



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK

Version Introduction

Nothing written in the Handbook abrogates anything written in the Bylaws, which define the legal nature of the non-profit corporation that is Vineyard USA. Rather, the Handbook functions as a supplementary ecclesiastical document that accurately and thoroughly describes the way in which Vineyard USA operates as a church, as well as the ways in which recognized leaders within Vineyard USA agree to relate to one another.

Version 1.0 - Ratified by Vineyard USA Executive Team (December 2021)

Version 1.0 of the Vineyard USA National Leadership Handbook (hereafter “the Handbook”) is intended only to be a minimally sufficient accompaniment to the new Vineyard USA Bylaws (hereafter “the Bylaws”), which will come into force on January 1, 2022. As such, this version will cover only some dimensions of the Board of Trustees, as well as some dimensions of the role of the Council.

Version 2.0 - Ratified by Vineyard USA Leadership Council (March 4, 2024)

The Handbook is intended to be a minimally sufficient accompaniment to the Vineyard USA Bylaws (hereafter “the Bylaws”). In Version 2.0, the following Sections were included/updated:

- Section 1 - Provisional Policies
- Section 3 - Officers
- Section 4 - National Team
- Section 5 - Regions and Areas
- Section 6 - Associations
- Section 8 - National Ministries
- Section 9 - Ordination and Credentialing

Section 1. PROVISIONAL POLICIES

Where necessary or not yet addressed in the VineyardUSA (VUSA) Leadership Handbook, the Board of Trustees may enact policies and procedures outlined in previously adopted VineyardUSA Bylaws (2020 *being the most recent governing document*). In all matters expressly outlined in the 2022 Bylaws and VineyardUSA Leadership Handbook, stated policies will supersede those outlined in previous Bylaws.

Section 1. Review Date

Section 1 will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Leadership Council no later than December 31, 2025.

Section 2. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 2.1. Relevant Bylaws

This Handbook will not reiterate the contents of the Bylaws. The Bylaws describe essential elements of the roles, responsibilities, and procedures of the Board of Trustees in Article IV, Article VI, and throughout.

Section 2.2. Job Description

Alongside all that is written in the Bylaws, the role of a member of the Board of Trustees is:

- To be a trusted advisor to the National Director and National Team,
- To keep the National Team accountable for fulfilling the mission of VineyardUSA, ensuring good stewardship and an even keel,
- To be legally and fiscally responsible for VineyardUSA, within legal limits,
- To be enthusiastic supporters of the mission of VineyardUSA, using their time, treasure, and talents.

Section 2.3. Compensation

While the Bylaws make provision for the reasonable compensation of Trustees who are not employees of VineyardUSA, all Trustees are currently uncompensated for their work.

Section 2.4. National Director

The National Director will always be a member of the Board of Trustees, except in case of an emergency as described in the Bylaws. However, per the Bylaws, the National Director will not be the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Section 2.5. Chairman of the Board

The Chairman of the Board will be responsible, in conversation with the National Director, for setting the agenda of the meetings of the Board of Trustees.

Section 2.6. Executive Committee

The Board of Trustees will have an Executive Committee, consisting of the Chairman, the National Director, and one other Trustee. The Executive Committee will be responsible for administering the appointment of new Trustees.

Section 2.7. Appointing New Trustees

The standard process for appointing new Trustees will be as follows:

- The VineyardUSA Council, which consists of all Regional, Association and Area Leaders, will submit nominations of new Trustee candidates to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.
- Upon receiving these nominations, the Executive Committee will confirm with each nominated candidate that, if appointed, they would serve as a Trustee.
- The Executive Committee will submit a list of candidates to the Board of Trustees, which will then select the next Trustees to serve.
- The names of the newly selected Trustees will be submitted to the Council of VineyardUSA for ratification.

Section 3. OFFICERS

The officers of this corporation shall be a President/National Director, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and such other officers the President/National Director may appoint. A person, other than the President/National Director, may hold more than one of these offices. Officers other than the President/National Director need not be members of the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

The VUSA Executive Team voted in September 2020 to hire a National Leadership Team for VineyardUSA, consisting of the following positions:

- Associate National Director, Pastoral Health and Development
- Associate National Director, Church Health and Development
- Associate National Director, Evangelism and Justice
- Associate National Director, Theology and Education
- Super-Regional Leaders (up to 4)
- Managing Director
- Communications Director

In addition to the roles noted above approved by the former VUSA Executive Committee in 2020, the following positions were added to the VineyardUSA National Leadership Team structure effective January 2022:

- Events Director

- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Development Officer
- Strategic Associations Coordinator

Section 5. REGIONS AND AREAS

Section 5.1. Regions

VineyardUSA will utilize geographic Regions to support national organization, to foster relational connection and where appropriate, may be utilized to apply policies and procedures. Regions will be based on any number of factors. The primary goal of regional structuring is the ongoing support of local churches and their connection to each other, area and regional leadership, and the national ministries.

Effective January 2022, VineyardUSA designated nine (9) Regions:

- East
- Southeast
- Gulf Coast
- Great Lakes
- Midwest Central
- Midwest North
- Mountain
- Northwest
- Southern California

Section 5.2. Areas

Each Region of VineyardUSA will be subdivided into Areas. Areas will be based on any number of factors. The primary goal of Area structuring is the ongoing support of local churches and their connection to each other, area and regional leadership, and the national ministries.

Section 5.3 Regional Leaders

Section 5.3.1. Appointment to Office

The Regional Leader is appointed by the Super Regional Leader(s). This appointment is then confirmed by the National Director.

Section 5.3.2. Communication Lines, Interaction, and Evaluation

The Regional Leader is a member of the Leadership Council. He/She is directly responsible to the Super Regional Leader(s).

Section 5.3.3. Term of Office:

The Regional Leader serves the Super Regional Leaders, National Director, and Board of Trustees. The Regional Leader serves a five (5) year term. He/She may succeed himself or

herself. Should he/she be requested by the National Director to serve an additional term or terms, he/she will be nominated to the additional terms by the Super Regional Leaders and approved by the National Director. The Regional Leader may be removed from office by a simple request of the Super Regional Leader, National Director, or by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees. The Super Regional Leader or National Director shall make no changes in Regional Leaders if the Super Regional Leader or National Director is under disciplinary action that might lead to his/her removal by the Board of Trustees.

Section 5.3.4. Duties and Responsibilities:

The Regional Leader is responsible for leading the designated Region in cooperation with the national leadership by casting vision, developing translocal leadership, overseeing pastoral care and fostering connection.

Responsibilities to the National Team

- Serve the National Organization as requested by the National Director.
- Carry out all administrative assignments given by the National Office.
- Report to the Super Regional Leaders and National Director as requested
- Give an annual financial report to the National Office for all funds spent by the Region.
- Encourage every church to report in the annual census administered by the National Office.
- Update data from Vineyards in the Region in the VineyardUSA database as requested by the National Office.
- Identify and recommend Area leaders for appointment in conjunction with the Super Regional Leaders

Section 5.4. Area Leaders

Section 5.4.1. Appointment to Office

The Area Leader is appointed by the Regional Leader(s). This appointment is then confirmed by the Super Regional Leader and the National Director.

Section 5.4.2. Communication Lines, Interaction, and Evaluation

The Area Leader is a member of the Leadership Council. He/She is directly responsible to the Regional Leader(s).

Section 5.4.3. Term of Office:

The Area Leader serves the Regional Leader, Super Regional Leaders, National Director, and Board of Trustees. The Area Leader serves a five (5) year term. He/She may succeed himself or herself. Should he/she be requested by the National Director to serve an additional term or terms, he/she will be nominated to the additional terms by the National Director and approved

by the Board of Trustees. The Area Leader may be removed from office by a simple request of the Super Regional Leader, National Director, or by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

Section 5.4.4. Duties and responsibilities:

The Area Leader is responsible for leading the designated Area in cooperation with the national and regional leadership, developing translocal leadership, overseeing pastoral care and fostering connection.

5.5 Training and Oversight of Regional and Area Leaders

The national leadership of VineyardUSA will develop training and provide oversight to all Regional and Area Leaders.

Section 6. ASSOCIATIONS

Associations serve two basic purposes:

- Establishing intentional environments for leadership development, mentoring, and hospitality, within the structure of VineyardUSA, for typically under-represented pastors and leaders
- Establishing formal structures by which voices representing groups of typically under-represented pastors and leaders are consistently heard at the national leadership table of VineyardUSA

Section 6.1 Definition.

Associations are intentional environments for leadership development, mentoring, and hospitality, within the structure of VineyardUSA, for typically under-represented pastors and leaders.

Section 6.2. Ethnic Associations. Ethnic associations shall encourage mutual fellowship, recruitment, and the development of congregations and ministries. Each ethnic association shall relate to the broader Vineyard movement in the United States through the representation of its leadership and jointly recognized policies.

Section 6.2.1. Recognition. A list of ethnic associations shall be kept current and may be amended by the Leadership Council. Effective January 2022 VineyardUSA designated the following three (3) ethnic Associations:

- Black Pastors and Leaders Association
- Asian American and Pacific Islanders Association
- Hispanic Association

Section 6.3. Other Associations. VineyardUSA may at its determination create and recognize other associations. A list of other associations shall be kept current and may be amended by the Leadership Council.

Section 6.3.1. Recognition. A list of other associations shall be kept current and may be amended by the Leadership Council. Effective January 2022 VineyardUSA designated the following Association:

- Women's Association

Section 6.4 Association Leaders

Section 6.4.1. Appointment to Office

An Association Leader is appointed by the Associations Strategic Coordinator. This appointment is confirmed by the National Director.

Section 6.4.2. Communication Lines, Interaction, and Evaluation

An Association Leader is a member of the Leadership Council. He/She is directly responsible to the Associations Strategic Coordinator.

Sections 6.4.3. Term of Office:

An Association Leader serves the Associations Strategic Coordinator, National Director, and Board of Trustees. The Association Leader serves a five (5) year term. He/She may succeed himself or herself. Should he/she be requested by the National Director to serve an additional term or terms, he/she will be appointed to the additional terms by the National Director and approved by the Board of Trustees. The Association Leader may be removed from office by a simple request of the Associations Strategic Coordinator, National Director, or by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

6.5 Training and Oversight of Regional and Area Leaders

The national leadership of VineyardUSA will develop training and provide oversight to all Association Leaders.

Section 7. VINEYARD USA LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Section 7.1. Relevant Bylaws

This Handbook will not reiterate the contents of the Bylaws. The Bylaws describe elements of the roles, responsibilities, and procedures of the VineyardUSA Leadership Council (Council) in Article IV, Article VI, and Article XII.

Section 7.2. Definition

The Council consists of all Regional Leaders, all Association Leaders, and all Area Leaders.

Section 7.3. Responsibilities

The Council is responsible for nominating and ratifying new members of the VineyardUSA Board of Trustees, ratifying changes to the VineyardUSA National Leadership Handbook, and ratifying changes to the VineyardUSA Statement of Faith.

Section 8. NATIONAL MINISTRIES AND INITIATIVES

The President/National Director may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Board of Trustees then in office, or by appointment by the National Director, designate one or more national ministries and/or initiatives, including the team members comprising such national ministries or initiatives.

Section 9. ORDINATION AND CREDENTIALING

Section 9.1. Rationale for and Benefits of a national Credentialing Process

The rationale for and benefits of national credentialing include the following:

- recognition of God's calling to and gifting for those who are clearly called and set apart for lifetime service,
- interdependency between the local church, area, regional, and national leadership, to ensure a commitment to and alignment with VineyardUSA beliefs, values, and vocation,
- accountability to the local church and to VineyardUSA, in matters of doctrine, practice, and morality,
- demonstrates a commitment to personal and professional development, and
- strengthens demonstration of ministerial status as it relates to IRS tax guidelines.

Section 9.2. A Foundation for Ordained Ministry

Scripture teaches that each believer has been given one or more gifts in order to serve Jesus and His Church (Eph.4:7). In addition, some believers have received the call of God upon their lives for ordained ministry and have been given gifts for the task of equipping God's people to carry out the works of service which build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11,12). Those called to ordained ministry are chosen and appointed by God, affirmed by the local church, and subsequently recognized, endorsed, and supported by VineyardUSA (Acts 13:3, 1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 1:6).

9.3. A Cooperative Process of Ordination, Credentialing, Endorsement, and Revocation

VineyardUSA has often been described as a "relational movement." At our best, we highly value and honor the God-given, Spirit-led relationships that animate the heart of our movement. As such, the process of credentialing should also value and demonstrate the best of our relationality. The term, therefore, that will guide the credentialing process is mutual and affectionate **cooperation** - out of love for Jesus, His church, and those He has set apart for ordained ministry.

The recognition and endorsed credentials of those set apart for ministry has long been understood by the Church as vital to establishing an interdependent and accountable process for appointing trustworthy pastors and leaders to lead local congregations. The process of credentialing establishes a

biblical vision for ministry, accountability between pastors, the local church, and VineyardUSA, and shared commitment to the community of pastors within VineyardUSA. Therefore, in cooperation with local Vineyard churches, VineyardUSA will:

- Endorse the ordination credentials of all Vineyard pastors ordained prior to June 1, 2025 who are still actively engaged in ministry and in relation to a local Vineyard church or national ministry.
- Establish and maintain a process to endorse the ordination credentials of Vineyard pastors seeking to be ordained after June 1, 2025.
- Establish and maintain a process for the renewal of credentials for all ordained Vineyard pastors which will be put into effect no later than June 1, 2027.
- Develop, articulate and evaluate the standards for ordination.
- Establish and maintain programs, partnerships, and training resources that will support pastors in their journey to ordination and beyond.
- Establish and maintain a process to revoke the credentials of ordained Vineyard pastors found in substantial violation of the ordination standards to which he/she agreed.

In cooperation with VineyardUSA, local Vineyard churches will therefore:

- Amend their governing bylaws to acknowledge the VineyardUSA National Leadership Handbook and the policies and procedures therein.
- Participate in the attestation process that will endorse the ordination credentials of all active Vineyard pastors ordained prior to June 1, 2025.
- Participate in the credentialing process that will include a recommendation from the governing body of a local Vineyard church and the approval and endorsement of that church's designated Area, Regional and Super Regional Leader for Vineyard pastors seeking ordination after June 1, 2025.

In cooperation with VineyardUSA and local Vineyard churches, candidates for Ordination will therefore:

1. Complete an Application for Ordination
2. Be recommended for ordination by the governing body of a local church or national ministry of VineyardUSA.
3. Provide a written response from a selection of questions related to personal history, sense of call, training, experience and education.
4. Demonstrate a lifestyle consistent with biblical standards of Christian conduct.
5. Demonstrate a clear call of God that is individually discerned and corporately affirmed by the local church and witnessed through a history of service to the local church.
6. Demonstrate an acceptable level of biblical/theological training for ministry, whether formal and/or informal, as well as commitment to ongoing education and training in line with their calling.

7. Provide written recommendations from the candidate's spouse (if married), close family member and/or friend and designated trustee of the recommending church or ministry.
8. Demonstrate a cooperative spirit with the purposes of VineyardUSA and commitment to relational connection to VineyardUSA.
9. Complete a background check.

Section 9.4 Credentialing Authority

- VineyardUSA has the responsibility of articulating the standards of ordination and carrying out the policies and processes associated, which are reflected in the Bylaws and Leadership Handbook.
- Those seeking ordination in VineyardUSA will be recommended by the governing body of a local Vineyard church, and approved and endorsed by that church's designated Area, Regional and Super Regional Leader. When necessary, the process may be amended. Any amendments to the process will be clearly articulated to the candidate and the recommending church.
- Upon approval and endorsement by VineyardUSA, the responsibility for governance and oversight will be assigned to the governing body of a local Vineyard church as determined in its bylaws.
- A VineyardUSA credential is granted to candidates "in trust." This means the candidate is accountable to VineyardUSA through the local church, in cooperation with support of Area, Regional and National leadership. The credential does not belong to the individual who holds it.

9.5. Licensing, Commissioning, & Chaplain Endorsement

VineyardUSA recommends that all local Vineyard churches develop processes for temporary Licensing and/or Commissioning that serve the local church and individuals pursuing a call to ministry. Among other things, a process for temporary Licensing and/or Commissioning establishes a formal window of time for training, testing, and discernment in the life of a potential Ordained pastor. These processes grant positional opportunity and provide delegated authority. It is during this time that the governing body of the local church can observe a developing pastor and assess their competencies, conduct, maturity, and morality. If after several years of service, the individual or the governing body of the local church discerns the individual is no longer called to or competent in pastoral ministry, he or she can stop doing the function, and will also cease to hold the title. The processes below should not be used as an alternative to the Credentialing Process outlined above.

9.5.1 Licensing provides a new(er) pastor with a year-to-year certificate that legally allows them to do all of the functions of the pastorate, i.e. marry, bury, and lead in the church with pastoral authority. The governing body of a local church bestows a license for the function of the pastorate. To receive this position a person should meet the qualifications for eldership as recorded in 1 Timothy and Titus. VineyardUSA recommends that this license be renewed annually by the governing body of the local church. A license is not trans-local.

9.5.2 Commissioning is a process often used in the local church that allows individuals to operate with pastoral authority for short-term or specific tasks (i.e. a non-pastor staff member for jail ministry). Some denominations commission missionaries for seasons of time as needed to serve in the mission field. A commission is not trans-local.

9.5.3 Chaplain Endorsement - VineyardUSA has an established separate process for endorsing military and civilian chaplains. Should a chaplain seek ordination, the process noted above would serve as the guidelines for each candidate and be amended as needed.

9.6 Legal and Tax Implications

As statutes may vary state to state, It is the responsibility of the individual and governing body of the local Vineyard church to be aware of the implications and legal requirements associated with ordination, licensing, and commissioning.

Section 9.7. Review

Section 9. Ordination and Credentials will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Leadership Council no later than December 31, 2030.