

Financial Support for Bishops

When a district is preparing to call a new bishop, there needs to be some advance planning for his financial support.

This planning needs to be done by the bishop search committee, made up of a representative from each congregation, a member of the credentialing commission and a member of the bishop board executive committee. The search committee could ask the officers of the district, deacons, or others who have a good understanding of the bishop's task and the potential of the district for financial giving beyond the congregational expenses.

First, the district needs to prepare an updated ministry description for the bishop. This ministry description should define the proportion of time the bishop is expected to give to the task, in accordance with the size of the district and the scope of the task. If the ministry description calls for full time, the ***Salary Guidelines*** from Mennonite Church USA could be followed which includes recommendations for salary, housing allowance, medical insurance, social security, retirement, and other benefits, plus car and office expenses.

If the ministry description calls for a part-time arrangement, there should be a pro-rating of the salary guidelines in accordance with the time the bishop is expected to give to his task. This assumes, however, that the bishop will find some other part-time employment to supplement his bishop work. If the bishop ministry description calls for 50% or more of his time, he may not receive any benefits other than cash from his supplemental employment. In such cases, the district may need to give him full-time allowance for at least his medical and retirement benefits.

The total cost of the annual bishop salary and benefits should be shared by the congregations in the district. The costs may be pro-rated, based on the number of members, or divided in some other equitable way among congregations. The congregations can meet this need by including it in their annual budget, or if they do not have a budget, an occasional offering can be taken. The amount coming from each congregation for this cause should be sent to the district treasury monthly so that the district treasurer can make monthly payments of salary and benefits to the bishop.

If the bishop has other employment full time and gives only marginal time to his bishop work, provision should be made for a stipend plus office, car, and other expense reimbursement.

If the district needs assistance in setting up or operating a payroll plan, they may consult the director of finance in the conference office.