

Due to major changes in the Board of Pension requirements and offering in 2025, the following is a major change in our minimum terms of call. Please take time to read through so you understand the changes coming. If you have any questions, please email Philip.lotspeich@transyby.org.

Minimum Terms of Call for 2026
 Presbytery of Transylvania

These requirements are intended to provide congregations with assistance and guidance both in calling new pastors and in the annual review of the terms of call. The categories used in these terms are in use generally throughout the Presbyterian Church (USA). They are intended to provide a uniform set of items to be considered by ministers and congregations in their discussions and negotiations. They are also intended to assist Presbytery in taking seriously its responsibility to support and nourish pastors and congregations.

Classification	Median		% Change
	effective	salaries	
	for 2026	for 2025	2026 vs. 2025
Ministers*	\$71,100	\$70,000	1.02%

As seen from the above chart, the median effective salary for PUCSA Teaching elders rose 1.02%. Per our policy adopted in 2018, our minimums increase by the same percentage increase as that of the Median effective salaries.

Based on the above increase, for full-time (40 hours/week) positions, whether installed or temporary:

	<u>If a manse is provided for the minister's residence</u>	<u>If no manse is provided</u>
Cash Salary	\$35,476	\$49,972
Housing Allowance	Manse escrow of \$1,000 per year paid into a 403(b) account	Approval of declared housing allowance sufficient to cover rent or mortgage, insurance, tax, utilities, and maintenance

Social Security	Actual cost paid by church or an allowance of 50% of Social Security = .0765 of Salary, Housing, Utilities, and other cash income from the church. (Ministers have to file as Self-employed persons and pay Social Security taxes themselves.)
*Pension and Medical	Pension, medical coverage, and disability premiums shall be paid to Board of Pensions as defined by the Board of Pensions. (See Further guidelines below)
*Continuing Education	\$1000 (includes books, other resources and professional expenses)
Travel	Reimbursed at current IRS business mileage rate, or the church may elect to provide a travel allowance instead.
Vacation	4 weeks
Continuing Ed Leave	2 weeks
Moving Expenses	Reasonable moving expenses approved in advance.
Family Medical Leave	12 weeks paid (minimum) G-2.0804

In the opinion of the Pastoral Transitions Commission (PTC), the Effective Salary for a pastor should be comparable to the starting salary of a new master's level public school teacher. While we believe that the salary listed above is consistent with those teacher salaries, it is true that they vary from county to county. Should a church find that the new public school teacher salary is lower in their county, said church may petition the PTC for a lower Effective Salary. Appropriate documentation should accompany such a request. The PTC will give such a request serious consideration.

PENSION AND INSURANCE

For Installed Pastors:

All Installed Pastors are required by the Book of Order G-2.0804 to be enrolled in the Board of Pensions option called the **Congregational Pastors Package**. Non-PC(USA) ministers serving the PC(USA) and PC(USA) ministers serving other denominations are not eligible for this package. The dues for 2026 will consist of 10% of effective salary for Pension, Death and Disability AND 17.5% medical dues for the Pastor alone. There are options for Spouse and/or family coverage at the rates provided by the BOP. Based on the circumstances of each Pastor, care should be taken to ensure that coverage is available for the Pastor's family whether that be through the BOP or another provider. This can be fully covered by the church or a cost sharing arrangement can be negotiated—but only with the Congregational Pastors Package. (Cost sharing is not available with the Transitional Pastor Participation.)

For congregational pastoral leaders who were enrolled in Transitional Pastor's Participation for 2025, congregations may choose to continue enrollment in 2026. Transitional Pastor's Participation continues the noncontributory dues structure of Pastor's Participation as a percentage of effective salary through Dec. 31, 2027, paid entirely by the congregation or employer and subject to cost increases. All dues for the Transitional Pastor's Transitional Pastor's Participation will end for 2028, and installed pastors will be enrolled in the Congregational Pastors Package.

The key issues are: what are the needs of the pastor and the pastor's family, and, which option is better—the Congregational Pastors Package or Transitional Pastors Participation?

For Other Pastoral Leaders (Commissioned Pastors, Stated Supply, Interim, Non-Presbyterian Supply):

Pastoral leaders working more than 20 hours but not installed are eligible to participate in either the **Congregational Pastors Package** or the **Covenant Package (10% of effective salary for Pension, Death and Disability)**. They may also have outside coverage instead of the BOP medical coverage. It is permissible to participate in the Covenant Package but not the Congregational Pastors Package. Coverage for spouse and/or children may be negotiated, but is not required. The key question is: What coverage is needed by the pastor and the pastor's family?

For Others:

Other validated Pastors and employees working more than 20 hours may participate in the Covenant Package which is 10% of effective salary. These validated Pastors and employees are not eligible for the Congregational Pastors Package. If medical coverage is desired, the employee/validated pastor may choose the Benefits Plan options provided by the Board of Pensions. For medical coverage in this situation, employers are required to contribute a minimum of 50% of the cost of Member-Only coverage for the lowest-cost plan offered (three BOP plans available). The rest may be cost-shared.

Commissioned Pastors and Non-Presbyterian Supply

Commissioned Pastors and Non-Presbyterian Supply may negotiate with their respective congregations concerning compensation. The Pastoral Transitions Commission will take into account the hours worked, duties assigned, and financial health of the congregation when determining if compensation is adequate. The Commission will use the minimums stated above as the guide for compensation. Only in cases where there is compelling documentation of need will compensation at less than our minimums (prorated for part-time work) be approved.

SABBATICAL

Taking a sabbatical is more than just a break from the routine; it's a strategic investment in personal and professional growth. In today's fast-paced world, where burnout and stress are pervasive, the significance of sabbaticals cannot be overstated. They offer a precious opportunity to recharge, reflect, and pursue passions outside the constraints of daily obligations. Whether it's traveling to new places, learning new skills, or simply disconnecting from work, sabbaticals allow individuals to gain fresh perspectives, rejuvenate creativity, and foster resilience. By embracing sabbaticals, Pastors and congregations can cultivate a healthier work-life balance, enhance their overall well-being, and ultimately, contribute more effectively to their mission and communities. To that end, the Presbytery of Transylvania requires congregations to provide a sabbatical after 6 continuous years of service. This applies to full or part time Pastors as well as Commissioned Pastors, certified educators and Non-Presbyterian Supply. There are multiple grants and funding opportunities available to help defray the cost of a sabbatical. The length of the sabbatical as well as when it's taken will be negotiated with the congregation through its Session. The sabbatical will not affect their vacation days and compensation will continue through the sabbatical. The Session will be responsible for planning for coverage during the Pastor's absence.

FAMILY LEAVE/SICK DAYS/DISABILITY (LONG OR SHORT TERM)

Regarding Family Leave/Sick Days/Disability (long or short term), depending on the situation and severity, the church and pastor have options as to which benefit might be most beneficial to all involved.

SICK DAYS

Pastors should be afforded the ability to take sick days as needed through the year without any reduction in salary. Sick leave/personal leave shall normally be calculated at one (1) day per month of service or employment. This leave may accumulate up to sixty (60) days. If the illness or injury is severe enough to warrant a longer time away, the Board of Pensions has resources for long-term and short-term disability.

FAMILY LEAVE

G-2.09 states that the call “shall include **provision for a minimum of twelve weeks of paid family medical leave.**” Family medical leave is often necessary for various reasons, including but not limited to:

Serious Illness or Injury: Family members may require care and support during times of illness or injury, necessitating leave to provide assistance and comfort.

Childbirth and Parental Responsibilities: Maternity and paternity leave allow parents to bond with a new child, adjust to parenthood, and manage the demands of childcare.

Adoption or Foster Care: Families welcoming a new child through adoption or foster care may need time off to complete the necessary arrangements and provide stability for the new addition.

Serious Health Conditions: Family medical leave can be essential for managing and supporting loved ones with chronic or debilitating health conditions, ensuring they receive the care and attention they need.

End-of-Life Care: During times of terminal illness or hospice care, family members may require leave to be with their loved ones, provide comfort, and make necessary arrangements.

Medical Emergencies: Unexpected medical emergencies involving family members may require immediate attention and care, necessitating time off to handle the situation effectively.

Mental Health Support: Family medical leave can also be crucial for supporting family members dealing with mental health challenges, allowing them to seek treatment or therapy, or simply for providing emotional support.

Work-Life Balance: Taking family medical leave promotes work-life balance by allowing individuals to prioritize their family's health and well-being without sacrificing their job security.

Overall, family medical leave is essential for ensuring the welfare of both individuals and their families during times of need, fostering stronger family bonds, and promoting employee well-being.

Presbytery of Transylvania

Terms of Call Requirement for Pastoral Positions in the Presbytery

1. The minimum for cash salary, housing equity, and continuing education shall be proposed by the Commission on Pastoral Transitions and set by Presbytery each year at the last meeting before the next calendar year.
2. Ministers who live in church-provided manses receive a utilities/housing allowance to the extent necessary to cover these expenses, thus allowing them to take advantage of current IRS rulings.
3. Churches with a manse for their ministers pay at least the minimum set by Presbytery into a housing equity account to accrue for the benefit of the minister at the time of the termination of the call. These monies should be deposited in a 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan, *e. g.*, the Board of Pensions 403(b).
4. Churches without a manse provide a housing allowance sufficient to cover rent or mortgage payments, insurance, taxes, utilities, furnishings, and maintenance.
5. Churches reimburse their ministers for one-half of their IRS Schedule SE self-employed social security. This amount is to be paid monthly, quarterly, or annually, as the minister and church decide.
6. Churches pay the entire pension and medical payment for their pastor. Any coverage of spouse and/or children is negotiable, and should be based on the principles described above.
7. Churches reimburse pastors for the actual expenses incurred in their professional work, including mileage, food and lodging, and books and magazines.
8. Churches pay at least the minimum set by Presbytery for continuing education. This amount may accumulate over a period of three years. The content of this continuing education will be negotiated with the session. (SEE the policy on Continuing Education.)
9. Ministers receive 4 weeks of paid vacation annually.
10. Ministers receive 2 weeks of continuing education leave annually. This time may accumulate up to six weeks over a three-year period.
11. The Presbytery considers G-2.0804 Terms of Call and its provisions for a 12-week paid family leave to be the minimum required for this Presbytery.
12. After 6 or more years of continuous service to a particular church, the Minister and certified educators shall be eligible for a sabbatical in sufficient length and at a time approved by the congregation and Minister.

13. [Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training](#) is required by the Transylvania Presbytery within the first year of being received by the Presbytery and repeated every three (3) years. This requirement applies to will be included in all minister member- and commissioned pastor-contracts and/or terms of call. This Policy is to supersede any congregational policy for Presbytery Members. The link in this paragraph is to the official policy adopted by the Presbytery of Transylvania on November 11, 2023.

Continuing Education Requirements for Ministers in Transylvania Presbytery

The purpose of providing ministers with time and money for continuing education is to allow them to improve their effectiveness as ministers. Study leave gives them the resources to study particular topics in depth, learn new skills, and grow as ministers.

Churches in Transylvania Presbytery shall provide their ministers with funds for continuing education and a minimum of two weeks annual study leave. Upon negotiation with the Session, continuing education time and money can accumulate for up to three years to provide for an extended study period.

Both the topic and the schedule for continuing education should be negotiated with and approved by the Session. The minister should report back to the Session about the continuing education experience upon its completion.

Involuntary Dissolution Policy

Although the *Book of Order* clearly outlines the basic process for the dissolution of pastoral relationships (G-2.09), it does not fully address the implications of a situation in which the pastor does not concur with that action (G-2.0903), a situation commonly described as an “involuntary dissolution.”

The dissolution of a pastoral relationship is quite often a time of great turmoil and distress for both the congregation and the departing pastor, and this is especially true in the case of an involuntary dissolution. It is the responsibility of all parties involved (the pastor, the congregation, and the presbytery’s Commissions on Pastoral Transitions and Congregational Issues) to work together in the case of an involuntary dissolution to address the sometimes-conflicting needs and competing concerns of the congregation and the departing pastor.

Pastors do not receive unemployment benefits from the state, and our denomination cannot guarantee that a departing pastor will receive a new call within any specified period of time. Therefore, in the case of an involuntary dissolution, fair and adequate terms of severance are necessary to protect the departing pastor during the search for a new call.

While such provisions may present a degree of financial hardship for the congregation, the lack of such provisions would almost certainly present an even greater degree of financial hardship for the departing pastor and his or her family.

The following two paragraphs shall be included in each pastor’s contract:

In the event of an involuntary dissolution of your pastoral relationship with this congregation, for any cause other than *unethical behavior*, criminal activity, sexual misconduct, financial malfeasance, or a finding of guilt in a disciplinary case resulting in either temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordained office or removal from ordained office, you shall be afforded as severance benefits a continuation of your then-current salary and benefits being provided for a negotiated period of time which shall take into account your tenure among us—but not less than three months. Such compensation will cease when full-time employment is secured. *If part time ministry is found while receiving severance, the amount of severance being paid may be reduced by an amount commensurate to what is being received at the part-time ministry job. (Neither Pulpit Supply nor jobs outside the ministry context will cause reduction of severance.) The terms of the severance will be detailed in an agreement approved by the congregation of the church, the Pastor, and the Pastoral Transitions Commission.* Such payments shall be made monthly; not as a lump sum settlement. During the severance period, it shall remain the congregation’s responsibility to continue all benefit payments to the Board of Pensions.

In the case of criminal activity, sexual misconduct, financial malfeasance, or a finding of guilt in a disciplinary case resulting in either temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordained office or removal from ordained office: in an effort to be redemptive, in consideration of your family, and with respect for your past ministry to this congregation, you shall be afforded as severance benefits a continuation of your then-current salary and benefits being provided for a period of one month.