

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-A135
Title: Compensation for Non-stipendiary Clergy
Proposer: Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development
Topic: Clergy Benefits

Directly Related: (Attached)

None

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2015-A177 Revise Benefits for Alternative Forms of Ministry Service
2012-D086 On the Topic of Benefits for Retired Non-stipendiary Clergy (Rejected)

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).

A135 - Compensation for Non-stipendiary Clergy

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing lb: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: Yes

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention requires that all active currently non-stipendiary clergy of any order under the age of 72, canonically resident in and serving in the Episcopal Church, and with a current letter of agreement with the congregation or entity they serve, be paid a minimum of \$25 per month and assessment be paid on their account to the Church Pension Fund (CPF) beginning January 1, 2025; and be it further

Resolved, That compensation may be designated as housing allowance with agreement of the clergy and vestry of the congregation served; and be it further

Resolved, That two or more congregations or entities served by the same clergy person must agree in a timely manner upon the fair allocation among them of the costs of the clergy's compensation and the related assessment to the CPF. Those congregations must also in a timely manner decide on a process for paying those amounts, which may require one congregation to be responsible for communicating with and paying the CPF; and be it further

Resolved, That compensation paid under this resolution does not replace payment on behalf of the clergy by the congregation or the diocese for the expenses of Diocesan Convention, Clergy Conference, continuing education, discretionary fund, or mileage, and other expenses as may be established in the letter of agreement.

Explanation

Compensation for traditionally non-stipendiary clergy promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion for all who may feel called to ordination. Providing compensation for all our clergy is an investment in our future clergy.

The financial burden of formation and service as an unpaid clergy person (deacon or priest), is a barrier for many who need to balance costs and demands of their call with the practical needs of their lives.

Currently many non-stipendiary clergy are retired and in households where they do not need to earn a living. The demands of earning to support self and family and limited discretionary income are real barriers to answering God's call; these barriers are most felt by marginalized groups. Thus most non-stipendiary clergy now serving live with significant privilege. Lack of compensation is an unwritten barrier to Christians who are young, are without adequate employment, are without resources to assist in planning for their futures.

God shows no partiality; the call to ordination is not limited to those with means and leisure; ordination should be inclusive and representative of all parts of society—by age, economic status, ethnicity, race, gender identity.

The BCP bids that the "Minister of the Congregation is directed to instruct the people, from time to time, about the duty of Christian parents to make prudent provision for the well-being of their families (p. 445, Thanksgiving for a Child). Access to the benefits of enrollment in the Church Pension Fund assists non-stipendiary clergy to do so.

We are told that the Church Pension Fund would like to assist all clergy; it cannot do so for clergy not enrolled with assessments paid to the Fund. Potential benefits for eligible clergy include (eligibility is very broadly defined):

- Pension (depending on years of assessment paid)
- CREDO
- Access to financial planning
- Medicare supplement plan
- Disability benefits
- Mental health resources

Similar resolutions have already passed by a number of diocesan conventions. We ask the Episcopal Church to recognize that compensation for non-stipendiary clergy is a move towards equity and inclusion of marginalized groups who will be our future leaders.