

## Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania Clergy Compensation Review, 2023-24

As our Lord commissioned His apostles, He said: “the laborer deserves his wages.” (Luke 10:7) The Apostle Paul says: “Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the Gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:13-1).

The financial health of our diocesan parishes varies considerably, due to a variety of reasons, i.e., the size of the parish, understanding of authentic Christian Stewardship, openness to growth, etc. This affects compensation “packages” provided to our diocesan clergy. The Church continues to wrestle with the concept of “bi-vocational” clergy: the need for parish clergy to supplement parish compensation and benefits through other, often secular, employment. This, however, is a compromise, NOT the ideal. (There are Church canons that forbid this!)

The OCA Statute states: “To be free from material preoccupations and wholly committed to his sacred ministry, the priest must be compensated by the parish, the amount of his compensation being clearly agreed upon at the time of his appointment” (article 10, Section 4).\* Obviously a parish priest cannot be “wholly committed to his sacred ministry” if, for whatever reason, he is forced to procure employment outside of his assigned parish. Further, in many cases, clergy lack the wherewithal (education, training, experience, credentials to obtain secular employment beyond minimum wage jobs as they have centered their professional aspirations on full-time pastoral ministry and, in most cases, have invested an average of seven years of academic/seminary education and training to this end.

Diocesan parishes are reminded that a clergy compensation review should be part of the annual budget preparation process. To aid parish administrations in this process, we offer the following overview for clergy compensation **as an example** based on the 1995 guidelines adopted by the All-American Council and relevant current data (real numbers). The cost of housing is not automatically 32%, but must be investigated to determine the appropriate percentage to deduct from median income.

1) 100% Median Family Income**	\$76,289
Value of Housing or Housing Allowance, 32%	\$24,412 *** (32% is only given as example, local values must be investigated)
Cash salary, 68% of Median Income	\$51,876.52 ****
2) Benefits****	
Pension @ 12%	\$ 7,629
Social Security @ 7.65%	\$ 6,225.18
<b>TOTAL PACKAGE</b>	<b>\$64, 326.88 w/o Health Care Plan</b>

**Additions:** (1) Length of service - 10% increase for every five years. (2) Funding for Continuing Education  
(3) Annual Cost of living increase

### Required Non-Compensation:

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| (1) Life Insurance (Approximately)   | \$700.00                         |
| (2) The full cost of Health Insurance  |                                  |
| Coverage is not optional, though parishes can seek more affordable options without curtailing the extent or quality of coverage. |                                  |
| (3) Car/Travel allowance a minimum of  | \$400 a month                    |
| (4) Workmen’s Compensation Insurance   | \$366.00 a year (required in PA) |
| (5) Cell Phone, Utilities, Cable / Internet  |                                  |
| (6) Substitute Clergy  |                                  |
| (7) Mandatory attendance at Diocesan Assembly, All American Council, Clergy Continuing Education, etc.                           |                                  |
- (These are parish expenses, not clergy compensation.)*

Whether or not diocesan parishes are presently capable of achieving adequate clergy compensation according to the established guidelines does not negate the reality of the current data which must be considered in future planning and pastoral assignments within our diocese. Clergy not receiving the minimum compensation in their present parish will be considered first for any openings in the Diocese. As

there is a shortage of clergy throughout the Orthodox Church, we must be mindful of the sacrifices clergy and their families make and show our appreciation and gratitude. The more loving and caring we are with those entrusted with our care the more likely we are to attract and retain clergy.

**\*Clergy Compensation, once agreed upon and accepted cannot be lowered.**

**\*\*Median Family Income** data for particular counties/cities/townships are provided at the following link: <https://www.incomebyzipcode.com/>. Since this data is dated, we are providing adjusted figures. In some cases, more accurate information was available reflecting higher figures.

*\*\*\* Where housing is valued less the 32% of the Median Income the balance is to be paid in stipend.*

\*\*\*\* Parishes not currently compensating their priests according to these minimum guidelines ***must give a minimum 5% increase per year, in addition to COLA increases***, to work towards compliance with OCA compensation policies.

\*\*\*\*\* **10% Pension** and **7.65% Social Security** are based on the stipend AND housing allowance or value of the housing provided. To double check your figures, think of it as 10% of the median income for the Pension and 7.65% for Social Security if you are working with a new priest.

The Full Cost of Health and Life Insurance are mandated by OCA All American Council Resolutions.

While clergy are generally available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, please be considerate. Unless there is an emergency that absolutely cannot wait until the following day, call your priest during normal working hours. Our clergy also need down time as well as family time.

Paid Vacation:

0-5 Years of Service 2 weeks, i.e., two Sundays  
5-10 Years of Service 3 weeks  
10-20 Years 4 weeks  
20-30 Years 5 weeks  
30 Years and over 6 weeks

All clergy are encouraged to take as a minimum a day and a half off per week.

National Holidays are also considered to be a day off.

Major Feast Days of the Church should also be a time of relaxation and family time after the Divine Services.

Each priest may take 3 personal days a year.