
This guide, along with the diocesan Clergy Compensation Standards document and Supporting Glossary, is intended to inform priests plus assist congregations as they join together in ministry. In addition to direct stipendiary compensation, clergy are also offered non-stipendiary benefits under the provisions in the standard Letter of Agreement (LOA) of this diocese. Note: Wherever the word “Vestry” is used, mission congregations should consider similar action by their Bishop’s Committee. Similarly, any references to Rector or priest would normally apply to a Vicar, as well.

This guide covers topics within the basic outline shown immediately below. Unless otherwise noted in the discussion of each item, it should be considered as required by the LOA. For all items, direct and indirect costs should be calculated each year to ensure proper budgeting and timely payment. A worksheet format is provided below to help capture such costs in a single view.

- **Primary benefits**, mandated or expected for clergy in the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado
- **Supporting “benefits”** to allow the priest to do her or his job effectively and efficiently
- **Time-related benefits**, i.e., situations requiring paid-time-off or other time away

**Worksheet to Record Clergy-Related Costs**

This section is designed to help record all clergy-related costs in one place as an aid to annual church budget processes. (All figures in dollars.)

**Direct Stipendiary Compensation** (including Pension)
Stipend:
- Salary
- Housing
- Utilities
- SECA Allowance
(Total of above )
Pension – 18% of Total

**Benefits and Clergy Related Costs**
- Health Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Life Insurance – covered under pension system
- Moving Expenses (if applicable)
- Communication Expenses
- Office Expenses
- Discretionary Fund
- Reimbursable Expenses
- Continuing Education
- Sabbatical (annual set-aside)
- Supply Coverage
- Other: 


**Clarification**: Also, to be very clear: benefits cited – including those that are time-related – are diocesan policy and not a matter of congregational negotiation, unless otherwise noted. And, just as financial compensation is expected to be reviewed annually to ensure conformance to the Colorado Clergy Compensation Standards, non-stipendiary benefits should be evaluated annually as well.

### PRIMARY BENEFITS

**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).

**Health Insurance**: Premiums will be paid by the congregation as required by the Diocese. Medical insurance will be from the Medical Trust. Assistance is available from the Bishop’s staff and a table of premiums is posted on the diocesan website. Coverage includes vision insurance, behavioral health and employee assistance, and prescription support. A priest may opt out if adequate coverage is provided by a spouse or partner’s employer. Note: some churches pay up to a specified level, allowing the priest to pay the difference for higher level coverage when desired.

**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.

**Life Insurance**: Coverage is included as part of the clergy person’s Church Pension Fund benefits.

**Moving Expenses**: If applicable, total to be negotiated prior to priest’s move. Normally handled as a reimbursement, based on receipts.

### SUPPORTING BENEFITS

**Communications Expenses**: Each parish is expected to provide a telephone and internet access in the priest’s office. Postage for church business should be paid for by the parish. Also, it is recommended that the congregation offset some portion of the priest’s personal internet and cell phone service. These payments should come through the priest’s monthly expense reimbursement report submitted to the church. All of these costs are recognized as essential elements of effective ministry the parish should plan for and arrange to fund.

**Office Expenses**: Secretarial/administrative services, office support, and all necessary office furniture, equipment and supplies should be budgeted and paid for by the parish.

**Clergy Discretionary Ministry Fund**: A fund will be provided in accordance with the Church Canons. The clergy person will normally be the sole individual to disburse these funds in accordance with the Colorado Ethical Guidelines for Clergy Discretionary Funds. This fund must be audited annually.
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 similar requirements, and the cost of professional books and periodicals; (3) reasonable costs of parish-related hospitality and entertainment hosted on behalf of the parish.

Continuing Education: Priests are expected to engage in continuing education, with at least $1000 of the cost provided by the parish. The recipient may be tasked to provide an annual report to the Vestry on all continuing education efforts.

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. Ideally, funding will be shared by at least two sources (clergy and parish). The Vestry is expected to set aside an amount each year toward the clergy sabbatical. The clergy would match that money and is encouraged to secure grants and scholarships. Working with the clergy person, the parish should examine taxable income reporting requirements and methods for income versus pass-through to cover expenses.

TIME-RELATED BENEFITS

Covering Absences - Supply Clergy: The cost of pulpit supply and pastoral services when the clergy person is absent from the parish will be budgeted for and paid in the amounts established in other diocesan guidelines.

Paid Leave Time: A number of situations each year will require the priest to take leave, normally at full compensation.

- 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: To ensure the Rector's continued spiritual development and formation, the Vestry expects the Rector to make regular spiritual retreats. Time spent in prayer, professional study, spiritual retreat, and theological reflection is not considered “time off” or vacation days; it is seen as essential to the exercise of the priestly vocation. Seven days per year may be used for these retreats in coordination with the Vestry.

- Sick Leave: Sick leave is accumulated at a rate of one day per month. Sick leave may be used for Rector’s medical and dental appointments. Sick leave may also be used to care for immediate family who are ill in the area. "Immediate family" shall consist of mother, father, sister, brother,
husband, wife, son, daughter, mother-in-law, father-in-law, and for relatives residing with the Rector. Sick leave is not compensated for upon termination.

- Parental Leave: In the event of pregnancy, absence based on that pregnancy will be treated on the same basis as any other leave. When leave is to be requested for maternity purposes, a statement shall accompany the request from the Rector’s physician indicating the length of time the Rector may safely remain on the job before delivery and the approximate date of delivery. Parental leave can be up to 12 weeks following the birth. After delivery, the Rector is requested to furnish to the Vestry a statement from the physician advising of the approved date for returning to work. (For latest guidance, the Diocese relies on Church Pension Fund website for details on repayments and salary.)

- National Holidays: (List may vary based on local situation.) The priest shall be afforded the following national holidays: New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and Thanksgiving Day. These holidays will be observed to the extent time away does not interfere with worship for major occasions, e.g., Christmas. In addition, the parish offices will normally be closed during the week between Christmas Day and New Year’s Day and on the Monday and Tuesday following Easter. 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. (Note that “immediate family” is spelled out above under Sick Leave.)

- Regional, Diocesan and National Church Responsibilities and Events: The clergy is expected and encouraged to participate in these events as well as in community endeavors. Time given to such work shall be understood to be an integral part of the clergy’s ministry and work schedule in the parish. Up to three Sundays away per year can be planned and agreed to between the priest and Vestry for these responsibilities and events.

- Continuing Education Time: 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.

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