

2015 Compensation Guidelines for Lay Rostered Leaders

(Diaconal Ministers, Deaconesses, Associates in Ministry)

SOUTHERN OHIO SYNOD Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

INTRODUCTION

Congregations, as well as the synod, have an obligation to review compensation plans annually. Lay rostered leaders are encouraged to take initiative in seeking annual compensation reviews. Congregations should develop defined and consistent procedures by which to review the lay rostered leader's compensation.

These guidelines are applicable to lay rostered leaders serving in either congregational or synodical ministries. They are established in order to recognize certification or professionalism gained through applied parish and related experiences. While not able to address every local situation, these guidelines are offered to assist lay rostered leaders and the ministries they serve to determine appropriate compensation.

If you or congregation members have questions or seek clarification about the synod's compensation guidelines, you are welcome to contact the assistant to the bishop who works with your congregation.

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~ ROSTER DEFINITIONS ~

Diaconal Ministry

Diaconal Ministers are consecrated for service in ministries at the intersection of church and world.

Diaconal Ministers work to seek wholeness in the world and to help the people of God to live out the Gospel. They are committed to alerting the church to the needs of the world.

Diaconal Ministry is a ministry of Word and service, sharing the hope of Christ, helping where there is need, and equipping others for healing and justice in the world.

Diaconal ministers serve through agencies, institutions, and traditional church programs as they build bridges between the church and the world.

Deaconess Community

“A deaconess is consecrated for service in the context of the church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel, to relate the Gospel to human need in every situation, and to extend the ministry of the Gospel to all the world.”

The Deaconess Community of the ELCA has roots in 19th century Germany and has prepared and supported women who are committed to a life of service to church and society. It is centered in a community of women for spiritual, personal, and ministry growth and support.

The skilled and theologically prepared women of this roster serve in a variety of ministries, including health care, parish work, education, church music, administration, chaplaincy, and social service.

Associates in Ministry

Associates in Ministry are commissioned for ministry in the areas of education, service, music, and administration.

The partnerships provided by those who serve on this lay roster are of deep value to the church. Associates in Ministry frequently share in a collegial staff ministry and focus in areas such as learning ministries, family ministries, youth, administration, volunteer ministry, music, ministry coordination or parish nursing.

Some Associates in Ministry serve in staff positions in congregations where the position includes more than one area of specialty. An Associate in Ministry may also be called by a synod to a non-congregational setting such as a social service agency, counseling center, college or seminary faculty, or synod staff.

Many congregations benefit from the life experiences and skills of faith-filled lay persons who serve as commissioned Associates in Ministry in the ELCA. They provide leadership and support for specific program ministries of the whole people of God in serving the mission and ministry needs of the church.

(Definitions are from ELCA booklet, *Called by God: Responding with a Life of Service*)

~ COMPENSATION ~ LAY ROSTERED LEADERS

SECTION 1: SALARY

(Please refer to Appendix A on page 10 as you work through Section 1)

A. BASE SALARY

1. The following *2015 Base Salary* figures for lay rostered leaders are based on a 40+ hour work week. They are intended to be the starting point for discussion between the lay rostered leader and congregation as a *Base Salary* is negotiated reflecting the specific nature of the lay rostered leader's ministry, as well as her or his gifts and skills.

Years of Experience	2015 Bachelor's Degree Base Salary	2015 Master's Degree Base Salary
0	\$33,789	\$40,888
1	\$34,807	\$42,100
2	\$35,826	\$43,311
3	\$36,843	\$44,523
4	\$37,862	\$45,736
5	\$38,880	\$46,948
6	\$39,897	\$48,160
7	\$40,915	\$49,371
8	\$41,934	\$50,583
9	\$42,951	\$51,796
10	\$43,969	\$53,008
11	\$44,988	\$54,142
12	\$46,006	\$55,430
13	\$47,025	\$56,643
14	\$48,043	\$57,855
15	\$49,061	\$59,067
16	\$50,039	\$60,279
17	\$51,096	\$61,490
18	\$52,136	\$62,703
19	\$53,133	\$63,915
20	\$54,150	\$65,127

2. *Base Salary* figures for lay rostered leaders include taxable housing compensation.

3. The *Base Salary* of a lay rostered leader who works less than full time should be calculated by using the appropriate percentage of the *Base Salary* for an equivalent full-time position.

B. LOCAL COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

Base Salary figures above are based on an average cost of living for the synod territory. Final *Base Salary* amounts, therefore, should be adjusted during initial and annual negotiations of the compensation plan to reflect the local community's cost of living that may fall above or below the synod average. Comparisons of local living costs may be obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor (www.bls.gov/home.htm).

C. MERIT INCREASE

Congregations are encouraged to consider affirming the ministry of lay rostered leaders by providing additional increases in compensation based on merit.

D. ANNUAL REVIEW

Congregations should conduct an annual review of the salary and other compensation of lay rostered leaders based on education, economic factors, performance and the position description.

SECTION 2. BENEFITS

(Please refer to Appendix A on page 10 as you work through Section 2)

In addition to *Base Salary*, considerations for *Local Cost of Living Adjustments* and/or *Merit Increases*, congregations are expected to provide full-time lay rostered leaders the following benefits:

A. PENSION, HEALTH, SURVIVOR AND DISABILITY BENEFITS

Congregations shall sponsor the lay rostered leader in the Pension and Other Benefits Program of the ELCA which provides retirement, disability, survivor, and medical-dental coverage. Sponsorship will include medical-coverage for the lay rostered leader's spouse and children unless they have other employer-provided group medical insurance coverage and the lay rostered leader consents to waiving medical-dental coverage for them under the ELCA program.

Portico Benefit Services adjusts contribution rates annually based on current economic and regional realities. The board sends a letter to each congregation in mid-August that delineates the figures for the next year. The most current contribution rates may be also acquired by visiting the Board of Pensions web site and following the instructions for its easy-to-use contribution rate calculator at www.elcabop.org. Portico Benefit Services is happy to answer questions about their benefits programs. Call them at their Service Center at 1-800-352-2876 or 1-612-333-7651.

B. SOCIAL SECURITY (FICA) COVERAGE

Social Security is required by law. IRS identifies lay rostered leaders as employees. Congregations are responsible, therefore, to see that the appropriate FICA obligation is met.

C. CONTINUING EDUCATION ALLOWANCE AND SABBATICALS

Continuing education is important for lay rostered leaders to improve or acquire skills, and experience personal and professional growth for a more effective ministry. The ELCA recommends that lay rostered leaders have a minimum of 50 contact hours of continuing education per year. In addition to vacation, therefore, congregations, institutions, boards and agencies of the Southern Ohio Synod are encouraged to make available two weeks per year (including two Sundays) for lay rostered leaders to engage in continuing education.

Congregations shall provide a minimum of \$750 per year to assist the lay rostered leader in meeting the costs of tuition, books, supplies, travel and living expenses while participating in continuing education, as well as continue the lay rostered leader's compensation, as well as meet the expenses of the lay rostered leader's service during the education leave.

Continuing education time and allocated funds accrue to an individual lay rostered leader in relation to the appointment in a particular congregation, institution, board or agency. When a lay rostered leader leaves that specific call, accrued continuing education time and funds are forfeited. Additionally, continuing education time and funds may not be transferred to a lay rostered leader who replaces a lay rostered leader in a place where such time has accrued.

It is also recommended that:

- Dates and programs for continuing education be mutually agreeable between the lay rostered leader and congregation council.
- The lay rostered leader and congregation develop goal-specific programs of continuing education.
- Congregations and lay rostered leaders may negotiate additional continuing education if mutually agreeable.

Sabbaticals (Extended Study Leaves) may be granted to provide an opportunity for the lay rostered leader to take an extended period of time for reflection and renewal, which may include personal enrichment, study, spiritual growth, travel, skill development and/or research. An extended study leave should be approved based upon a specific proposal that indicates how the planned activities will benefit the lay rostered leader, the congregation, and/or the wider church. All provisions should be negotiated well in advance of the leave and be clearly stated in writing. The proposal/agreement should define how the congregational ministry is to be handled during the absence.

This leave would normally be granted for up to three months after each five years of service in the same call. The lay rostered leader is expected to remain in his/her parish for at least one year (or other predetermined period) after completion of the sabbatical.

Congregations considering a sabbatical for a lay rostered leader are strongly encouraged to consult with the synod office, other rostered ministers who have been on sabbatical, and resources such as the ELCA website at <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Vocation/Rostered-Leadership/Leadership-Support/Sabbatical.aspx>.

~ CONGREGATIONAL EXPENSES ~

(Please refer to Appendix B on page 11 as you work through Congregational Expenses)

The following items are **not** part of the lay rostered leader's compensation but rather are costs (similar to Workers' Compensation) necessarily incurred by the congregation so that the lay rostered leader can fulfill terms of her or his call. These costs should, therefore, be listed in congregational budgets as "regular operating expenses" rather than as part of the lay rostered leader's compensation package. Any reimbursements or allowances made to the lay rostered leader for these congregational expenses should be paid completely and regularly (at least monthly).

A. AUTOMOBILE EXPENSES

When a lay rostered leader is required to use her/his automobiles in carrying out his/her ministry and responsibilities, the use of the automobile is a business expense of the congregation. The congregation may negotiate with the lay rostered leader to either:

1. Lease or purchase an automobile for use by the lay rostered leader and pay all related expenses; or
2. Pay a cents-per-mile reimbursement for actual business miles driven at the current IRS rate when the pastor uses his or her automobile (Check the IRS website at www.irs.gov for the latest mileage reimbursement rate.); or
3. Pay an equal monthly allowance sufficient to cover auto expenses. In this case, the IRS requires the lay rostered leader to keep accurate records of business miles driven and/or expenses, and report those figures regularly to the congregation. If the miles driven times the current IRS cents-per-mile reimbursement rate equals an amount less than the total allowance paid during the year, the difference must be reported as taxable income. Automobile allowances should be adjusted yearly to keep pace with inflation.

B. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES

Professional expenses include books, professional journals, magazines, vestments, assembly expenses and other costs that help a lay rostered leader carry on an effective ministry in the congregation. The congregation may negotiate with the lay rostered leader to either:

1. Pay all professional expenses as they occur with no maximum; or
2. Pay all professional expenses as they occur up to a maximum allowance; or
3. Establish an expense allowance paid in equal monthly installments. In this case, if the lay rostered leader's total professional expenses for the year equal an amount less than the total allowance paid during the year, the difference must be reported as taxable income.

Professional expense lines should be adjusted yearly to keep pace with inflation. Congregations may also want to consider increasing professional expense allowances at certain times, such as after a move or during periods of increased continuing education. It shall be understood that purchases are the property of the lay rostered leader.

~ WORK CONDITIONS ~

A. WORK WEEK

Church work requires a great deal of evening and weekend involvement. In order to reasonably set expectations with the rostered leader, it may be useful to think in terms of blocks of time. Each day can be considered to have three blocks of time: morning, afternoon and evening. A seven-day week consists of twenty-one blocks. So a normal full time work week expectation in the secular world might be defined as 10 blocks. Many professionals and administrators might work 11-12 blocks. A reasonable expectation of full-time service for a rostered leader might be 12-13 blocks. This would be comparable to a professional in the marketplace who also volunteers at the church and/or in the community. This slightly higher expectation takes into account the demands of congregational ministry, but ensures that the rostered leader has sufficient time off for nurturing of marital and family relationships, rest and renewal of spiritual, emotional, and physical resources, and personal business, issues which are critical to the health and well-being of the rostered leader and his/her family. The arrangement should be flexible for both rostered leader and congregation, but should also be clearly defined, and provision should be made for emergency coverage when the rostered leader is not available.

B. CHURCHWIDE AND OTHER COMMITMENTS

Lay rostered leaders may be called to serve in ways that take them beyond the congregation. Examples may include church-related activities such as serving as a Bible study leader at a church camp, or on a synodical or ELCA committee or task force. It may also include service in the secular arena such as National Guard/Reserve duty, jury duty, or short-term teaching at a college or seminary. In any case, this “extended ministry” should be carefully negotiated with the congregation council. This time should be regarded as an extension of the congregation’s ministry and should not be considered as vacation time.

C. SICK LEAVE

Sick leave shall be provided for up to six weeks per year with full salary and benefits, and, if applicable, with provision for partial disability thereafter, as agreed. Sick leave is to be coordinated with the *ELCA Pension, Health, Survivor and Disability Benefits* guidelines.

D. VACATION

Four weeks of paid vacation (including four Sundays) per year is recommended. Vacation time is to be determined in consultation with the lay rostered leader and congregation council. Time spent with members of the congregation in outdoor ministries, retreats or other such events should not be considered vacation time when it is a part of a church job-related activity.

E. HOLIDAYS

The responsibilities of lay rostered leaders often means that they are unable to take advantage of the three-day weekends and other holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, that most other people are able to observe. It is recommended, therefore, that the nine to eleven holidays observed by the general public, plus three floating personal days, should be designated as observed holidays by the congregation. Considerations should then be given, and lay rostered leaders should be encouraged, to take these days off at another time during the week whenever they cannot be observed because of their congregational responsibilities.

F. MATERNITY/PATERNITY/ADOPTION LEAVE

The congregation shall provide six weeks *Maternity Leave*, including full salary and benefits, at the time of the birth of a child. Additional time and salary considerations may be negotiated between the congregation and the lay rostered leader.

The congregation shall provide *Paternity Leave* of at least one week, including one Sunday, with full salary and benefits, at the time of the birth of a child. Additional time and salary considerations may be negotiated between the congregation and the lay rostered leader.

The congregation shall provide up to six weeks *Parental Leave*, including full salary and benefits, at the time of the adoption of a child. Additional time and salary consideration may be negotiated between the congregation and the lay rostered leader.

G. OTHER LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Conditions for leaves of absence from the congregation, including length and compensation, may be negotiated. Time spent on leave shall be included in years of experience as employment for salary increments.

H. HEALTHY LEADERS

As suggested by a 2002 ELCA study on Ministerial Health and Wellness, many rostered leaders (i.e., associates in ministry, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, ordained ministers) are currently suffering from stress, overweight, high blood pressure and/or high cholesterol, much of which stems from their vocational responsibilities. These unhealthy conditions not only reduce their effectiveness and quality of life, but also contribute directly to the rising cost of the congregation's cost for healthcare benefits.

In 2015 the ELCA healthcare plan for rostered leaders will continue to focus on encouraging healthy behaviors and lifestyles. In support of this effort, pastors, lay rostered leaders, and congregational leaders are encouraged to engage in a discussion to identify methods of safeguarding and improving the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, vocational, and spiritual health and well-being of their rostered leaders. Such a discussion should define specific and mutually beneficial practices that respect a rostered leader's personal time, establish reasonable work schedules, and encourage a healthy lifestyle. Visit the ELCA website (<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Vocation/Rostered-Leadership/Leadership-Support/Health.aspx>) and Portico Benefit Services website (<https://www.porticobenefits.org>) for additional information.

In addition, the focus of the Southern Ohio Synod's *Advancing God's Mission: Living Faith* strategic plan's goal 2 is to promote greater congregational health and healthy leaders. One recommendation under this goal encourages congregations to offer partial reimbursement for health/exercise membership as a way to promote the health of their pastor and other rostered leaders on their staff.

Keep in mind that "people grow best in their discipleship in healthy congregations, and are best served by healthy leaders." (*Advancing God's Mission: Living Faith* p.8)

~ Appendix A ~
COMPENSATION WORKSHEET

Headings below correspond to those found in the guidelines. *Items marked with an asterisk (*) shall be included.* The others are recommended items that should be negotiated between the Lay Rostered Leader and congregation.

1. SALARY (See Guidelines, pages 4-5)

- *A. Base Salary \$ _____
- B. Local Cost of Living Adjustment \$ _____
- C. Merit Increase \$ _____

D. TOTAL SALARY \$ _____
(Total of lines 1A through 1C)

2. BENEFITS (See Guidelines, pages 5-7)

- *A. Pension, Health, Survivor and Disability Benefits \$ _____
- *B. FICA (Social Security) \$ _____
- *C. Continuing Education Allowance \$ _____

D. TOTAL BENEFITS \$ _____
(Total of lines 2A through 2C)

**TOTAL COMPENSATION TO
LAY ROSTERED LEADER** \$ _____

~ Appendix B ~
CONGREGATIONAL EXPENSES WORKSHEET

(See Guidelines, page 7)

*A. Automobile Expenses \$ _____

*B. Professional Expenses \$ _____

TOTAL CONGREGATIONAL EXPENSES \$ _____
(A plus B)

SALARY (APPENDIX A) _____
+

BENEFITS (APPENDIX A) _____
+

CONGREGATIONAL EXPENSES (APPENDIX B) _____
+

VACATION SUPPLY COVERAGE _____
=

**TOTAL COST
TO CONGREGATION**
\$ _____