Benefits Guide for Priests 2019

In addition to direct stipendiary compensation (cash salary, housing, utilities, SECA, etc.), clergy are also offered non-stipendiary benefits, some required, others optional according to the standard Letter of Agreement (LOA) of this diocese. This guide, in addition to the Clergy Compensation document, is intended to inform priests and guide congregations as they join together in ministry. Note: Wherever the word “Vestry” is used, mission congregations should consider similar action by their Bishop’s Committee.

Just as financial compensation is to be reviewed annually to ensure conformance to the Colorado Clergy Compensation Standards, non-stipendiary benefits should be considered annually as well.

PRIMARY BENEFITS

**Health Insurance**: Premiums will be paid by the congregation as required by the Diocese. Medical insurance will be from the Medical Trust. There is assistance available from the Bishop’s staff and a table of premiums posted on the diocesan website. A priest may opt out if adequate coverage is provided by a spouse or partner’s employer.

**Dental Insurance**: Premiums will be paid by the congregation as required by the Diocese. Dental plan will be provided through the Church Pension Group. There is assistance available from the Bishop’s staff and a table of premiums posted on the diocesan website. A priest may opt out if adequate coverage is provided by a spouse or partner’s employer.

**Pension**: The parish shall directly pay premiums each month to the Church Pension Fund at the rate of 18%, based on the total stipendiary compensation package (including housing and SECA Allowance).

SUPPORTING BENEFITS

**Continuing Education**: Priests are expected to engage in continuing education, with at least $1000 of the cost provided by the parish. Up to 14 days away from
the parish may be used for continuing education events by the priest. One Sunday may be included in the two weeks for travel, if necessary, after consultation with the Vestry. The recipient may be tasked to provide an annual report to the Vestry on all continuing education efforts.

**Clergy Expense Reimbursements:** The following clergy expenses will be reimbursed and should be budgeted for each year: (1) car/transportation expenses while on parish business; mileage paid at the current authorized Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate, to be specified in the annual budget; (2) professional fees/dues, Diocesan Convention costs, the cost of Clergy Conferences with the Bishop’s Office, and the cost of professional books and periodicals; (3) reasonable costs of parish-related hospitality and entertainment hosted on behalf of the parish.

**Sabbatical:** Per diocesan policy, a sabbatical should occur every five years of active ministry and should last for at least three months. It should be carefully and thoughtfully scheduled being sensitive to the events and stresses of congregational life. Further, it is expected that following sabbatical time the clergy person will continue in the current ministry and location for at least one calendar year. In addition to paying clergy compensation during the sabbatical, the Vestry is expected to also contribute financially toward the sabbatical and the contribution should be addressed specifically in the LOA. The Vestry is expected to put aside an amount each year toward the clergy sabbatical. The clergy would match that money and is encouraged to secure grants and scholarships.

**PAID LEAVE**

**Annual Vacation:** Vacation consists of twenty-six workdays including four Sundays each calendar year. A maximum of six workdays and one Sunday of unused vacation may be carried forward to each succeeding calendar year.

**Spiritual Formation Days:** Seven days per year may be used for these retreats with coordination with the Vestry. Time spent in prayer, professional study, spiritual retreat, and theological reflection is not considered “time off” or vacation days but is seen as essential to the exercise of the priestly vocation.
**Sick Leave:** Sick leave is accumulated at a rate of one day per month. Sick leave may be used for the priest’s medical and dental appointments. Sick leave may be used to care for immediate family who are ill. Sick leave is not compensated for upon termination.

**Maternity/Paternity Leave:** Maternity/paternity leave can be up to 12 weeks following the birth (for the latest guidance, the Diocese relies on Church Pension Fund website for details on repayments and salary).

**National Holidays:** The priest shall recognize national holidays to the extent time away does not interfere with worship for major occasions. However, the priest shall be available for pastoral emergencies during these times unless specifically designated as vacation time.

**Bereavement Leave:** Provided to allow response to a death in the immediate family. Normally allows for paid leave in the event of such death with leave not to exceed three working days. If needed, with approval, may be extended by use of Annual Vacation days.

Additional details may be included in the Letter of Agreement between the priest and the parish. A parish may also choose to offer benefits not listed above.