

SAM Compensation Guidelines

Overview

The Northwestern Ohio Synod recruits and places Synod Authorized Ministers (SAMs) to serve in settings typically and historically served by rostered ministers. SAMs are lay persons authorized by the Bishop, and appointed by the Synod Council to serve one or more congregations for a specified period of time, generally one year, with the possibility of renewal for additional one-year increments.

With the expectation that utilization of SAMs to lead, or assist in leading, congregations will continue to grow, these initial guidelines have been prepared to guide congregations in determining compensation levels and components.

Congregations and SAMs should outline compensation and benefits in a written Compensation Agreement and update such agreement annually. It is recommended that a cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) increase be made each year to salary.

Salary

Because the responsibilities and time expectations of SAMs vary, and will likely continue to, it is reasonable to recommend salary compensation levels accordingly. Responsibilities may range from only leading worship services to the full range of duties similar to those performed by rostered ministers. It is assumed here that a forty-hour work week constitutes full-time status, and that part-time status will involve a minimum of twenty hours per week.

Recommendations:

- Full-time w/ full range of responsibilities: minimum starting salary of \$35,000
- Part-time w/full range of responsibilities: minimum starting salary of \$20,000
- Less than part-time w/o full range of responsibilities:
 - For leading worship and preaching follow the compensation guidelines for supply pastors

Additional duties (attendance at council meetings, teaching classes, making visits, etc.) may be contracted with the congregation at an hourly rate of \$25.

Social Security

As lay employees of the congregation, SAMs should receive social security benefits just as any other lay employee would.

ELCA Pension and Other Benefits

If it is expected that the SAM will be serving in a particular setting on an ongoing, longer-term (more than one year) basis, then it is recommended that pension and health care benefits be offered by the congregation on a negotiated basis.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

If the SAM is expected to travel on behalf of the congregation for activities related to its ministry, and/or for education and professional development, they should be reimbursed at the prevailing IRS mileage rate.

Professional Expense Reimbursement

It is recommended that the SAM be reimbursed for reasonable expenses such as vestments, books/ periodicals, online subscriptions, professional dues, hospitality costs, and other costs incurred in the performance of the duties of the position. Congregations are encouraged to offer an allowance for this.

Continuing Education

Continuing education is regarded as an essential ongoing process in order for the SAM to retain authorization to serve. Currently, SAMs are required to enroll in a prescribed series of Diakonia classes offered for a fee. The congregation should bear the expense of Diakonia class and textbook fees. Additionally, it is recommended that the congregation offer a continuing education allowance for other learning opportunities.

Intangible Benefits

Weekly Time Off: The congregation should ensure that the SAM has two full days off per week, with their weekly schedule to be negotiated as necessary.

Vacation: Congregations should allow for the SAM to have a minimum of ten work-days of vacation time per year, or more as negotiated.