

## CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

# GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT EXECUTIVE STAFF SALARIES AND BENEFITS

The executive committee of the District Board has the responsibility to negotiate a fair and equitable compensation package with the executive staff. The guidelines suggested here are recommendations for use for negotiation between the executive staff and the District Board with the assistance of the Coordinator of District Ministries. These guidelines, while stated broadly with a full-time executive in mind, are adaptable to local situations, including part-time service and/or associate executive staff. Since district offices are located all across the denomination, an attempt has been made to provide uniform procedures for determining fair compensation for executive staff while allowing for variations in the cost of living from one district to another. It is with that in mind that these guidelines should be used.

District Boards have an ethical obligation to meet the salary scale and to provide benefits. If District Boards cannot do this, then the executive committee should discuss the reason(s) and their implications with the executive staff and should take steps to achieve the recommended scale and benefits as soon as possible.

The Recommended Base Cash Salary for Executive Staff, and a District Staff Record of Agreement for use in recording the annual financial package are sent to each district office after Annual Conference each year.

The Recommended Base Cash Salary for Executive Staff is based on the cash salary for pastors as reviewed and approved annually by the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee of the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren. A 5 percent increase is recommended at each level for executive staff. A 2.5 percent increase is recommended at each level for associate executive staff.

The Coordinator of District Ministries is available as a consultant in the district/executive staff relationship and should participate at least once every three to five (3–5) years in the review of executive staff performance.

## I. COMPENSATION

### A. Base Salary

There is one base factor as a beginning point in the Recommended Base Cash Salary For Executive Staff. The base figure will be adjusted annually. The adjusted base figures and

salary schedule will be furnished each year after Annual Conference by the Coordinator of District Ministries.

#### 1. Educational Adjustment

The recommended base cash salary assumes the Master of Divinity degree as the standard educational level for full-time executive staff. Graduate degrees in related areas such as a Masters of Theology or Masters of Religious Education, or Masters of Adult Education should be considered as comparable in determining the education level of the executive staff.

For those having a Doctor of Ministry degree, add an additional 5 percent to the appropriate M.Div. figure.

Two additional columns are shown for those at different educational levels. It is assumed that persons in these categories have had educational programs for ministry such as Training in Ministry (TRIM) or Education for Shared Ministry (EFSM) or other ministry training programs approved by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

#### 2. Experience Adjustment

Experience differential is computed up to thirty (30) years of experience. Experience may include pastoral experience, District Executive/Minister experience, or experience in a field closely related to that of the executive staff position, or a combination of all three. The executive committee will need to use its own judgment in determining specific cases using the broad guidelines.

Larger increases are given in the beginning years than in the later years. After thirty (30) years, the executive committee and the executive staff need to negotiate a yearly increment that reflects the cost of living and additional experience.

#### 3. Social Security

Executive staff who are licensed or ordained ministers, for Social Security purposes, are self-employed and are responsible for the total Social Security payment. The base salary figure is built on that assumption.

Executive staff who are not licensed or ordained ministers are considered employees of the district and Social Security payments are shared by the district and the executive staff at the current percentages set by the IRS.

### **B. Housing**

A *minimum* housing allowance of \$8,000 should be provided over and above the recommended cash salary. For those where district offices are located in an area with a moderately higher cost of living, a 2.5 percent increase should be calculated on both the cash salary and the housing allowance. For a location with a higher cost of living, a 5 percent increase should be calculated on both the cash salary and housing allowance. Information on Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) variations from one area to another is available on several websites.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Check <[www.homefair.com/calc/salcalc.html](http://www.homefair.com/calc/salcalc.html)>

PLEASE NOTE: For tax purposes, licensed or ordained executive staff can claim a higher amount for housing. This amount should be recorded in the District Board minutes. This larger amount, allowed by the IRS, can include the cost of utilities, furnishings, home improvements, etc. The executive staff will need to verify these expenses with proper receipts.

### **C. Pension and Medical Plans**

Medical and Pension plans have been developed for use by employees in the Church of the Brethren including district executive staff. Enrollment and continued participation will provide medical care for all ages and the assurance of a pension upon retirement. Districts should be committed to the use of these plans in the negotiating process.

#### **1. Pension Plan**

The executive staff and the district should participate in the Pension Plan of the Church of the Brethren. Pension figures are determined by adding the housing allowance to the base salary.

Of that figure, districts pay 12 percent, and executive staff pay 4 percent at the beginning of the month or quarter (depending on the method elected) directly to Brethren Benefit Trust.

Executive staff may tax shelter their portion and may make additional contributions to the Pension Plan. Information about the Pension Plan and Tax Deferred Annuity option can be obtained directly from the Brethren Benefit Trust, 1505 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120.

#### **2. Medical Plan**

The executive staff and the district should participate in the Church of the Brethren Medical Plan. Premiums are divided approximately on a 2:1 ratio between the district and the executive staff, and are payable directly to the Medical Plan office monthly.

Benefits include: hospitalization and surgical allowances, major medical, life insurance, disability, and personal/family counseling. Information can be obtained from Church of the Brethren Medical Plan, 1505 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120.

### **D. Vacation and Days Off**

Executive staff should take off a day and a half per week, being free from district responsibilities except for crisis ministries.

Executive staff should receive vacation time in the year it is earned:

- Four (4) weeks for one to five (1–5) years of service;
- Five (5) weeks for six to ten (6–10) years of service; and
- Six (6) weeks after eleven (11) or more years of service.

Vacation time shall be taken at a time mutually agreed upon by the executive committee and the executive staff.

### **E. Special Circumstances**

Executive staff shall be granted thirty (30) days for special circumstances (paternity/maternity, sickness, death in the family, other crises) beginning with the first year of career service

and then ten (10) days for each succeeding year accumulating to no more than ninety (90) days. Upon request, the executive staff shall be granted this released time for special circumstances with the approval of the executive committee. The District Board shall not be required to pay any accrued days for special circumstances after the executive staff's service is terminated. Accurate records should be kept by the district. The accumulated days move with the executive staff.

## **II. EXECUTIVE-RELATED EXPENSES**

### **A. Travel**

The district should assume the cost of travel for district responsibilities by reimbursing the executive staff for the use of a personal car. Mileage records should be kept and the executive staff reimbursed for the actual miles at the accepted IRS rate. The district may choose to lease or purchase a vehicle.

### **B. Annual Conference and Meetings of the Council of District Executives**

The district should expect Annual Conference attendance by the executive staff and provide for the expenses and the time to do so.

The district should expect the executive staff to attend the two meetings of the Council of District Executives (CODE) each year, and the annual professional growth event and provide the expenses and time for the executive staff to do so.

### **C. Professional Growth**

Since growth is an ongoing part of the executive staff's ministry, the executive staff and the district should plan the equivalent of one week of special growth experience each year, beyond the professional growth event sponsored by CODE. The district should contribute to this experience with money and with released time.

### **D. Sabbatical**

Together, the executive staff and the district should develop a strategy whereby the executive staff can take a growth leave at full salary after each five (5) years of service in a particular district. Sufficient sabbatical leave should be added to vacation time to bring the total time to three (3) months. Since a sabbatical is intended to renew the executive staff for a current ministry, it is assumed that the executive staff will continue in the current district for at least one (1) year after the sabbatical is completed.

### **E. Professional Expenses**

Professional expenses which may be incurred by the executive staff should be negotiated.

## **III. MOVING EXPENSES**

The district will pay for the expenses of moving the executive staff and family into the district.

#### **IV. WORKERS COMPENSATION**

A district should participate in a state workers compensation plan even when it is optional for the district.

#### **V. OTHER MINISTRIES**

While little direct expense is involved, it is important that both the executive staff and the district discuss and agree on the number and types of ministry involvements beyond the district. Such ministries should include leadership roles in the Council of District Executives, General Board activities, camping programs, ecumenical organizations, and community involvements.

#### **VI. ANNUAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

It is important for the executive staff and executive committee to negotiate a job description and to evaluate executive staff performance annually. The Coordinator of District Ministries shall conduct a review of the executive staff in consultation with the executive committee every three to five (3–5) years.

Affirmed by Council of District Executives  
Revised 3/2000

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