

136th Convention of the Diocese of Oregon
Resolution for Compensation for Non-Stipendiary Clergy
FAQs 10/4/24

Purpose and Overall Context

Q: What is the purpose of this resolution?

A: To encourage **supporting unsalaried active clergy through CPG programs**. It was named after GC81's Resolution A135, "Compensation for Non-stipendiary Clergy," which encourages dioceses to provide a minimum monthly compensation of \$25 to the clergy member and to pay the standard 18% monthly assessment to CPG, making the clergy member an active participant who is then eligible for many CPG support programs.¹

Q: What are some of the CPG supports our unsalaried active clergy could thus be provided?

A: Potential supports include:

- CREDO: A spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial wellness retreat leading to the creation of a personal rule of life and access to ongoing resources.
- Church record of ordination(s) and church positions.
- Financial & planning and advice
- Access to the member-funded Retirement Savings Plan (RSVP)
- Access to a Medicare supplement plan at the cleric's expense

Q: What additional explanation was offered for A135 and carried through to our resolution?

A: The hope that even the austere level of participation proposed would promote clergy diversity, equity, and inclusion by encouraging younger people and members of marginalized communities who are discerning a call to ordination to continue in that discernment.

- Although this is a step in that direction, it would likely be only a modest encouraging factor among more substantive supports to discernment and formation.
- This proposed resolution is focused on securing modest CPG clergy supports *during active service* and generally would not provide a pension.
- I.e., 25 years of active service at \$25/month would provide \$17.19/month calculated pension. Even if rounded up to \$25/month per current practice, the low total value would result in a one-time retirement pay out under the CPG Lump Sum Payment of Small Benefits process and would not provide monthly pension payments.

Q: Have other dioceses passed similar resolutions?

A: Yes, more than 20 dioceses have done so since 2018, most commonly pertaining to deacons. Examples include the Dioceses of Washington, Atlanta, and Virginia.

¹The Church Pension Group (CPG) is the overarching organization. It exists to support clergy—and lay employees—in their calling to spread the gospel. A part of CPG, the and the Church Pension Fund (CPF) administers benefit plans for The Episcopal Church and manages over \$17 billion in associated assets.

Special Role of Deacons

Q: Why might some dioceses provide CPG supports for deacons separately from unsalaried priests?

A: Deacons' role is distinct from priests. As noted in their ordination rite, deacons are called to a special ministry of servanthood directly under their bishop. They assist the bishop and priests in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and deacons interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world, modeling service to marginalized people as direct service to Christ.

Q: Do any dioceses provide CPG supports to deacons in lieu of congregations?

A: Yes. Some dioceses have adopted resolutions providing for diocesan payment, or for the option of diocesan payment, e.g., the Dioceses of Olympia, Georgia, and Milwaukee.

Q: Why might dioceses directly provide CPG supports to deacons?

A: Common reasons: 1. To emphasize the bishop's direct leadership of the community of deacons and, 2. To avoid adding strain to congregations with very tight budgets—where bishops often focus deacon assignments.

Estimated Costs

Q: Is there a minimum disbursement level required to participate in CPG?

A: \$25 per month emerged as a notional amount in CPG presentations and in TEC and diocesan resolutions but, since 2018, there is no specific amount required.

Q: How much would need to be budgeted annually for \$25/month disbursements to an unsalaried active clergy member?

A: Annual compensation to the clergy member of \$300 plus the 18% assessment to CPG of \$54 brings the cost per cleric to \$354/year.

Q: What is the estimated total cost for just deacons under this resolution?

A: There are an estimated 10 canonically resident deacons under the mandatory retirement age of 72 and assigned to congregations in the diocese. At a monthly rate of \$29.50 (\$25+\$4.50 CPG assessment), supporting CPG participation for 10 deacons would cost \$295/month or \$3,540/year.

Historical Limitations

Q: Weren't vocational deacons canonically excluded from CPG participation?

A: Yes. Until 1990.

- Although the 1970 Canons restored the modern vocational diaconate (subsuming prior deaconesses and prior "perpetual deacons") and provided for women deacons to participate in CPG for those formed under canons pertaining to preparation for the priesthood, they did not provide for vocational deacon CPG supports until 1990.

- Canon III.10, Constitution and Canons 1970-1982; & Canon III.9., Constitution and Canons 1985 specified "Pension Rules do not apply" to vocational deacons, addressed under "Candidacy of men/those who will retain secular occupations."
- 1988 GC69 adopted resolution D151 affirming that deacons ordained under the proposed Canon III.6 are "fully ordained and canonically members of the clergy."
- January 1, 1990: Canon III.6, Constitution & Canons 1988 eliminated canons on deacons "who will retain secular occupations," applying CPF support to all deacons.

Q: Did the Church consider CPG supports for vocational deacons before GC81?

A: Yes, since at least 1976.

- 1976 GC65 requested that the CPF Board study and report to CG66 on non-stipendiary deacon participation in the CPP.
- 1985 GC68 referred back to committee a resolution on the extension of GPG benefits to non-stipendiary deacons.
- 2022 GC80 resolution C047, which would have established minimum deacon compensation at \$25 per month, was referred to a Standing Commission.

References

AED list of diocesan compensation resolutions with links. <https://www.episcopaldeacons.org/deacon-compensation.html>

Constitution and Canons 1789-1961, published as a supplement to the *Journal* proceedings during those years. <https://www.episcopalarchives.org/governance-documents/journals-of-gc>

Constitution and Canons 1964-present. <https://www.episcopalarchives.org/governance-documents/constitution-and-canons>

CPG webinar for deacons presentation. [https://www.cpg.org/globalassets/documents/publications/ew_deacon-webinar_presentation-slides_dec-2020.pdf?t_id=YoDFzDqbcBxlejPr3E012Q%3d%3d&t_uid=VBYYXTiJSqqaOkGmoC0LUQ&t_q=deacon&t_tags=language%3aen%2candquerymatch&t_hit.id=Adage_EpiStarterKit_ModelPartials_Models_Media_DocumentFile/_76767287-3659-42f1-bd6d-f3dac8998212&t_hit.pos=1.\)](https://www.cpg.org/globalassets/documents/publications/ew_deacon-webinar_presentation-slides_dec-2020.pdf?t_id=YoDFzDqbcBxlejPr3E012Q%3d%3d&t_uid=VBYYXTiJSqqaOkGmoC0LUQ&t_q=deacon&t_tags=language%3aen%2candquerymatch&t_hit.id=Adage_EpiStarterKit_ModelPartials_Models_Media_DocumentFile/_76767287-3659-42f1-bd6d-f3dac8998212&t_hit.pos=1.))

General Convention 81. Resolution A135, Compensation for Non-Stipendiary Clergy. <https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/608?house=HD&lang=en>

Mill-Curran, Lori, A Primer About Minimal Diaconal Compensation Resolutions (2022). <https://www.episcopaldeacons.org/uploads/2/6/7/3/26739998/dcncompsn-learned2.pdf>