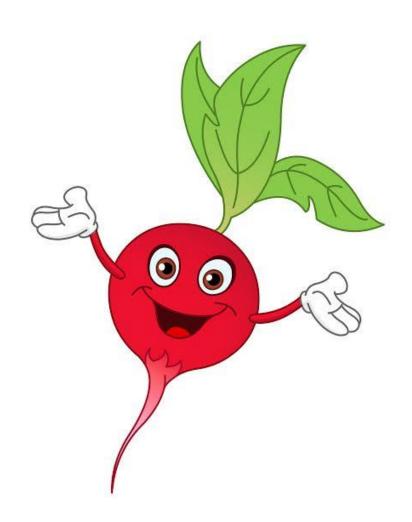
The Rocky Mountain Conference United Church of Christ

Conference Profile



The Rocky Mountain Conference, United Church of Christ

The Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ is a unique gathering of people in churches and organizations spread over three states (Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming). We comprise 75 churches in five associations, a camping facility (La Foret Camp and Conference Center), multiple partnerships, and The Archway Housing Agency. We are a very large geographical conference (from the farthest northeast church to the farthest southwest church is a distance of more than 800 miles), and a diverse conference in terms of its theological identity.

This is an exciting time to be part of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ. During the past few years, the Conference Board of Directors and members reevaluated and redesigned our purpose and vision for the future. The RMC has created a vision framework for the future with one big, inspirational goal: To BE RADICALLY CONNECTED. With a core purpose and a vivid description of the future (see page 3), we now seek a Conference Minister to be our spiritual and administrative leader, helping us to continue to imagine and create the future that God intends for us in the Conference and in the Region and who thinks creatively about ways to encourage radical connection as we practice being conference, as described in the Vision Framework.

Recognizing we are living in a time of great transformation, not only in the church but across our world, the Conference Minister we call will need to be enthusiastic about a future that is uncharted. Big ideas are being considered in Conference life, including innovation regarding how the Conference is structured and staffed. The following position description should be understood as being open to change as we live into the new times and situations of our call.

The qualities we need are those of pastor, equipper, motivator, visionary, and administrator. We are excited to welcome a leader as we pursue a shared mission to advance the prophetic and revolutionary teachings of Jesus and the Spirit of Christ in the Rocky Mountain West.

Our Mascot: The Radish

The word radish comes from "radix" which means, simply, "root." It is also the root of the word "radical." The Radish of the Rocky Mountain Conference represents being radically connected at the root. We also like to think of ourselves as cool and a bit spicy. It has become a small symbol of our future work together in the Rocky Mountain Conference.

This conference profile was completed in September 2015.



Rocky Mountain Conference Vision Framework

Core Purpose

We, the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ, exist to inspire, challenge, and empower faith and justice communities across the West.

Our Core Values

- Covenant While honoring autonomy, we engage in covenantal relationship with the Holy, our neighbors, creation, and ourselves
- Enduring Faith We express enduring faith in the transformational work of the Spirit
- Continuing Testament
- Extravagant Welcome
- Changing Lives

Our Big Inspirational Goal - Be Radically Connected

Vivid Description of the Future

By 2024, the Rocky Mountain Conference has ushered in a new era of Christianity in the West. Our Conference culture has shifted from a noun to a verb, and is alive in action, movement and connectivity. People are radically connected within our churches, among our churches, and with other people, churches, groups and agencies that share a similar desire to shape the world through living the prophetic and revolutionary teachings of Jesus. Churches throughout the region are taking care of each other. Members throughout the region feel a sense of kinship and see themselves as a part of a rich, vibrant Christian community grounded in the covenant of UCC. We are a church organization that put it all on the line, prioritizing our goals and organizing our resources to inspire, challenge and empower faith and justice communities across the West. The encouragement and growth that arose out of our structural changes has cultivated excellent, diverse leaders who freely and frequently connect by sharing resources, engaging in prayerful support, celebrating successes and learning from each other. With eyes and hearts opened wide to Jesus' core teachings and basic human needs, we have built an eco-system of care and reciprocity.

We now know that churches who gather together in organic groupings that share information, and confer on common ministries are strengthened to stand strong against a culture that thrives on separation. We now know that together we can transform more lives than we ever could alone. We have cultivated welcoming, reachable congregations and an engaged, committed community of the faithful because people have the tools and knowledge to get their spiritual needs met in organic cohorts. We have built a web of connection using online resources, crosspollination, camps and retreats, and face to face gatherings that has transformed what it means to be church and what it means to be conference. Claiming the prophetic and revolutionary lineage of Jesus and the urgency of now reflected in scientific research on the health of our planet, RMCUCC birthed a movement that links theology and action. While still honoring our sacred places, our church has also moved beyond the walls of buildings and tradition to connect people to the Spirit in places where they want to be churched – playgrounds, coffee houses, living rooms, bars, online communities, and in the natural world.



Conference Minister Job Description

(adopted by RMC Board of Directors 5/9/2015, edited by the RMC Search Committee 7/13/15)

Qualifications

The candidate must be an ordained minister with current and good standing in the United Church of Christ and have previous experience in a conference staff position or another ministerial position involving administration and supervision.

Preferred Characteristics

An ideal candidate will demonstrate emotional maturity and a strong faith in the transformational power of the Gospel. He or she is expected to engender a vision of new possibilities for the local and wider church. We expect our Conference Minister to bring energy, enthusiasm and passion to this ministry, and to:

- Have a strong faith in the transformational power of the Gospel;
- Delight in and work closely with our diverse congregations and be out in the community developing relationships and connections;
- Engage congregations in strategic planning and to develop effective leaders;
- Work in situations of conflict and bring conflict to constructive resolution;
- Demonstrate a facility for communicating effectively as a spokesperson for the Conference;
- Exhibit a willingness to embrace new technologies that connect people;
- Understand that the Rocky Mountain Conference does not begin or end at the Conference Office;
- Be passionate for the United Church of Christ;
- Care for one's self spiritually, emotionally, and physically and embrace an active faith life.

Accountability

The Conference Minister will be called by the Conference and supervised by the Conference Board of Directors.

Program Oversight and Development Responsibilities

The following tasks are important and ongoing undertakings allocated to the Conference office. One of the primary functions of the Conference Minister will be to identify priorities among these tasks and to accomplish them by appropriate assignment among the Conference staff and volunteers. Working with the Conference Board, staff, clergy and lay leaders, the Conference office will be responsible to:

1. Support Pastors and Leaders

- Create an environment of mutual support and encouragement for pastors and church leaders;
- Provide situational support for clergy, church leaders and members in discernment for ministry.



2. <u>Empower and Equip Congregations</u>

In times of vitality the Conference office will:

- Help congregations discern the strategies and resources that are most likely to bear fruit for the realm of God in their local setting;
- Assist, equip and train clergy and lay leaders as they intentionally prepare and lead vital congregations;
- Cultivate trust, hospitality, and cooperation between the local congregations and the Conference, the region, and the national setting of the United Church of Christ, as well as ecumenical and interfaith networks.

In times of conflict and/or transition the Conference office will:

- Oversee the Search and Call process of congregations seeking a new minister, and provide support to the local leadership, search committees, and transition teams;
- Assess, recruit, and supervise the Designated Pastor and Interim Pastor processes;
- Provide support to the Committees on Ministry as they equip and authorize new candidates for ministry;
- Act as a resource to the Committees on Ministry on matters of ministerial discipline;
- Assist congregations in dealing with conflict.

3. <u>Champion (inspire, motivate, empower, fire up) the Life of the Conference</u>

- Advance the vision framework of the Conference in concert with the staff, board, and conference-at-large;
- Recruit, train, coach, and empower teams for retreats, camps, & events;
- Plan, organize and conduct the Conference Annual Meeting;
- Create ministry opportunities for children, youth, adults, and congregations to learn and grow spiritually;
- Plan, host and lead trainings, clergy clusters, retreats and events to serve the spiritual needs of churches and for pastors;
- Provide and coordinate resources for churches and pastors, such as compensation guidelines, boundary, ethics & safe church training, conflict mediation, spiritual formation curriculum for children & adults, and leadership trainings for youth and adults;
- Preach and lead worship in churches and at RMC events and be a spiritual presence in the Conference;
- Serve as an ex-officio, voting member of the La Foret Board of Trustees and the Rocky Mountain Conference Endowment Corporation Board of Trustees.



4. <u>Promote Prophetic Witness</u>

- Envision and empower the future of the progressive Christian church in the West by coordinating with local, regional and national partners;
- Present a visible public presence through community action, blogs and articles in church and community papers;
- Emphasize Justice and Mission projects beyond our local churches in partnership with organizations whose values align with ours;
- Represent the Conference in local, regional and national settings, as well as in ecumenical and interfaith networks.

5. Serve as Administration of the Conference

- Recruit and supervise the Conference staff;
- Manage and strengthen the finances and assets of the Conference;
- Oversee the budget, financial analyses, legal matters, and information systems;
- Advance the vision and priorities of the Conference in concert with the staff and the Board (see Board vision document (see page 3);
- Represent the Conference on boards and committees of the Conference and assure a Conference staff presence at Association gatherings and events;
- Recruit people to participate and share what they have learned.

Employment

Profiles may be sent to the Conference Board of Directors Conference Minister Search Committee. The Board of Directors Search Committee will provide a salary and full compensation package. Candidates are encouraged to learn about the Conference at www.rmcucc.org





THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE

JUNE 2015 SNAPSHOT



13,089 MEMBERS —

ONA CHURCHES

ASSOCIATIONS

CLERGY SERVING IN CHURCHES: 94 237 CLERGY

	30					
# UF CHURCHES	20	14	22	23	7	9
		1-50	51-100	101-200	201-349	350+

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

250,000 SQU	ARE MILES				2015 REVISED	DE	2016 ROPOSED
	2013 ACTUALS	2014 ACTUALS		BUDGET		BUDGET	
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 631,584	\$	655,003	\$	678,483	\$	683,488
TOTAL EXPENSES	638,378		620,223		679,603		683,146
BORROWED OR RETURNED TO SERVICES	<u>\$ (6,794)</u>	\$	34,780	\$	(1,120)	\$	342
TOTAL OCWM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL (% OF TOTAL OCWM)	\$ 369,986 66,598 18%	\$	394,995 75,049 19%+	\$	394,995 78,999 20%	\$	400,000 84,000 21%
TOTAL PER CAPITA SUPPORT TO LA FORET (% OF PER CAPITA)	\$ 95,805 19,161 20%	\$	107,736 21,547 20%	\$	107,500 21,500 20%	\$	107,500 21,500 20%



A Brief History of the Rocky Mountain Conference

(for a more detailed history, please visit the RMC Website at www.rmcucc.org)

Early Congregational Churches in Colorado

The Boulder Congregational Church started in July, 1864 with 14 members in the small community of Valmont, CO, just south of Boulder. In 1866, they moved to Boulder and are now the oldest surviving Congregational congregation in Colorado. First Church Denver held its first meeting on October 23, 1864, in the United States Court room, with the Rev. Crawford preaching. The Rev. Norman McLeod, the second missionary sent to Colorado by the A.H.M.S., received the Society's permission to become the church's pastor for three months. During the summer of 1865, Crawford returned east to raise money and recruit ministers for the new churches. He recruited three recent Andover Seminary graduates, the Rev. G. D. Goodrich for Denver, the Rev. Nathan Thompson for Boulder, and Harvey Mellis for Empire, a mining camp five miles north of Georgetown. On January 16, 1866, ministers and lay delegates from Central City, Boulder, and Denver met in Empire, for the first General Conference of the Congregational Churches of Colorado. That day they ordained Harvey Mellis and the Empire Church became the fourth Congregational church in Colorado. A decade later, when Colorado became a state, there were eight Congregational Churches in the state. By 1886, there were forty Congregational churches in Colorado. In the harsh frontier environment, these early churches were very fragile and most of them didn't survive. The Central City church closed in 1881 and the Empire church closed in 1877. Congregational churches in Aspen, Breckenridge, Gunnison, Pitkin, and other towns closed when their towns' populations fizzled. For a lack of Congregational ministers, other Congregational churches changed denominations. Of the 260 Congregational churches founded during the church's first century in Colorado, 190 churches had disappeared by 1960.

Utah's Early Congregational Churches

The Mormon migration from Missouri to Utah, which started in 1847, has been compared to Moses leading his people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. Thus, unlike the mission churches in Colorado, the Mormons brought their church with them and "Utah" and "Mormon" became almost synonymous. Following his short pastorate in Denver, the Rev. McLeod moved to Salt Lake City and organized a Congregational Church there in February, 1865. As the first non-Mormon church in Utah, it served all of the Gentiles until other denominations opened their churches.

Rather than sermons, McLeod preached "tirades" against polygamy and the Mormon Church, which didn't help the hostile environment. The Sunday School Superintendent, Dr. J. King Robinson, had married a woman with Mormon ancestors and owned property in downtown Salt Lake City. In October 1866, while McLeod was visiting the east, Dr. Robinson's property was gutted and he was assassinated. A fence post near Robinson's grave was inscribed, "Damn the Gentiles. We did this." McLeod was advised not to return to Utah and the Congregational church folded. The First Congregational Church in Salt Lake traces its roots to this early church, and although it still survives, it is now a member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, rather than the United Church of Christ. The few early schools in Utah were private, and when the early Gentiles discovered



that the schools were inadequate, denominational schools were established. The Congregational missionaries started schools in 1880 and many of Utah's early Congregational churches were formed in conjunction with these schools. By 1890, when the state established public schools, the Congregational church had established a third of Utah's 99 denominational schools. Over the next several decades they sent 700 teachers to Utah.

Wyoming's Early Congregational Churches

The Rev. Jerome D. Davis was one of the more interesting and outstanding pastors in Wyoming. Davis entered Beloit College as a member of the Class of 1862. His education was interrupted when he enlisted in the Illinois Volunteers at the beginning of the Civil War. While acting as Color-Sergeant, Davis was wounded at Shiloh. Three years after he enlisted, Davis was elected commanding officer of the Fifty-second Illinois Volunteers and was appointed Lieutenant Colonel, the youngest Regiment commander in the Fifteenth Army Corps. Following the war, Davis graduated from Beloit College and entered Chicago Theological Seminary. After graduating, Davis asked the American Home Missionary Society to send him to their most difficult location. They sent the Rev. Davis to Cheyenne, Wyoming, a wild railroad town known as "hell on wheels," where he organized the First Congregational Church in June, 1869. The first transcontinental railroad stimulated the population growth of southern Wyoming and the early churches followed the railroad across the state. In western Wyoming, the Rock Springs First Congregational Church was started in 1881. Over the years, a few more western Wyoming churches were organized. Many of these churches were small and isolated. These western Wyoming churches, along with the Utah and Idaho churches, organized the Intermountain Convention in 1951, which became the Intermountain Conference in 1965. The present Rocky Mountain Conference was formed in 1974, when the Utah and western Wyoming churches of the Intermountain Conference merged with the Colorado and Wyoming churches from the Colorado Conference.







Some of our Wyoming churches



What is Unique About the Rocky Mountain Conference?

- 1. The Rocky Mountain Conference is a very large geographical conference. With churches located in the mountains, on the plains, in the high mountain desert, and along the foothills, our churches span urban, suburban, college, and small-town settings. Because of that, the Rocky Mountain Conference holds a diverse understanding of what it means to "be church." While the diversity we bring to the table gives us much insight, it also creates an exclusive set of challenges not faced by most conferences. Those challenges are both physical and theological. Bad roads, winter weather, and long distance can make it very difficult to gather together in person. Especially in the more rural areas in our conference, we rely heavily on ecumenism and gathering with interfaith partners, instead of other local UCC churches, which can lead to Western Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah churches feeling especially isolated from our denominational family. As we move beyond our physical proximity, the Rocky Mountain Conference also faces a unique balance and blend of justice and political issues. Many regions in the Conference are in areas which are politically conservative. Coal mining, hydraulic fracturing (commonly known as fracking), nuclear missile silos, largescale farming, organic farming, high migrant worker populations, legalized marijuana, limited gambling, a tense gun-control debate, and large government industry (especially militarized government) are just a few of the things that regularly put UCC theology and ideals of environmental care and social justice at odds with the reality of economy in the communities where our churches are.
- 2. While the Rocky Mountain Conference is wide-spread geographically, it is also a close-knit family of faith. Although our gatherings might not be as frequent as those of some conferences, they hold a special feeling of unity and collegiality. Our gatherings carry a spirit of trust that serves to keep us connected to one another and that helps to define the Rocky Mountain Conference as much more than a business office. The Vision Framework grew out of the understanding that the people in this Conference see conference as a verb, not a noun. Much of what happens in the Rocky Mountain Conference comes from ideas and people outside of the Conference office.
- 3. Because many of the churches in the Rocky Mountain Conference formed on the edge of the new frontier of the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Western Spirit of Individualism is still evident in many churches throughout the Conference. While this spirit encourages each church to find ways to commit itself to serving the community in which it resides, it can also challenge the way in which we live out our covenant of conference as we are sometimes left alone, trying to find ways to reach so many individual communities for social justice and mission activities.
- 4. In Utah, Western Wyoming, and parts of Colorado, protestant churches are, overwhelmingly, the religious minority. High Mormon populations often challenge our churches to find support in other Protestant Christians and can find the interfaith and ecumenical relationships, as well as relationships with other UCC churches to be life-sustaining. Many families in these communities can experience exclusion and outcasting because they are not part of the dominant religious tradition. That exclusion is magnified for children and can create unique hurdles in forming relationships to one's own community.



5. While each community in the Rocky Mountain Conference has a variety of religious institutions, the greater Colorado Springs area (about an hour from Denver) has one of the nation's greatest concentrations of conservative para-church organizations, which have long dominated the political and religious landscape of the region. While these 40+ organizations call our UCC churches to be a strong voice for progressive Christianity, the tensions in the region can also put UCC churches and their members at odds with their communities.



Denver Pridefest 2015



La Foret Conference and Retreat Center

La Foret was originally the summer estate of Mrs. Alice Bemis Taylor. Mrs. Taylor and her husband, Frederick Morgan Pike Taylor, are considered to be one of Colorado Springs' most important founding families. Their family had a rich history of philanthropy. Alice Bemis Taylor was the first woman to serve as a trustee of Colorado College and was known as "Lady Bountiful" for her generous donations to the institution. Mrs. Taylor held great interest for art and architecture. She was one of three benefactresses of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, perhaps her greatest contribution to the community.

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor began construction of their summer estate, which she called La Foret, on what was then 500 acres in the Black Forest. Ponderosa Lodge, the main residence, was constructed in 1928 by J.J.B. Benedict, a prominent Denver architect. Mrs. Taylor resided there during the summers and often hosted artist-in-residence programs. The Taylor Memorial Chapel was built in 1929 as a memorial to her husband, who passed away before ever visiting the property. The Chapel was designed by renowned architect John Gaw Meem, who also designed the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center along with many other chapels and buildings throughout the southwest.

After Mrs. Taylor's death in 1942, the Bemis Taylor Foundation deeded La Foret to the Colorado Congregational Church, now known as the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ. Cabins were constructed and the church used La Foret for their outdoor ministries. Over the years, La Foret has developed into a full-service conference and retreat center. Today, it operates as non-profit organization serving a wide variety of clientele. La Foret Conference and Retreat Center is open to all children, youth, families, individuals, and churches of the United Church of Christ, as well as those of other denominations, and educational and non-profit organizations who seek to share in the experience of discovery, growth and transformation.



Pikes Peak



Ponderosa Lodge



Partnerships

Archway Housing

Archway Housing & Services is a faith-based Colorado non-profit with roots in the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ. The predecessor entities Mountain United Church Housing and Rocky Mountain HDC, Inc. stretch back to the 1970's in their dedication to providing affordable housing to families and seniors. Archway Housing also began in the early 1990's to focus on the needs of families and individuals transitioning out of homelessness. The mission remains unchanged... to changing lives by providing housing and supportive services that engender a safe environment, build heathier communities, and teach community skills for families with very low-to-moderate incomes.

Archway realizes that affordable housing is the cornerstone of healthy, sustainable communities; however by providing additional and sometimes uncompensated family services to more than 360 families currently, with a planned additional 60 apartments set-aside for formerly homeless veterans, they believe that in some small way their efforts are making the community, and those who reside in it, a better place. There is a youth development program which includes after school and summer programs and an adult services program includes career development, computer skills, food assistance, ESL classes, and professional referrals. New services are being added for those residents coming out of homelessness.

The continuing partnership between the Rocky Mountain Conference and Archway is very important to both entities and both are constantly looking for ways to strengthen this common ministry.

Colorado Council of Churches

The Rocky Mountain Conference is a covenanting denomination with the Colorado Council of Churches (CCC), an ecumenical and social justice organization. Representing 11 covenanting denominations and over 850 churches, the CCC's mission statement is "Walking Together in Faith, Working Together for Justice." UCC members are active with the CCC's multiple task forces and support its programs.

Iliff School of Theology

Iliff School of Theology, located in Denver, CO, was founded in 1887. While Iliff is part of the United Methodist Church, many UCC members attend Iliff. It offers UCC polity and history, and many UCC churches in the Denver area will have Iliff students who serve as field education students. In addition, Iliff often sponsors many continuing theological events and programs for the Denver area.



Venezuela (UEPV/CMR-DOC)

Global Partners is a partnership between the Rocky Mountain Conference United Church of Christ (UCC), the Rocky Mountain Disciples of Christ (DOC) and the Evangelical United Pentecostal Church of Venezuela (UEPV). As far as we know, we are the only Partnership through Common Global Ministries wherein the UCC and DOC work together with a third partner. Together we represent about 200 churches in western Venezuela, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming.

The membership of each of the three partner denominations have committed to:

- Working together to share God's love without trying to change each other theologically;
- Planning and working on projects together;
- Exchanging people and sharing resources;
- Supporting each other through social, political and spiritual challenges.

In the past twenty years over 150 people have visited Venezuela in a variety of medical, youth, and work trips. In addition, we have helped assist many members of the UEPV to visit the United States. In the past two years, as airline prices have risen dramatically, the partnership is undergoing a process of study to discern how best to continue our relationship with one another.





Rocky Mountain Conference Youth Immersion Trip, 2006



An Invitation

We hope this booklet has conveyed to you something of why we love the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ. We thrive on diversity of thought (and by the way, one of the members of this committee lives in a city ranked among the ten most ethnically diverse cities in the country). We thrive on the vastness of mountains and plains, and are sensitive to uses and abuses of creation. Being spread out and living at a distance from one another, we have learned that we must be intentional about our connections, and we become innovative and flexible in making and keeping those connections. That's why we have a big inspirational goal to "be radically connected." We see great opportunity for prophetic witness as we seek to inspire, challenge and empower faith and justice communities across the West.

If you share our big ideas and our big heart for covenant, justice, and transformed lives, we invite you to consider whether you might be called to work among us.



Addendum

The Search Committee

The Conference Minister Search Committee, appointed by the Board of Directors, includes persons representing each association of the Conference. We are diverse in age, gender, sexual orientation and church leadership experience. We also represent congregations varied in size and theological understanding. Our commonality is a love of Rocky Mountain Conference, UCC.

Beth Robey Hyde, chair

Retired clergy; Member of Washington Park UCC, Denver, CO; Metro Denver Association

Betty Barnes, layperson

Moderator, Hayden Congregational Church, Hayden, CO; Western Association

Gage Church, clergy (Nonvoting representative of Board of Directors)

Pastor Ogden UCC, Ogden, UT; Intermountain Association

Chris Gilmore, clergy

Pastor, Sixth Avenue UCC, Denver, CO; Metro Denver Association

Laura Gurney, member in discernment

First Congregational Church, Greeley, CO; Platte Valley Association

Ron Heil, layperson

First Congregational Church, Greeley, CO; Platte Valley Association

Heidi Hess, layperson

First Congregational UCC, Grand Junction, CO; Western Association

Adrian Miller, layperson (Nonvoting ecumenical member)

Executive Director, Colorado Council of Churches

Member of Campbell AME Church, Denver, CO

Amanda Minter, layperson

Member Holladay UCC, Salt Lake City, UT; Intermountain Association

Chuck Vail, layperson

Music Minister Christ Congregational Church, Pueblo, CO; Southeastern Association

