hope and alleviating human suffering. With integrity, transparency, and a commitment to The United Methodist Church's connectional vision of the world, the Advance provides a conduit enabling persons and churches to support mission and ministry projects within the bounds of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

**MISSION:** The Advance is an accountable, designated arm of The Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church ensuring 100% of each gift is used for its intended mission project(s). These gifts fulfill both physical and spiritual needs to make a life-changing and long-lasting impact.

**CORE VALUES:**

- Operated with accountability, integrity and transparency
- Promote compassion and service conference-wide
- Make a positive, lasting impact

**OBJECTIVES:**

- To provide an avenue by which ministries related to the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference may seek contributions from local churches of the Conference, for the support of specific mission projects they are undertaking.
- To provide local churches, organizations and individuals of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference an opportunity to "go the second mile" in their Missional giving.
- To develop and maintain a list of Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference related mission projects that have been screened and approved by the Conference Board of Global Ministries (CBGM) for Conference Advance Special Status (CASS).
- To provide local churches paying 100% of their World Service Conference Benevolences a method of supplying additional support to the CASS mission project(s) of their choice.
- To assure local churches, organizations and individuals that 100% of their Conference Advance Special gift is applied to the CASS mission project(s) of their choice.

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CRITERIA TO RECEIVE CONFERENCE ADVANCE SPECIAL STATUS (CASS):

1. The mission project must be located within the bounds of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference or Episcopal area authorized by the Annual Conference.
2. The work must be a specific mission project or a specific mission project of a broader mission agency. It may be self-contained in nature such as a short-term UMVIM work team or new church development project or be a special program of an existing parent or sponsor ministry, e.g., a literacy program, older adult program, etc.
3. The project must be one that requires a base of support beyond the capabilities of the parent ministry.
4. The specific mission project must have written and measurable short- and/or long-term objectives that align with conference missional goals and priorities.
5. The project must have a separate, written budget clearly designed to outline the anticipated annual cost of operating the project. Please note:
  - a. The budget may not include line items for administration or promotional costs.
  - b. There must be an accounting system in place that reflects all monies paid into and out of the specific mission project budget.
  - c. The project receiving Advance Special gifts must develop and maintain a method of communication with the group(s) and/or individual(s) giving Advance Special gifts.

CASS APPROVAL PROCESS:

1. Agencies may submit a completed application form to the Conference Board of Global Ministries (CBGM) no later than January 1. The CASS cycle will run for a four-year period beginning with the Annual Conference during a General Conference year. Applications may be received at any time during the four-year period
2. The CBGM will consider all applications for CASS during its Winter/Spring meeting.
3. All projects applying for CASS will be evaluated and rated as to purpose, importance, potential Missional impact, past performance, compliance with Alabama-West Florida Conference goals and objectives for mission outreach

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within the conference, etc.

4. A list of the top 30 projects will be compiled for recommendation to the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference.
5. The CBGM will submit recommendations for CASS to the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference during its regular annual session. CASS will be granted only upon approval of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference and will take effect on the day after the Annual Conference has concluded.
6. CASS will be granted for the remainder of the 4-year cycle within which the application is approved regardless of when the application is submitted. All approved CASS projects will be reviewed for approval annually (see #2 above and #1 below).

CONTINUATION OF CASS:

1. In order to maintain CASS, the mission/ministry must submit a project evaluation provided by the CBGM by January 1 at the end of years 1, 2 and 3 of the cycle, as applicable. Each mission/ministry will submit a new application in the fourth year of the cycle by January 1. (e.g., evaluations submitted January 1 in 2017, 2018 and 2019, application submitted January 1, 2020)
2. The mission/ministry must demonstrate measurable progress toward stated project goals and outcomes.
3. A new church of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference may receive CASS for a maximum of five years. After five years, only specific mission projects of the church may receive CASS.
4. A new mission agency of the Alabama-West Florida Annual conference may receive CASS for a maximum of five years. After five years, only specific mission projects of the mission agency may receive CASS.

*Originally adopted by the 1993 Annual Conference; edited and reaffirmed in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2016 by the Conference Board of Global Ministries. References are to the 2012 UM Book of Discipline.*