

American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin

Strategic Plan 2017-2020, Executive Summary



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PART I: VISIONING STATEMENTS

Introduction

The Strategic Plan (SP) developed as a response to various factors affecting ABC Wisconsin regional ministries, particularly: objectives given by the search committee and Board of Managers to the new Executive Minister (EM) who began in August 2014, the announcement of several retiring regional staff members in the Winter of 2016, and the intentional orientation to and discernment of the state of the region undertaken by the EM over the past two years.

This document sets forth a missional vision for ABC Wisconsin churches and individuals, as well as a strategy for the regional staff and elected leadership in living out ABC Wisconsin's mission statement during the years 2017-2020. The SP in detail is meant to be a working document for region leadership, open for revisions as needed; however, it is comprehensive enough to also be useful for prioritizing the many opportunities for mission and ministry based upon the scope of the organization for the next quadrennium.

The following paragraphs provide an overview of the foundational components that shape the details of the SP.

Mission Statement

ABC of WI is a fellowship of persons, churches and organizations drawn together in the love of God as known in Jesus Christ. We affirm our diversity of culture, gender, and theological perspectives as gifts for ministry. We covenant to share the gospel of Christ, encourage each other in our faith, and share our resources in witness and mission.

Vision Statement - Ministry of ABC/WI Regional Office

To become an effective resource that compels and equips our ministers and ministries toward rootedness, collaboration, growth, and transformation for the sake of a relevant and engaging Christian witness in Wisconsin and beyond.

Vision Statement – ABC/WI Constituency

Together Living Faithfully through Christ Today

Executive Minister Commentary on the Vision

With the region's mission statement as a foundation and two years of interactions with the various individuals and groups within our region, these vision statements speak of both current concerns as well as the needed direction for the coming years.

The vision statement for the ministry of the ABC/WI regional office has been instrumental in redesigning the staffing model and will guide and prioritize the efforts of the regional staff, leaders, and volunteers who work on behalf of ABC/WI, with a goal to foster engagement among our ministers and ministries toward our common mission.

Our common mission is categorized into four areas of ministry; Church and Ministerial Resourcing, Education, Camping, and The POST. Each of these areas will include objectives in the four imperatives named in this vision.

- *Rootedness* – to foster a clear sense of belonging and affinity by keeping in the forefront our commonality in and centrality of Christ and educating on the particular heritage and current efforts that define an American Baptist framework and perspective
- *Collaboration* – to serve as a hub that seeks and creates opportunities for fellowship and synergy in mission among our members and partners
- *Growth* – to encourage and equip for spiritual, discipleship, and ministry growth through education, skill-building, and sharing of best practices; to foster numerical growth and/or increased impact through evaluation of our covenantal relationships and programmatic efforts with intent toward pruning and expansion
- *Transformation* – to promote God-directed community engagement, innovation, and ministerial experiments that would positively affect institutional and societal cultural change toward more genuine Christ-like reflection

The vision statement for the ABC/WI constituency is an expression of the values inherent in our mission statement:

- *Together* – acknowledging we associate for missional purposes that can be better pursued and achieved together rather than apart
- *Living* – an act of receiving and sharing the abundant life we have been given and called to through our faith; an intentionality to live with the fullness of Christ
- *Faithfully* – trusting that each person and entity can determine and contribute their unique God-given gift and role to our diverse fellowship
- *Through* – a prepositional word that indicates a starting point, a journey, and progression
- *Christ* – the source of our fellowship, the reason for our motivation, and our strength to work toward our common mission
- *Today* – the directive for relevance, not existing in the past or idly waiting for the future, but ministering in the present

Scriptural Inspiration for the Vision

Ephesians 3:18-19

“I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” *NRSV*

“And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you’ll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ’s love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.” *The Message*

Additional Components of the Strategic Plan

The vision statements and the imperatives of rootedness, collaboration, growth, and transformation are repeated in each section of the Strategic Plan to foster consistency and focus. There are nine sections. In addition to the four areas of ministries—Church and Ministerial Resourcing, Education, Camping, and the POST—there are five areas of ministry support also included: Staff, Governance, Office Facilities, Communications, and Financial Resources. Each of these nine sections includes objectives, action items for each objective, anticipated short-term measurable outcomes (2017-2020) and hope-for long-term impact (beyond 2020). The Strategic Plan includes a consolidated calendar to help in prioritizing and planning across the various objectives.

How to Engage the Strategic Plan

We invite the ABC Constituency to review our region’s mission statement, to learn the language of the vision statement for the ABC/WI Regional Office and vision statement for the ABC/WI Constituency, to prayerful consider the imperatives toward rootedness, collaboration, growth, and transformation, and to search the scriptural message found in Ephesians 3:18-19 and others that God may reveal to you.

We then also ask our member churches to articulate with regional leadership what their covenantal association with ABC Wisconsin and the wider American Baptist family means to them and their mission as a local church. Let us know if what you value is experienced as our region leadership lives into our vision and plan before us and reports on our objectives and outcomes. Please receive this as an invitation to the many opportunities for conversations and input over the next years about the existing and/or hoped-for value in being a part of this denominational family and witness.

To our ministry partners, know that our relationships with you were considered in the development of this plan; we trust our path toward our vision will include opportunities for continued and deepening collaboration.

PART II: Objectives, Short-Term Outcomes, and Long-term Impact Overview

Note: Each objective within the plan has accompanying action items that will guide the work of the region staff and leadership. Highlights of the action items will be shared over the course of the coming months and years.

CHURCH AND MINISTERIAL RESOURCING

IMPERATIVE #1: ROOTEDNESS

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Work toward an accurate roster of member churches who have re-affirmed their commitment to the Covenant of Cooperating Churches
- B. Develop resources that support our commitment to equip, celebrate, and learn from the diversity of our constituency
- C. Revise written regional history from last update until current day

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Region staff and leadership will have an updated assessment of the expectations and levels of cooperation among member churches of ABC/Wisconsin, which can then be used to fine-tune direction of the region and to determine future approaches to realizing a meaningful associational organization
- B. Gradually fostering a clearer articulation of the identity, purpose, and direction of ABC/WI; gradual yet planned development of resources to realize our mission statement

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. A stronger foundation will be built from which our constituency (current and prospective) can understand and own their commitment to covenantal relationship to ABC/WI (and ABCUSA) and among its members
- B. A revised written history will help document the development of ABC/WI in recent decades for the sustaining of core values and for the learning for future endeavors

IMPERATIVE #2: COLLABORATION

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Develop referral system that will assist churches pursue prioritized ABCUSA and regional mission initiatives
- B. Continue to develop a partnership agreement with the Ministers Council (MC) of Wisconsin that in order to better address the care and development of our ministers
- C. Strengthen connection and communication of regional representatives to ministry partners with regional constituency
- D. Define a streamlined process for connecting churches and ministry partners with other ABC entities when mission alignment is identified and/or desired

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Stronger connections and more organic relationships will be developed directly between churches, ministers, and partners around common mission priorities
- B. Continued strengthening of the Wisconsin Ministers Council with a greater benefit to council members and other ministers in the state
- C. Clearer paths of relationship with ministry partners will develop

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. Stronger and more varied ministerial support networks will be available and utilized by region ministers, fostering greater health among ministers and more effective leadership within our churches and partner organizations
- B. More connection points will be made between ministry partners and region constituency, relying less on region office initiative

IMPERATIVE #3: GROWTH

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Develop a pool of best practice resources for various church ministries and processes
- B. Develop an articulation of a philosophy or policy around guidelines for church membership retention and recruitment in ABC/WI
- C. Collate resources and networks for ministers and churches called to plant new churches, alternative faith communities, or alternative ministries
- D. Develop region-wide mission immersion program

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Respond to recent requests to the region office for best practice resources that we have not yet been able to fully provide and/or better collate and make available the resources we have been able to pull together since 2014
- B. A carefully considered guideline to follow in response to historical concerns for non-participating churches and for prospective churches already in the pipeline

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. A development of a region-wide cultivation of new life through the birth of ministries, innovative and experimental mission, and the widening of learning and growing from local, national, and global immersion experiences
- B. A region that is well on its way to equipping itself for the imminent cultural shifts in the US and across the globe (i.e. 2040 prediction of no-racial majority in US and the aging of millennials) and the resulting ministry challenges and opportunities

IMPERATIVE #4: TRANSFORMATION

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Implement grant project for the creation of “The Circuit:” an initiative inclusive of specially-trained ministers and participating churches in the discernment of the future of the congregation
- B. Design and roll out a revised approach to search and call for ABC/WI churches and related coaching for ABC/WI ministers
- C. Provide clear paths of ministerial credentialing that are appropriate and maintain integrity for both traditional and emerging vocations

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. The Circuit to fill a void for leaders who are specially trained (in contrast to generally trained) to work with churches who are in serious decline or close to the point of closure and who do not rely on interim work as the sole source of livelihood

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. God-honoring decisions will be made and carried out about the future of mission and ministry by churches who are currently struggling
- B. A systemic shift on the search and call process that results in a greater potential for pastoral leadership and congregational relationships that foster more vital and effective congregations
- C. An organizational culture that continues to value the professional preparation for vocational ministers yet also intentionally supports the broadening understanding and expressions of faith-based leadership

EDUCATION

IMPERATIVE #1: ROOTEDNESS

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Revise pool of resources available for ministers and churches on Baptist history and polity and communicate its accessibility to the constituency

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Readily available curriculum that is relevant for both church group and ordination candidates

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. Stronger sense of American Baptist identity and expression that strengthens one’s engagement in ecumenical, interfaith, intergenerational, and intercultural settings
- B. Positioning of ABC/WI members to contribute to national and global conversations on Baptist witness

IMPERATIVE #2: COLLABORATION

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Solidify functioning of the CENTRAL Wisconsin Collaborative (CWC) to meet its internal goals
- B. Explore ways education can be delivered to constituency in addition to the CENTRAL Wisconsin MDiv program

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. New incoming MDiv class in Fall 2017 of minimally ten students with a strengthening recruitment program for another sizable class in Fall 2018
- B. Implementation of minimally two relevant non-degree educational offerings for the wider constituency per year

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. CENTRAL Wisconsin becomes widely known for its innovative accredited MDiv program and other relevant educational offerings among free church networks in SE Wisconsin

IMPERATIVE #3: GROWTH

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Develop a business plan for CENTRAL Wisconsin to work toward sustained 15% profitability
- B. Identify areas and delivery of training that would help our constituency live out the vision statement and would support growth in their ministries

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Positive income statement from seminary offerings, even when considering hidden costs that have not historically been reported upon in financial analysis.
- B. A clear plan on how the seminary and/or other regional avenues will address priority educational topics for the constituency

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. An impactful and financially strong seminary program that validates its mission within the larger Central Seminary system and the ABC/WI organization.
- B. A growing number of ABC/WI clergy and lay leaders engaging in life-longer learning opportunities and in turn are positively impacting their ministries and communities

IMPERATIVE #4: TRANSFORMATION

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Through the work of The Circuit and The POST offer virtual educational opportunities that explore innovative or alternative topics that will foster experimental ministry and mission
- B. Consider ways CENTRAL Wisconsin degree programs and initiatives will connect and benefit from the expertise of regional staff and practitioners and scholars throughout the constituency

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Portions of the experimental educational experiences of the POST and the Circuit will be made available in a refined version to the wider constituency, succeeding in the goal of expanding regional capacity embedded to both of these initiatives.
- B. A network of theological educators and scholars begins to form among the ABC/WI constituency

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. Christian education is revived in new and relevant ways throughout the region

CAMPING

IMPERATIVE #1: ROOTEDNESS

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Organize historical data for camping ministry for program visioning and future region history updating
- B. Clarify the identity and uniqueness of the camp in contrast to other camping options in Wisconsin

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Organized and accessible information to contribute to a future comprehensive regional history writing project
- B. A well-informed and renewed sense of identity and vision among camp leaders to shape and direct the start of the second century of camping in Wisconsin

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. An established process for archiving, learning from experiences, and development of camping ministry
- B. A well-defined and rooted story of camping ministry that is effectively communicated and that impacts the on-going process of ministry development toward relevancy, maturity, and sustainability

IMPERATIVE #2: COLLABORATION

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Connect with other ABC camp ministries for mutual edification and learning
- B. Identify appropriate partnerships for the named areas of growth and transformation

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. A new peer group for discussions, questions, resources and general knowledge for successful camping ministry
- B. Determine potential to become an accredited camp in terms of safety, health, and processes

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. Areas of focus will become clearer for the Camp Tamarack mission and vision for staff, campers and renters
- B. Able to articulate areas where Camp Tamarack is exemplar in best industry practices

IMPERATIVE #3: GROWTH

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Develop a clear programming strategy to include goals for summer camps, rentals, retreats, and any other camp usages
- B. Develop a business plan to work toward minimally 5% profitability

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. A strong leadership base for camp that helps tie the vision of Camp Tamarack—ABC/WI together with the individual camps, rentals, and retreats
- B. An improved rental group program that results in consistent and satisfactory experience for both first-time and a growing base of recurring rental groups

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. Develop an established leadership training process that ensures an equitable and positive experience for all campers, nurtures campers to transition into leaders, and equips all leaders to contribute to the achievement of program goals
- B. A stronger financial position for Camp Tamarack to support regular maintenance needs, pursue long-term capital improvements, and support stronger programming
- C. Camp Tamarack becomes a stronger example of good stewardship of God's creation through this outdoor/holistic ministry

IMPERATIVE #4: TRANSFORMATION

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Implement new staffing structure and refine job functionality for effective mission
- B. Explore and experiment new models for outdoor ministry and the recruitment/training of volunteer program leaders for these new offerings

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Realignment of those involved in camping ministries with overall region vision, employment philosophy, and ministry goals
- B. Development exposure of Camp Tamarack in new markets that will help expand the impact of the ministry

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. A stronger foundation between camping ministries and the rest of the region from which to expand mission and networks
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THE POST

[Mission] A community of faith purposed to:

- Place the remnant and the rising among the people of God *thru*
- Online & in-person engagement toward Jesus Christ-discipleship *for*
- Service to the ministries and communities connected to ABC Wisconsin *while*
- Trusting in the guidance and revelation of the Holy Spirit

IMPERATIVE #1: ROOTEDNESS

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. *Place the remnant and the rising among the people of God*

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Potential equivalent but alternative to “local church membership” as a way to officially connect into ABC structures

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. Birthing of a new path for strengthening resonance with and identity as American Baptists while equipping for effectively ministering in a increasingly pluralistic and denominationally-fluid society

IMPERATIVE #2: COLLABORATION

I. OBJECTIVES

- Service to the ministries and communities connected to the ABC Wisconsin region.*

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. At least four clear examples of the POST ambassadors successfully partnering with churches or partner ministries in ways or levels that the region office had not been previously able to do

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. A sustained model that expands the region office’s ability to positively support efforts of our constituency while also shifting our associational culture toward greater collaboration

IMPERATIVE #3: GROWTH

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. *Online & in-person engagement toward Jesus Christ-discipleship*

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. The development of a strong pool of people who activate new levels of regional ministry serving our churches, partners, and communities

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. A community where “un/displaced” people can connect and gain support, guidance, edification, and equipping for and clarity of Christian purpose/call for however long he/she finds meaningful connection
- B. An intentional training ground for those called to grow in ministerial leadership capacity, those seeking to increase experiences in regional ministry or similar vocations, and/or those interested in engaging with a particular ministry that is connection to ABC Wisconsin

IMPERATIVE #4: TRANSFORMATION

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. *Trusting in the guidance and revelation of the Holy Spirit:*

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. The development of a discipleship model that works within the framework of a “Post-_____ landscape” (post-denominational, post-modern ...) for the purpose of helping ambassadors think beyond received theology and ecclesiology toward transformative practices

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. A relevant and effective model for developing next generation of Christian leaders for a variety of ministries, including regional ministry
- B. A catalyst for a new model of “church” planting and church resourcing

AREAS OF ABC/WI REGIONAL MINISTRY SUPPORT

IMPERATIVE #1: STAFF

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. To implement a new staffing model for ABC/ WI regional ministries
- B. Revise Personnel Policy Handbooks to reflect new staffing structure and revised practices
- C. Revise job descriptions as needed and redesign and implement value-driven employee goal-setting, evaluation, and incentive program and processes to reflect organizational guiding statements and strategic plan

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Opportunity to test and evaluate new staffing initiatives and overall structure by the impact on the region office's ability to reach missional and fiscal goals
- B. Development of a cohesive staff team who is able to communicate and realize regional vision

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. Be on the way to a proven model for effective leadership development and creative staffing for enhanced and expanded regional ministries

IMPERATIVE #2: REGION GOVERNANCE

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Develop a proposal for a revised regional structure to be presented at the 2018 Annual Gathering
- B. Implement new structure with intentional training for inaugural directors, commission, and committee personnel

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Stagnancy and/or stunted functionality in associations, commissions, committees, and boards will be addressed

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. A leaner regional organization made up of people who are eager to engage regional ministry and able to contribute value-added through their talents, expertise, and energy
- B. A regional governance model that serves as a multi-directional leadership training model for governance personnel
- C. Shift from staff-initiated culture to strengthened shared leadership between staff and board

IMPERATIVE #3: OFFICE FACILITIES

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. To reconfigure building use and infrastructure that would be supportive of new staffing model and values of integrity, diligence, accountability, and humility before God
- B. Consider and plan for long-term use and presentation of office facilities for the developing needs of ministry

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. Ability to hold large group meetings at the regional office even if classes are in session in lower level classrooms
- B. Have space(s) where staff can foster collaboration, spiritual growth, and healthy staff relationships
- C. Improved technological infrastructure for staff to work remotely

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. Development of an organizational culture that exemplifies an intentional holistic work environment that fosters mental, physical, and spiritual health for staff, constituents, and visitors

IMPERATIVE #4: COMMUNICATIONS

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Have readily available updated materials expressing the vision and story of ABC/WI and the value of being a cooperating church and/or ministry partner
- B. Revise platforms and procedures for communications from and to the regional office, fostering an effective communications hub for vision, mission, and ministry opportunities
- C. Explore and foster relationships with strategic communication partners

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

- A. A more comprehensive, user-friendly, attractive, and effective communication program that fosters stronger association for mission and ministry

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. Constituency comes to anticipate and utilize accurate, helpful, and inspirational information from the regional office as well as contributes their own ministry and mission stories to share with those within the fellowship
- B. Strengthen a positive and recognizable American Baptist presence in related non-profit, civic, and corporate networks in Wisconsin and beyond

IMPERATIVE #5: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Develop a mission-centered strategy for building income from investments to support operational needs
- B. In partnership with denominational entities develop a focused communications plan about United Mission and other ABC mission support
- C. Develop policies and internal processes that will undergird sound financial practices and useful reporting for administrative decisions and overall accountability
- D. Develop funds and procedures for both ministerial and church financial assistance

II. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (2017-2020)

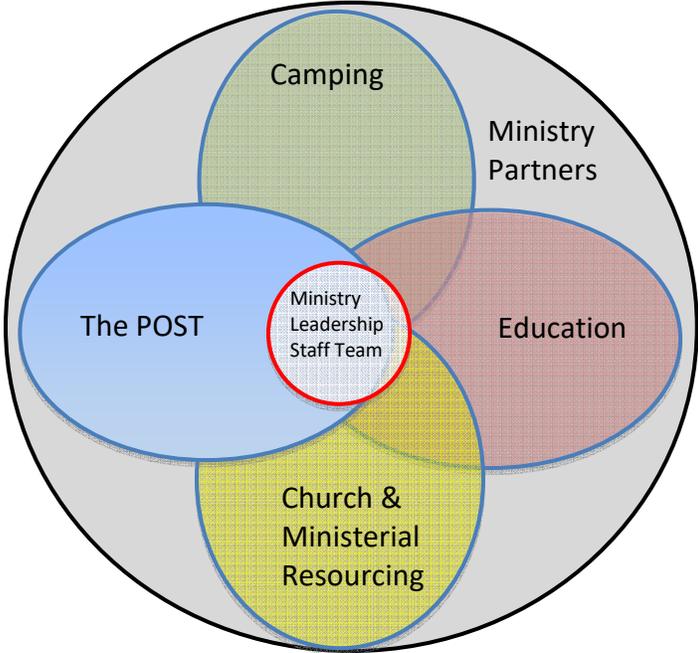
- A. The development of a team that is actively working with region staff on goals related to the financial ministry of the region
- B. Clearer communications among and from the region staff and the Board on the opportunities for, the value of, and the impact from mission giving to ABC/WI and ABCUSA
- C. Clearer communications for existing financial assistance available for ministers and churches through the region

III. LONG TERM IMPACT (2020 and beyond)

- A. A clearly followed regional stewardship program that inspires individuals and organizations to generously support meaningful missions and ministries connected with ABC/WI, ABCUSA, and other partners
- B. A stronger financial regional base from which to support ministers, churches, and partners in their own efforts

PART III: ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

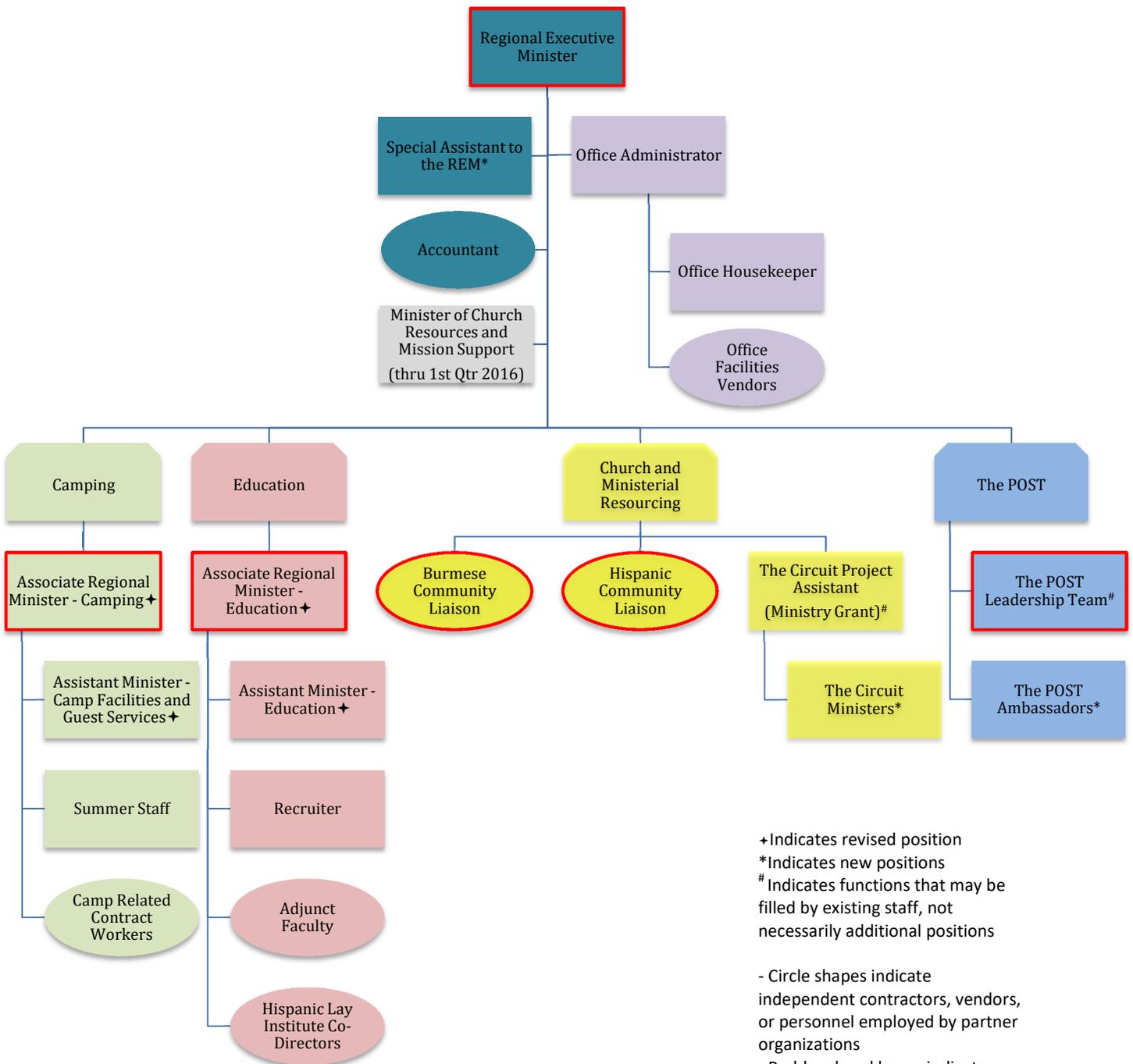
Areas of ABC/WI Regional Ministry



Areas of ABC/WI Regional Ministry Support



Regional Staff Team Overview



+ Indicates revised position
 * Indicates new positions
 # Indicates functions that may be filled by existing staff, not necessarily additional positions

- Circle shapes indicate independent contractors, vendors, or personnel employed by partner organizations
 - Red-bordered boxes indicate Ministry Leadership Staff Team