



Understanding

Effective

Salary

The Community of Faith and the Benefits Plan

Following a biblical understanding of sharing based on need, the Benefits Plan calls on the entire community of faith to contribute toward the care of all servants of the church. Churches and employing organizations with members enrolled for the traditional program do not pay for the benefits of their own enrolled members, but for their share of the total cost of providing benefits for all church workers in the Plan.

The Benefits Plan serves ordained ministers and lay church workers in churches and other employing organizations by offering participation in

- traditional program benefits that include healthcare, pension, death and disability as well as optional benefits programs.
- Affiliated Benefits Program benefits that include healthcare coverage for organizations that are controlled by or associated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). At the option of the employing organizations, Affiliated Benefits Program members may also participate in death and disability coverage as well as optional benefits programs.

If any discrepancy exists between this booklet and the terms and conditions set forth in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Plan document shall control.

The Benefits Plan is a church plan under §414(e) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Plan has not elected to be subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and, pursuant to the Church Plan Parity and Entanglement Protection Act of 2000, is exempt from state insurance licensing, solvency and funding requirements.

If you have questions, please call the Board of Pensions at 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN) or visit the Board's Web site at www.pensions.org.

Effective Salary and the Benefits Plan

Effective salary is an important part of the Benefits Plan for employing organizations who pay dues and members who receive benefits. This booklet describes the various types of compensation or reimbursements most frequently paid by churches and other employing organizations and identifies those types that must be included in effective salary for Benefits Plan purposes.

The Benefits Plan links both dues and benefits to the financial situation of the employing organization and employee. The effective salary of the participant determines

- healthcare and pension dues for members in the traditional program coverage.
- death and disability dues and benefits for all participating members.
- dues for members with Optional Supplemental Disability coverage.
- healthcare deductible and copayment limits for all participating members.
- accrued pension credits for members with pension coverage.

Plan Definition

The definition of effective salary in Sec. 2.1 of the Benefits Plan is:

“Effective Salary. Any compensation received during a Plan Year by a Benefits Plan Member from an employing organization, including but not limited to any sums paid as a housing (including utilities and furnishings) allowance. Effective Salary shall also include any deferred compensation (funded or unfunded) credited to a Member by an employing organization during a Plan Year and any salary reduction contributions to a plan or other arrangement providing a tax-favored benefit. Effective Salary does not include amounts received for reimbursement of professional expenses through an accountable reimbursement plan or Social Security amounts up to fifty percent (50%) of a minister's Self-Employment Contributions Act obligations. With respect to a Member eligible for a housing allowance, the amount for housing is calculated as follows: if a Manse is provided, the amount shall be at least thirty percent (30%) of all other compensation described above; if no Manse is provided, the amount shall be the actual housing allowance.”

The Plan year is January 1 to December 31.

Elements of Effective Salary

The administrative interpretations set forth in this booklet establish the amounts of a member's compensation that must be included in the effective salary reported to the Board.

Effective salary only relates to compensation received from the member's employing organization. Amounts received directly from other organizations or persons are not included (for example, honoraria, gifts).

Effective salary includes most compensation, whether received in cash, in kind, or in deferred form. Generally, fringe benefits only offered to individual employees, or where an employee can elect an optional or supplemental benefit in lieu of cash, are included in effective salary. Tax-free fringe benefits (other than housing-related expenses or fringe benefits in lieu of cash) are generally excluded if the benefit is offered to all employees. The current taxability of the compensation under federal and state income tax laws does not determine whether an item of compensation is to be included in effective salary. Any and all compensation, whether received in cash, in kind, or in deferred form, is included. Please see the detailed information in the chart on Specific Types of Payments, Page 5.

Effective salary does not include accountable reimbursements for business expenses advanced by the member on behalf of the employing organization. Accountable reimbursements for business expenses are those expenses paid by an employing organization upon substantiation or an accounting from the member of the purpose, date, amount, and place of the expenditure. See Internal Revenue Code or the *Tax Guide for Ministers and Churches* from the Board of Pensions for further clarification of requirements.

Generally, effective salary includes reimbursement of personal expenses and general lump sum allowances for which the member has no obligation to account for to the employing organization.

Specifying the Housing Amounts

When a housing allowance is part of a member's effective salary, it must be itemized when reported to the Board. To comply with tax laws, the Board must maintain records of the itemized components of effective salary such as cash salary, housing, and others.

Effective salary is a term defined in the Plan to include cash salary, housing allowance, certain other allowances, and deferred compensation paid to a member.

Most ministers' compensation packages include income that is not subject to federal income tax (for example, housing allowance or in-kind benefits such as a manse). These parts of effective salary are important because the Benefits Plan retirement benefits accrue annually on the basis of the Plan's formula rather than taxable income; namely, 1.25% of total annual effective salary of the member.

Minimum Effective Salary Requirement

The Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a church employee benefit plan as defined in §414(e) of the Internal Revenue Code with legal standing to provide benefits for ministers and church employees only. Donated or volunteer services do not constitute a valid employment relationship for Plan purposes.

The Board of Pensions adopted Administrative Rule 305 (available on www.pensions.org) that clarifies that the Plan deems an eligible employment relationship to exist when the employee/member has a total effective annual salary of at least 25% of the current year's churchwide median salary for pastors serving local congregations (the minimum pension participation basis). The IRS has other tests for determining employed status.

Annual salary for full-time service (35 hours a week or more) must be at least equal to the current year's pension minimum salary participation basis.

The Benefits Plan defines 1,820 hours as full-time service (1,820 hours/52 weeks = 35 hours a week).

For part-time workers (working 20 or more hours a week, but fewer than 35 hours a week), the minimum annual salary is prorated based on the hours worked compared to 35 hours. Annual salary for part-time service must reflect the same proportion to the current year's minimum salary requirement as the member's hours are to 35 hours.

To arrive at the required annual minimum salary for employees scheduled to work fewer than 35 hours a week,

- divide the current year's minimum pension participation basis by 35 hours a week, then
- multiply the result by the actual number of hours a week the employee is scheduled to work.

Healthcare Deductible and Copayment Requirements

The member's healthcare deductible and copayment maximums are based on his/her effective salary. The member's effective salary can change during the calendar year as a result of a salary increase or decrease, bonus payment, overtime compensation, or change of position.

When a salary change is reported, the member's deductible and copayment maximum changes only if a salary increase or decrease puts the member's salary in a different deductible/copayment salary range.

If the member's participation changes (for example, from active to Medical Continuation or from Medical Continuation to Medicare Supplement) the member's deductible and copayment maximum also changes. If the deductible or copayment maximum requirements had not been met, the member's deductible and copayment limits also change. Any credit toward the deductible or copayment requirements is applied to the deductible or copayment requirement for the new participation.

The deductible and copayment maximum in effect on the date of service is applied, not the deductible and copayment maximum in effect when the claim is processed.

Salary Reporting and Verification

The church or employing organization must correctly report the member's total annual effective salary, employment classification, and scheduled hours to work a week and notify the Board within 30 days of any changes.

All these changes should be reported on the Service/Salary Change form, ENR-100, within 30 days of the date that the change takes effect.

Reporting information correctly and quickly is important so that members receive accurate benefits information, and appropriate benefit payments and accruals.

To protect member benefits, churches and other employing organizations must ensure the accuracy of salary information reported to the Board of Pensions. Members can verify salary information by checking their Annual Statement of Benefits. They can also verify salary information, employment classification and hours worked in a week by checking the Member Confirmation Forms sent to them every time the Board updates their records.

Members and representatives of a church or other employing organization may call the Board to verify that the specific salary information in their files is the same as that in the Board records.

To protect this confidential information, Board member services representatives may only confirm or deny a match. If any discrepancy is identified, the Board will give the caller instructions to remedy the discrepancy.

Retroactive changes to salary, employment classification or hours worked a week are made **only** for the current year and the immediate preceding calendar year, subject to receipt of supporting documentation.

The standard components of effective salary (cash, housing, deferred compensation) must be reported annually. For variable components of effective salary (overtime, bonuses, reimbursements for personal expenses, and others), the actual amounts are to be reported in effective salary.

Reporting Variable Compensation to the Board

The amounts of some compensation paid to members vary from year to year (for example, bonuses, overtime, reimbursements for deductibles, and others). The total compensation for the year may be unknown at the beginning of the year. As a result, no specific figure for these items is included in the terms of call or his/her effective salary when the information is reported to the Board of Pensions at the beginning of the year.

Timing of Variable Reporting

- Reimbursements for deductibles and other medical expenses should be reported in full in January as adjustments to the prior year.
- Bonuses are to be reported within 30 days. Manse value, if any, will be adjusted for bonuses. If applicable, adjustments to dues and pension credits will be made for the year in which the payment is made.
- Overtime pay should be reported each January for the prior year and adjustments, if applicable, will be made for the year in which the payment is made.
- Fixed allowances such as a car allowance paid in equal monthly amounts are to be reported “up-front” with cash salary information when such allowances are not paid through an accountable reimbursement plan.

For members with a manse component, effective salary increases by the total amount of the reported adjustments plus an adjustment to ensure that the manse amount continues to be at least 30% of all other components of effective salary.

When changes in effective salary are reported, healthcare deductible and copayment requirements are adjusted only as explained on Page 3. When applicable, dues for benefits are adjusted.

Billing and Effective Salary

Billing for healthcare (traditional program), pension, and death and disability dues is based on the greater of the member's total annual effective salary or the minimum participation basis for the particular benefit (medical, pension, or death and disability). The basis does not exceed the established maximum basis for either medical or pension.

Dues for salary adjustments will be invoiced retroactively.

Please check our online library at www.pensions.org or call us at 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN) for current year minimum and maximum participation bases.

Specific Types of Payments

For questions about taxes associated with a form of payment, please call your tax advisor. The member services representatives at the Board of Pensions

may answer your questions about effective salary, but are not qualified to provide tax advice (federal income tax, FICA or SECA).

Form of Payment	Is it included?	Explanation
Annual Cash Salary	Yes	The full amount of gross cash compensation paid to the member must be included in effective salary. The annual salary or 12-month salary must be reported. For example, if the salary is \$20,000 but the member starts July 1, report the annual salary of \$20,000, not the amount the member receives for the part of the year he/she works.
Automobile Allowance	See Car Allowance.	
Book Allowance	No	It is not included if it is reimbursed to the member through an accountable reimbursement plan.
	Yes	It is included if it is a lump sum amount paid directly to the member and not a reimbursement processed through an accountable reimbursement plan.
Bonuses	Yes	An adjusted effective salary incorporating the actual amount of the bonus is to be reported within 30 days of the award. Pension credits for the bonus are accrued during the year in which the bonus is paid.
Car Allowance	No	It is not included if it is reimbursed to the member through an accountable reimbursement plan.
	Yes	It is included if it is a lump sum amount paid directly to the member and not a reimbursement processed through an accountable reimbursement plan.
Copayment Reimbursement	No	It is not included if the member's copayments amounts are paid or reimbursed by a third party as part of a supplemental wrap-around plan provided by the employing organization under Internal Revenue Code Sec. 105 on a group coverage basis to all employees of that employing organization or members of the sponsoring governing body.
	Yes	It is included if the copayment amounts are paid or reimbursed to the member by the employing organization on an individual basis, even if the payments are made through an FSA (Flexible Spending Account, Sec. 125 Plan).
	Yes	It is included if the member's copayment amounts are paid or reimbursed by a third party as part of a supplemental wrap-around plan provided by the employing organization on an individual basis. The amount included is the dues or premiums paid by the employing organization for that coverage, not the benefits actually received.

Form of Payment	Is it included?	Explanation
Deductible Reimbursement	No	It is not included if the member's deductible amounts are paid or reimbursed as part of a HRA (Health Reimbursement Account) plan, or supplemental wrap-around plan provided by the employing organization under Internal Revenue Code Sec. 105 on a group coverage basis to all employees of that employing organization or members of the sponsoring governing body.
	Yes	It is included if the deductible amounts are paid for or reimbursed to the member by the employing organization on an individual basis, even if the payments are made through an FSA (Flexible Spending Account, Sec. 125 Plan).
	Yes	It is included if the member's deductible amounts are paid or reimbursed by a third party as part of a HRA (Healthcare Reimbursement Account) or a supplemental wrap-around plan provided by the employing organization on an individual basis. The amount included is the dues or premiums paid by the employing organization for that coverage, not the benefits actually received.
Deferred Compensation	Yes	Deferred compensation plans (funded and unfunded) include employer and member contributions to 403(b)(9) plans (including the Retirement Savings Plan), Rabbi Trusts, and other forms of funded and unfunded deferred compensation arrangements. These arrangements are generally elective and negotiated as part of an individual member's overall compensation package. As long as the member has a legally enforceable right to the deferred sums at some time in the future, the sum set aside in a given year to reserve for that obligation is to be included in the member's effective salary that year.
Down Payment	Yes	If any amount for a down payment on a house/condominium is given to the member or paid for the member outright (that is, without the stipulation that the member must pay it back), such an amount is compensation, which is included in effective salary.
Dues/Benefits Plan	No	The amount paid by the employing organization represents that organization's share of the funds needed to provide the benefits to all members of the Benefits Plan. The amount is not tied to the sum required to fund the promised benefits to the individual members.
Equity Allowances	Yes	Sums paid or contributed by an employing organization to a deferred compensation plan or other account, on behalf of a member residing in a manse, to compensate for equity which the member forgoes by not owning his or her own residence. See Deferred Compensation for additional detail.
Flexible Spending Account	Yes	See Section 125 Allowances.
Furnishings	Yes	These arrangements are generally elective and negotiated as part of an individual member's overall compensation package. If a member lives in a manse and receives an additional allowance for utility services and/or furnishings, the additional allowances are to be included in effective salary, in addition to the 30% manse amount.

Form of Payment	Is it included?	Explanation
Gifts from the Employing Organization	Yes	Gifts of cash given to the member by the employing organization must be included in effective salary as they are compensation in addition to annual cash salary. Adjustments to the annual effective salary because of the gift are required to be reported at the time the gift is given. Dues and pension credit accruals will be adjusted retroactively.
Gifts from Others	No	Gifts from private donors are not included in the effective salary.
Healthcare Reimbursement Account	No	An option under which expenses paid for medical or other healthcare services not reimbursed by the Medical Plan such as vision, hearing, dental care, and cost-sharing requirements (deductibles and copayments, for example) are reimbursable by the employing organization on a nontaxable basis provided that Internal Revenue Code Sec. 105 requirements are met. See also Deductible Reimbursement.
Honoraria	No	These are gifts for services provided to an organization other than the employing organization and are not to be included.
Housing Allowance	Yes	This allowance is an elective portion of an individual member's compensation package. For this reason, it is included as part of effective salary. The housing allowance amount is designated annually by the session or employing organization in advance of payment. Effective salary also includes any amount designated as housing allowance and used to pay rent to the employing organization. Rent reported as housing allowance for the employer-provided housing is the fair market value of the housing as determined annually through appropriate means.
Insurance Premiums (Group Policies)	No	Premiums for group coverage provided by an employing organization to all employees are not to be included.
Insurance Premiums (Individual Policies)	Yes	Premiums for individual insurance policies (auto, disability, life, supplemental medical, etc.), other than dues for participation in the basic benefits provided by the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), that the employing organization pays for or reimburses to the member at his/her request are compensation to be included in effective salary. Subscription dues for optional benefit coverage under the Benefits Plan paid for by the employing organization are to be included in effective salary on the same basis.
Loan Forgiveness	Yes	Loan forgiveness should be reported as effective salary.
Loans—Interest-Free	Yes	Interest savings to the member because of the nature of this type of loan are included. The amount of interest to be included in the effective salary calculation is that amount reportable under the federal income tax laws.
Loans—Principal	No	Principal of the loan is not included in effective salary because it will be paid back to the lender.
Manse Value	Yes	If a manse is provided, the amount included shall be at least thirty (30%) of all other compensation included in effective salary. If utility or furnishings allowances are provided to a member residing in a manse, those allowances are to be included in effective salary in addition to the manse value defined above.

Form of Payment	Is it included?	Explanation
Medical Expense Reimbursement		See Copayment and Deductible Reimbursements.
Mileage	No	May be synonym for car allowance. This is a professional expense which, if reimbursed through an accountable reimbursement plan, is not to be included.
Overtime	Yes	Overtime pay is to be reported in January each year for the preceding year and will be credited to the year for which it was paid. Dues will be billed retroactively.
Rent Allowance		See Housing Allowance.
Section 125 Allowances	Yes	These allowances are voluntary salary reductions from a member's cash salary. They are, therefore, to be included in effective salary.
Self-Employment Contributions Act Reimbursements	Yes, in excess of 50%	If the employing organization pays for or reimburses the member more than 50% of this expense, then the amount in excess of 50% of the expense must be included in the effective salary.
Severance Pay	Yes	<p>A severance payment is any money given by an employing organization to a Benefits Plan member in association with the member's termination of eligible service regardless of the description of that payment (gift, goodwill payment, payment for unused vacation, etc.). The presence or absence of a formal written agreement is not a factor when determining if the payment is considered severance.</p> <p>Dues are payable on any and all components of effective salary which are part of the severance arrangement. This applies whether or not the severance arrangement provides that the employing organization continue to pay for benefits under the traditional program and whether or not the severance payment is a lump sum or in installments.</p> <p>When a severance arrangement extends the terminated employee's benefits beyond the last day worked, dues continue until the date specified in the arrangement as if the employee were still on the payroll.</p> <p>When a severance arrangement does not extend the terminated employee's benefits beyond the last day worked, dues are paid in a single payment on all components of effective salary included in the severance payment based on the member's level of benefits participation on the last day worked.</p> <p>Severance payments are to be reported within 30 days. If applicable, adjustments to dues and pension credits will be made for the year in which the payment is made.</p>
Study Allowance	No	It is not included if it is reimbursed to the member through an accountable reimbursement plan and provides for studies that are related to employment and actually undertaken in the current year.
	Yes	It is included if it is a lump sum amount paid directly to the member and not a reimbursement processed through an accountable reimbursement plan or when given to the member for studies completed before the current year.

Form of Payment	Is it included?	Explanation
Study Leave	Yes	Pay during study leave is generally part of an employee’s annual cash salary and constitutes compensation to be included in effective salary even though the member is not working.
Tax-Deferred or Tax-Sheltered Annuities	Yes	These allowances are voluntary salary reductions from a member’s cash salary. They are, therefore, compensation to be included in effective salary.
Tuition Reimbursement	See Study Allowance.	
Utilities Allowance	No	If a member lives in a manse and the utility services are maintained in the employing organization’s name and paid for directly by the employing organization, the value of those services is not to be included in effective salary.
	Yes	These allowances, if paid directly to the employee, are dues bearing and are to be included in effective salary. If a member lives in a manse and receives an additional allowance for utility services and/or furnishings, the additional allowances are to be included in effective salary, in addition to the 30% manse amount.
Vacation	Yes	Vacation pay is generally part of an employee’s annual cash salary even though the member is not working and constitutes compensation to be included in effective salary.
Wrap-around Plans	See Copayment and Deductible Reimbursements.	

Effective Salary Worksheet

This worksheet is a guide to determining effective salary for Benefits Plan purposes. It may be helpful in completing the Service/Salary Change form, ENR-100.

The worksheet is only for effective salary and is not

intended to provide Social Security or income tax advice. For more income tax information, please refer to Internal Revenue Service publications or seek the advice of a competent tax advisor.

Compensation Included in Effective Salary (see *Specific Types of Payments starting on Page 5 for details*)

1. \$ _____ Annual cash salary (including employee contributions to 403(b)(9) plans, tax-sheltered annuity plans, salary reduction contributions to flexible health spending accounts and cafeteria plans).
2. \$ _____ Housing, utility, and furnishings allowances.
3. \$ _____ Employing organization contributions to 403(b)(9) plans, tax-sheltered annuity plans, equity allowances.
4. \$ _____ Bonuses, overtime pay, unvouchered professional expense allowances, gifts from employing organization, manse equity allowances (unless contributed to a qualified deferred compensation program).
Include year-end or other bonuses, unvouchered allowances (such as expenses that are not paid through an accountable reimbursement plan), down payment grants for the purchase of a home, savings from interest-free or interest-reduced loans (not loan principal), and gifts paid by the employing organization. (Gifts received directly from private donors or honoraria are NOT included.)
5. \$ _____ Other allowances. Include all other forms of compensation not otherwise covered on Lines 1-4, including medical deductible and medical expense reimbursement allowances not paid through a group benefit plan, insurance premiums for additional insurance coverage provided for individual employees (premiums for group plan coverage are not included) and others. If an allowance is provided to reimburse Self-Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligations, any amount in excess of 50% of the minister's SECA tax obligation should be included on this line.
6. \$ _____ Manse amount (must be at least 30% of Lines 1-5 for members residing in employer-provided housing).
7. \$ _____ Total effective salary (Sum of Lines 1-6). Dues are computed and benefits are determined on this amount.



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