

Church Status Information Sheet

This sheet is meant to be a quick-reference guide for Conference Offices. For official wording, see ¶6800+ of the [2019 Book of Discipline](#).

Pre-Church Status

A group or gathering performing ministry in a pre-church context which functions on its own under the leadership of the conference superintendent and the annual conference. It may exist without a constitution, bylaws, budget, members, growth/vision plan. It is, however, under the direction of and accountable to the conference superintendent and the annual conference. These pre-churches are strong ministries that have a desire to become their own entity but are not quite established enough to be considered a CPP. A Pre-Church could be labeled as a **Home Church**, a **Preaching Point (PP)**, or an **Emerging Ministry Point (EMP)**, as determined by the annual conference.

Church Statuses

The Book of Discipline clearly outlines the steps toward a church becoming a full society. Below is a quick list of the requirements of each step.

CPP Status (Church-Planting Project)

A church-planting project is the first phase in the formation of most new churches. To obtain a Church ID Number, a [Church Status Change Form](#) *must* be submitted by the Conference Office.

The CPP comes into existence when the sponsoring agency announces its decision. A CPP shall remain in this relationship no longer than two years unless granted an extension by its sponsoring agency.

Requirements:

- A sponsoring agency (local society or conference board/committee) which has announced its decision to sponsor. The CPP is completely accountable to this sponsoring agency.
- The sponsoring agency is responsible for providing assistance and support in the form of consultation, personnel, materials, and/or finances.

Responsibilities:

- Preparing persons to become members of a new Free Methodist fellowship or society
- When authorized by the sponsoring agency, full financial self-support shall be attained as early as possible.

A church may be recognized as a CPP at any time in the year with adequate documentation provided to the denomination ([Church Status Change Form](#) must be filled out by the Conference Office).

Fellowship Status

Fellowship status is the second phase in the formation of most new churches. **The conference's Administrative Committee or Board of Evangelism shall serve as the fellowship's sponsoring agency.** A fellowship shall remain in this relationship no longer than three years unless granted an extension. Members of Free Methodist fellowships shall be counted in conference and denominational totals for all purposes other than voting at annual conference.

Requirements:

- Enough (as determined by annual conference) prospective members have been adequately prepared for membership (See 2019 Book of Discipline ¶16100 & ¶16810-D)
- Those prospective members give public joint assent to the adoption of the Book of Discipline and individually answer the questions for adult membership
- The church's name is [incorporated under state law](#)
- The church has an [EIN](#)
- Each quarter, a written report of progress and needs for further guidance shall be submitted to the superintendent and sponsoring agency
- Members shall elect a local Board of Administration (no less than three members): One honorary delegate may have a voice but no vote at Annual Conference.

A church may be recognized as a Fellowship at any time in the year with adequate documentation provided to the denomination ([Church Status Change Form](#) must be filled out by the Conference Office).

Society Status

A society is a term for a fully organized local Free Methodist church. The conference may provide a phased plan to bring new societies into full participation in all conference and denominational financial responsibilities as soon as possible. Only recognized societies shall be entitled to voting representation in the annual conference.

Requirements:

- All requirements of a Fellowship, and:
- Has developed a mission statement that is in harmony with the denomination
- Has sufficient (as determined by annual conference) members, maturity, and financial stability to function in this relationship
- Acknowledge the trust clause requirements in the written document of its property agreement
- Adopt by-laws in accordance with denominational and state laws ([see a suggested template here](#)).

A church may be recognized as a Society at any time in the year with adequate documentation provided to the denomination ([Church Status Change Form](#) must be filled out by the Conference Office).

For information on [Affiliate churches](#), [click here](#).

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call the number at the bottom of this page.

Updated 9/17/21 by E.G.