

Establishing Minimum Clergy Compensation for 2025

SPONSOR: Diocesan Executive Council (approved October 22, 2024)

CONTACT PERSON: The Rev. Canon Linda Grenz: transition@diovermont.org

RESOLVED, That the 191st Convention of the Diocese of Vermont approve the 2025 Total Clergy Compensation minimums for full-time clergy with no experience as: Cash Stipend (including housing allowance/value of housing) of \$68,705.60, plus SECA reimbursement (calculated as 7.65% of Cash Stipend); this includes the recommended Cost of Living Increase of 2.5% and would apply proportionally to part-time clergy; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 191st Convention of the Diocese of Vermont approve the following Remunerations for Locally Ordained Priests serving actively in a parish and (vocational) Deacons serving actively in a parish: a minimum of \$25 per month plus the required contribution to the Church Pension Fund and expense reimbursements; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 191st Convention of the Diocese of Vermont recommend a 2.5% minimum cost of living increase (COLA) for all compensated clergy and lay employees; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 191st Convention of the Diocese of Vermont recommend a \$500 increase for each year of experience for all full-time compensated clergy and lay employees, applied proportionally to those employed part-time; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 191st Convention of the Diocese of Vermont recommend an equity allowance for clergy living in church supplied housing calculated at 5% of Total Clergy Compensation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 191st Convention of the Diocese of Vermont approve the following Reimbursement Guidelines:

- Cell Phone Reimbursement: \$25 - \$75 per month
- Travel Mileage Reimbursement at the IRS rate for 2025
- Continuing Education: \$500 minimum;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 191st Convention of the Diocese of Vermont recommend the minimum rates for Supply Clergy as:

- One Service with sermon: \$175 plus mileage/expenses
 - Holiday services (Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve or Easter day): \$225 plus mileage/expenses
 - One Service without sermon (lay preacher): \$100 plus mileage/expenses
 - Two Services on one Sunday with sermon: \$225 plus mileage/expenses
 - Two Services on one Sunday without sermon (lay preacher): \$150 plus mileage/expenses
- Weddings and funerals that include meetings in addition to the service need to provide additional compensation at \$40/hr. in addition to the worship service charge above

- Other services such as pastoral care, providing training, etc., \$25-35/hr. for the visitation/training time plus mileage (number of hours to be agreed upon in advance if extensive preparation is required); and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 191st Convention of the Diocese of Vermont recommend that the Anthem BCBS BlueCard PPO 80 health insurance plan, the Anthem BCBS BlueCard MSP PPO 80 health insurance plans for those over 65 and the Delta comprehensive dental plan insurance be established as the minimum plan offered to clergy and lay employees.

EXPLANATION

Housing Value

The value of church provided housing is computed as 30% of the Total Clergy Compensation (salary, housing allowance, utilities, bonuses and the experience factor + half of SECA).

Cost of Living increase

2.5% is the estimated COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) by the Social Security Administration as of September 15, 2024. We suggest using that figure as the recommended COLA for all clergy and lay employees.

Health Insurance

The Diocese of Vermont has previously set the PPO 90 option as the minimum required insurance. Given the significant increase in rates this year (9.49% for the PPO 90 plan) and having learned that most dioceses only require the PPO 70 option, we are proposing the PPO 80 as the minimum required, along with establishing a Health Reimbursement Account to assist clergy and lay employees in covering medical costs. The PPO 70 plan has a maximum out-of-pocket set at \$7,000. We felt that this jump from \$1,000 under the PPO 90 to \$7,000 would likely be too much for beneficiaries to absorb and so opted for the PPO 80 plan with the out-of-pocket mostly covered by an HRA. This provides congregations some relief in the growing costs of insurance while providing employees a safety net to cover costs that may occur.

The resolution establishes a minimum requirement, but churches will be offered three levels of plans to choose from: PPO 100, 90, and 80. Each church may select which plans they will offer to their employees so long as all of the employees of that church are offered the same plans.

For more detail, see “Recommended Insurance Plans and COLA 2025.”

Compensation Guide

A Compensation Guide has been prepared that provides more details, suggestions on how to negotiate, things to consider in making these decisions, etc. A revised version will be issued when the insurance enrollment period is open and CPG provides us with the information about the new system of selecting options. It is recommended that all Vestries and Bishop’s Committees take the time to read and discuss the Guide before making any decisions.