



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA Federal Credit Union

Over the past several years, the ELCA and the Mission Investment Fund have been considering the establishment of an ELCA-sponsored credit union for two purposes: **to provide additional financial services to ELCA members and ministries and to assist the Mission Investment Fund by providing more efficient banking services for its customers.**

Considerable study and analysis were given to this initiative. A nationwide **feasibility survey** was conducted to determine ELCA members' interest in a credit union. Results were quite positive and demonstrated the viability and need for a consumer-based lending and savings institution. With these positive survey results, the ELCA determined that a credit union would be well received and used by the membership.

The National Credit Union Administration approved the charter for the ELCA Federal Credit Union on July 7, 2015. The credit union will open in the first quarter of 2016.

What is a credit union?

Credit unions are **regulated, not-for-profit cooperative financial institutions** that are **owned and managed by their members**. Credit unions are regulated by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) or the state in which they reside.

Credit unions provide **services to groups that share a common bond such as a church affiliation**, an employer or a geographical location. Currently, credit unions are **sponsored by virtually all religious denominations**.

Who owns and governs the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

Credit unions are economic democracies. **Each credit union member will have equal ownership and one vote**—regardless of how much money a member has on deposit. **Every customer will be both a member and an owner, and earnings will be returned to member owners**. The credit union's governing documents are established by the regulatory agency under which it is chartered, the NCUA.

What does ELCA sponsorship entail?

The ELCA Federal Credit Union is a separate entity from the ELCA churchwide organization. **ELCA sponsorship allows the credit union to serve the members and ministries of the ELCA**. With the ELCA as the sponsor, the credit union's actions will reflect the concerns and issues of this church.

What are the benefits of an ELCA-sponsored credit union?

Credit unions provide a variety of financial services. Because credit unions are not-for-profit financial cooperatives, they exist to serve their members, not to make a profit. Earnings are returned to members in the form of **lower loan rates, higher interest rates on deposits and lower fees.**

The benefits to ELCA members and ministries are significant: ELCA members and ministries will have **access to the credit union's low-cost financial services.** Credit union members historically have received better savings rates, lower-cost loans and modest fees compared with other financial institutions. This is a tangible economic benefit that will be immediately available to ELCA members and ministries.

How is our credit union connected to the mission of the ELCA?

Prudent stewardship of individual and congregational financial resources is key to the sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all people. As stated in the ELCA's Social Statement on Economic Life, "the church is guided by the biblically grounded imperative of 'sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all...' Economic life is intended to be a means through which God's purposes for humankind and creation are to be served..."

As the church, we seek to participate in the economic life that promotes responsible stewardship. Promoting good stewardship – learning how "to use and share what God has given for the sake of all" – is an integral part of the ELCA's mission. **The credit union is a means that aligns with and supports this mission,** providing service and benefits to all members regardless of financial status.

How are the credit union's products and services different than those provided by the Mission Investment Fund?

The Mission Investment Fund exists to provide loans to congregations and ministries of the church. **The ELCA Federal Credit Union's main purpose is to serve the members of the ELCA,** offering consumer loans as well as insured deposits.

The ELCA Federal Credit Union will offer these products and services:

- savings accounts
- checking accounts
- certificates of deposit
- money market accounts
- IRA/Keogh accounts
- credit cards
- auto loans
- unsecured loans
- online banking
- online bill payment
- mobile banking
- ATM access
- direct deposit
- (mortgages—after 2016)

How can I get more information about the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

Direct your inquiries by email to cu@elca.org.