

## Operational Guidelines for American Baptist Personnel Services

ABPS is information and consulting service for American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) related ministerial leaders and organizations providing personnel Profiles and other resources used in the selection process for leadership positions. The ABPS Profile is the common document used throughout ABCUSA to introduce potential leadership to search committees. Therefore, it is expected that all ABCUSA ministerial leaders presently serving in recognized ABCUSA ministries or seeking a call to an ABCUSA recognized ministry will be enrolled in ABPS. All data collected by ABPS and the processes used to produce Profiles and other information belong to ABPS and shall be managed according to principles of confidentiality and these guidelines.

### I. ENROLLMENT

#### *Eligibility*

Category 1 - A ministerial church leader who is listed in the Professional Registry (PR) of the American Baptist Churches USA

Category 2 - A ministerial church leader not listed in the PR who is an active member of an ABCUSA church or serving in a recognized ABCUSA ministry and *VALIDATED*<sup>1</sup> by their regional executive minister or national executive director or a designee on record with ABPS.

Category 3 - A seminarian who is an active member of an American Baptist church and *VALIDATED* by a regional executive minister or national executive director or a designee

#### *Procedure*

Request from ABPS, Valley Forge the enrollment material; include a check or money order for \$25.00 made out to American Baptist Home Mission Societies.

Request from ABPS, Valley Forge the enrollment materials; include name and region of the church in which membership is held; include a check or money order for \$25.00 made out to American Baptist Home Mission Societies. The Validation Form must be on file with ABPS before personnel data is entered into the computer.

Secure from the seminary placement office, if available, or request from ABPS, Valley Forge the seminarian enrollment material; include name of seminary, the name and region of church in which membership is held. The Validation Form must be on file with ABPS before personnel data is entered into the

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*Eligibility*

*Procedure*

computer. There is no enrollment fee for those pursuing a first graduate level theological degree until the date of graduation.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I

*Eligibility*

*Procedure*

Category 4 - A ministerial church leader who is not ordained by ABCUSA, not a member of an ABUSA church, not serving in a recognized ABUSA ministry, but *SPONSORED*<sup>2</sup> by a regional executive minister or national executive director or a designee.

Request from a regional executive minister or national executive director a letter of "Sponsorship" to be sent directly to ABPS. Upon receipt of the sponsorship letter, ABPS will request from the person a check or money order for \$50.00 made out to American Baptist Home Mission Societies. Upon receipt of the \$50.00, ABPS will send the person the enrollment material.

Category 5 - A seminarian who is not an active member of an American Baptist church but *SPONSORED* by a regional executive minister or national executive director or a designee.

Request from a regional executive minister or national executive director a letter of "Sponsorship" to be sent directly to ABPS. Secure from the seminary placement office, if available, or request from ABPS, Valley Forge the seminarian enrollment materials. Include name of seminary. The sponsorship letter must be on file with ABPS before personnel data is entered into the computer. There is no enrollment fee for those pursuing a first graduate level theological degree until the date of graduation.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II

**II. Maintenance of the Personnel Information System**

A. Responsibility for creating new Profiles

1. The individual will provide accurate information. A completed questionnaire and four rating forms will be returned to ABPS, Valley Forge, Pa.

2. ABPS will process the material to produce a Profile when the questionnaire and at least three rating forms have been received and a validation form or sponsorship letter is on file, if needed.
3. ABPS will retain an original copy and send a Profile to the individual and to the regional/national office to which the person relates (indicated at the top center of the Profile).
4. ABPS may destroy questionnaires older than 12 months for which three rating forms have not been received.
5. ABPS may destroy incomplete questionnaires older than 12 months which include insufficient data to create a Profile.
6. ABPS will request—from institutions of higher education—verification of all listed degrees earned within the last 20 years.
7. ABPS will indicate on the Profile those colleges and universities which are listed as accredited in the Higher Education Directory and those seminaries and graduate schools of theology which are accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

## B. Updating the Profile

### 1. Interim Update

- a. ABPS will update the Profile when new information is received through formal channels (leadership change form, region newsletter, personal contact) regarding the region, address, current work position or professional status and notify the person of the changes.
- b. An individual may update the following information at any time free of charge.
  1. Availability code
  2. Name
  3. Address/phone
  4. Current position
  5. Professional status (if verified)
  6. Continuing Education Units
  7. ABPS errors
  8. First reference (when initiated by ABPS)
  9. Region/national unit
  10. Address/phone for second and third references
- c. An individual may update all other data at any time by providing information in writing and paying the current \$10.00 update fee.
- d. CEUs will be added to the Profile when a copy of the official certificate or a letter of attendance verifying participation is received by the ABPS office.

This must include either the CEUs or the contact hours and the subject of the course.

2. Three Year Update

- a. A Profile must have a full update at least once every three years.
- b. The three year period is measured from the date on which the initial information or the last full update was entered into the computer.
- c. A full update must include new rating forms, new self ratings and indication that the work experience dates and the experience modifiers are accurate.
- d. ABPS will request that three year updates be done prior to the three year anniversary. The request will be sent at least 90 days before the anniversary date. There is no charge for the three year update if the updated questionnaire is returned to ABPS prior to the anniversary date. Beyond that date there will be a regular \$10.00 update fee.
- e. If there has not been a full update within three years, the Profile will not respond to a search of the ABPS system and will not be circulated by ABPS.

C. Removal from active files

1. A Profile will be removed from the active file upon written request from the enrolled individual. The data will be placed in the history file. (See Section II, E.)
2. A Profile will be removed from the active file, other than by the enrolled individual, in the following ways:
  - a. Upon notification by the responsible regional/nation unit (through official channels using the professional leadership change form) that the individual has been removed from the Professional Registry. The Profile will be placed in the history file.
  - b. Upon written notification that the responsible regional/national unit that sponsorship or validation is withdrawn. The Profile will be placed in the history file.
  - c. Upon completion of the one year—two years if extended limit— to sponsorship, the Profile will be placed in the history file.
  - d. Upon completion of six years— without a full update—the Profile will be placed in the inactive file. (See Section II, D.)

D. Composition of inactive file

1. All Profiles that have not been updated in six years. A Profile may remain in the inactive file until a full update is completed. At this time the file is returned to active status. If the person leaves active ministry within ABCUSA, the Profile is placed in the history file.
2. Profiles of retired persons. The Profile of a retired person may remain in the active file upon written notice from the person indicating a willingness

to relocate for a new position. Profiles of retired persons will be placed in the history file after three years.

E. The History File

1. A Profile, no longer eligible to be in the active or inactive file, will be placed in the history file.
2. A Profile in the history file may be restored to the active file upon written request of the individual, confirmation of eligibility for enrollment in ABPS and completion of a full update.
3. Profiles will be deleted from the history file whenever storage space on the computer is required.

E. System Interface – data may be exchanged between ABPS and the PR or the American Baptist Information System (ABCIS) to the extent that the systems are compatible.

III. Circulation of Profiles

A. Profiles may be given by ABPS to:

1. The individual – only his or her own Profile.
2. The ABPS staff – all Profiles.
3. Regional/national authorized staff. All Profiles within their administrative unit and other Profiles which do not have an availability code 4 or higher. (See Section III, C.)
4. Personnel officers of ABC-related institutions—colleges, seminaries, homes and hospitals— and only Profiles that do not have an Availability Code 4 or higher that match search criteria for open positions.

B. Individuals may copy their own Profile for circulation among regional or national staff for use in the selection process. ABPS cannot send Profiles to regional or national staff at the request of the individual.

C. Availability - Code Descriptions:

Code 1—Open to Move—means the person is open to a new position and will seriously consider all inquiries.

Code 2—Might Consider— means the person will only consider a new position that has special interest or challenge.

Code 3—Not Interested—means the person has no desire to consider a new position. The Profile is available for special searches.

Code 4—No Circulation—means the Profile is not available and will not be released by ABPS due to one or more of the reasons allowed by these guidelines.

Code 5—Inactive—means the Profile is in the "inactive" file and is not available for circulation.

Code 6—History—means the Profile is in the "history" file and the person is no longer enrolled in ABPS.

## 2. Use of Codes

- a. The current code will appear in the upper right corner of the Profile.
- b. The individual may select Code 1 – Open to Move, Code 2 – Might Consider or Code 3 – Not Interested.
- c. Code 4 – No Circulation can only be placed on the Profile by ABPS and is for administrative purposes only—waiting for additional data, verifying the accuracy of certain data or when circulation has been stopped in accordance with the procedure given below. (See Section III, E.)
- d. Code 5 and Code 6 can only be placed on the Profile by ABPS in accordance with the procedures given above. (See Section II: C., D., E.)

## D. Retirement

Upon notification that a person has or is about to retire, ABPS will request his or her permission to transfer the personnel data to the history file. If the individual wants the Profile to remain in circulation a written statement indicating a willingness to relocate must be on file with ABPS.

## E. Circulation of a Profile may be stopped upon receipt of a letter from the responsible regional or national unit executive that includes:

1. A specific statement requesting that the Profile is stopped from circulating.
2. A brief statement of the situation.
3. Specific indication that the person has been notified of this action.
4. A marker will be placed in the computer file preventing the Profile from responding to searches of the database. The availability code will be changed to

Code 4 – No Circulation. The marker will remain until written notification to remove it has been received from the original correspondent or successor. At that time, the Profile will be activated. All written material related to the situation received by ABPS will be held in a confidential file until the matter is resolved and then destroyed.

IV. Searching the database

- A. The regional or national unit executive, region staff or national staff is responsible to prepare and send the search request to ABPS. All Profiles received will be handled in a confidential manner.
- B. Regional or national unit executives and authorized staff will be provided direct computer access to the ABPS search program in order to enter searches for available Profiles—and print those Profiles remotely. Such searching must meet the following criteria:

The individual regional/national staff person will need to file with ABPS a signed user agreement—co-signed by the responsible regional or national executive minister, executive director or general secretary committing the user to abide by these guidelines.

- C. All searches of the ABPS system will be blind regarding age, gender, marital status and racial and ethnic origin, unless otherwise specified in instances that can be reasonably demonstrated as supporting and enhancing the commitment of ABCUSA as an inclusive denomination.
- D. There will be no direct relationship between ABPS staff and local church search committees unless requested by the region executive.

**Appendix I**

Validation is given by the region in which the person's local church American Baptist membership is located or by the employing national unit—the individual must initiate the process. The validation form must be signed by the regional executive minister or national executive director or a designee and should be sent directly to ABPS, Valley Forge, Pa., by the regional or national unit. No other validation of the person's membership in an American Baptist church or the person's commitment to ABCUSA is sought by ABPS. The validation form becomes a part of the person's file until registry in the PR. If the person moves to a new region and is not eligible for the PR, the person is required to have a new validation form signed and sent to ABPS by the new region executive minister.

## Appendix II

Sponsorship is given by a region, preferably the region in which the person resides. If that is not feasible, any region where the person is known or a national unit on request of the individual and in accordance with the policies and procedures of the regional or national unit is able to sponsor. A letter signed by the regional executive minister, national executive director or a designee stating that the person is being “sponsored” for enrollment in ABPS must be sent to ABPS, Valley Forge, Pa. Sponsorship is for one year from the date the personnel data is entered into the computer. The sponsoring regional or national unit appears at the top center of the Profile and the executive minister, executive director or designee of that regional or national unit must be the “first reference.” If the person has not been called to an American Baptist ministry by the end of eleven months, ABPS will inform the person of the need to request an extension of “Sponsorship” for a second year. The executive minister, executive director or designee will receive a copy of that letter. If the extension is granted, a letter so indicating must be sent to ABPS, Valley Forge, Pa. If no extension is given, the Profile will be moved to the history file. If the person has not been called to an American Baptist ministry at the end of the two year period, the Profile will be moved to the history file and the person so informed by ABPS. The regional or national unit will receive a copy of the letter with the suggestion that the Profile be removed from the regional or national unit file as well. There will be no extension beyond two years. Sponsored Profiles will be identified as such. If a place of ministry in the ABCUSA is secured within the time of sponsorship, this identification will be removed and the Profile will remain active.