



Diocese of Southern Ohio

Policy and Guidelines for Clergy Compensation

Adopted by Diocesan Council on May 9, 2026

This policy and related guidelines provides congregations and clergy with information to make thoughtful and intentional decisions concerning clergy compensation, benefits, and expenses according to diocesan standards and market trends. While this policy provides a minimum requirement and additional guidelines, it does not account for all factors that inform compensation for clergy: experience, skills, responsibilities, and more.

The following policy and guidelines serve as a starting point for discussions between the vestry or mission council and the clergy person with the support of the diocesan transition minister.

A glossary of terms is provided in the Appendix.

Determining Clergy Compensation

Diocesan Policy: Minimum Compensation

The minimum total clergy compensation for a cleric serving full-time in the Diocese of Southern Ohio is \$65,000 plus SECA. Health insurance and pension are also required according to churchwide mandate.

This policy applies to new and revised Letters of Agreement signed after May 9, 2026.

Calculating Total Clergy Compensation (TCC)

Total Clergy Compensation (TCC) = Baseline Stipend + SECA

A portion of the Baseline Stipend may be designated as Housing Allowance.

The Diocesan Council Subcommittee on Clergy Compensation Review has developed a [Clergy New Hire Compensation Model worksheet](#), which helps to calculate TCC for clergy in new roles.

Determining Baseline Stipend

The following chart maps out recommended guidelines for calculating the baseline stipend based on trends in The Episcopal Church and within the Diocese of Southern Ohio with the intent of remaining competitive in recruitment.

Years of Service	Associate / Curate	Solo Priest / Vicar	Specialty Minister	Senior Minister
		<i>Increase 10%</i>	<i>Increase 25%</i>	<i>Increase 40%</i>
0	\$65,000 <i>(required minimum)</i>	\$71,500	\$81,250	\$91,000
1	\$67,000	\$73,500	\$83,250	\$93,000
2	\$69,000	\$75,500	\$85,250	\$95,000
3	\$71,000	\$77,500	\$87,250	\$97,000
4	\$73,000	\$79,500	\$89,250	\$99,000
5	\$75,000	\$81,500	\$91,250	\$101,000
6	\$77,000	\$83,500	\$93,250	\$103,000
7	\$79,000	\$85,500	\$95,250	\$105,000
8	\$81,000	\$87,500	\$97,250	\$107,000
9	\$83,000	\$89,500	\$99,250	\$109,000
10+	\$85,000	\$91,500	\$101,250	\$111,000

Calculating Part-time Compensation

To calculate compensation for a half-time or quarter-time priest, determine what the appropriate stipend would be for a full-time cleric based on the guidelines above and divide by two (for half-time) or four (for quarter-time).

- The *minimum* required compensation for a three-quarter time cleric is \$48,750 + SECA.
- The *minimum* required compensation for a half-time cleric is \$32,500 + SECA.
- The *minimum* required compensation for a quarter-time cleric is \$16,250 + SECA.

Other Expenses

Churchwide Policy: Health Insurance

In accordance with the canons of The Episcopal Church, it is required that employers provide health insurance through the Episcopal Church Medical Trust for any employee who is regularly scheduled

and works a minimum of 1,500 hours per year. Employers may choose to provide for full family coverage or to provide insurance for those working fewer than 1,500 hours per year.

Churchwide Policy: Pension

It is a churchwide mandate that employers provide for pension through the Clergy Pension Plan of the Church Pension Group (CPG) for clergy who are compensated and meet any one of the following qualifications:

- The employee has a letter of agreement (or other contract)
- The employee is called to the position by the bishop, vestry, or rector
- The employee has a formal title (such as rector or priest-in-charge)
- The employee is issued a W-2 (or equivalent) from the employer
- The employee is scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week

[See more detail on the CPG website.](#)

Possible Additional Expenses

The following expenses may not apply in all cases.

- Health Allowance (in-lieu of health insurance) - For amounts, speak with the diocesan transitions minister.
For employees who decline health insurance. Subject to annual approval by CPG.
- Cell Phone Allowance - recommended \$600-1,200/year
If a mobile device is not provided by the employer.
- Professional Development/Continuing Education expenses
- Mileage & Travel expenses
- Discretionary fund
- Sabbatical fund

Cost-of-Living (COLA) Increases

If not already providing the recommended annual increases based on years of service and for those beyond 10 years of service, It is recommended that employers provide for COLA increases annually, based on the annual [rate set by the Social Security Administration.](#)

Diocesan Support

With questions or for support for new or existing Letters of Agreement, contact the diocesan transitions minister, the Rev. Melanie Slane at mslane@diosohio.org.

Appendix

Glossary of Terms

Associate / Curate

A category of clergy position as identified by the Church Pension Group, indicating a priest in their beginning years of ministry.

Baseline Stipend

The portion of the cleric's Total Clergy Compensation that reflects salary. A portion of this stipend may be allocated for housing allowance. It does not include the cost of SECA, health insurance, or pension.

Guideline

For the purposes of this document, a guideline is a non-compulsory recommendation intended to reflect trends in compensation across The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Southern Ohio for the purposes of fair compensation and competitiveness in recruiting.

Housing Allowance

A special tax provision in the United States that allows ministers to exclude part of their compensation from federal income tax if it's used for housing expenses. It must be officially and proactively designated by action of the vestry on an annual basis according to the rules set by the IRS and the Business Manual of Church Affairs. Housing allowance applies to the following expenses: rent or mortgage payments, utilities, property taxes, insurance, and furnishings and maintenance.

Letter of Agreement

A contract between a clergy employee and employer that outlines compensation, benefits, hours, and more.

Senior Minister

A category of clergy position as identified by the Church Pension Group, indicating a priest with oversight of a congregation and a multi-clergy staff.

Specialty Minister

A category of clergy position as identified by the Church Pension Group, indicating a more senior priest with a specialized portfolio.

Self-Employment Contributions Action (SECA)

Because clergy are considered to be self-employed, it is required that employers provide for SECA, the self-employment equivalent of FICA (the payroll taxes that most lay employees see on their paychecks). The 7.8% SECA allowance is applied to the cost of the base stipend (including housing allowance) to calculate the Total Clergy Compensation.

Solo Priest / Vicar

A category of clergy position as identified by the Church Pension Group, indicating a priest serving a congregation with no or minimal additional staff.