

POSD Severance Policy

Congregational and Pastoral Care (CPC) has approved the following policy regarding severance for pastors and moves its adoption by POSD:

Congregations that request dissolution of a pastoral relationship are expected to negotiate severance for pastors. Severance is not recommended when pastors leave a church voluntarily, or when there has been misconduct.

Definitions

For the purposed of this document, "severance" means all compensation consistent with the pastor's previous terms of call, plus any unused vacation time, pro-rated, up to a maximum of four weeks. Unused Continuing education and book or professional expenses are not included.

For the purposes of this policy, *misconduct* means a provable and serious violation of some objective standard – BOO, law, or similar – and not merely an oversight or trivial infraction. Misconduct does not include ineptness, inexperience, mistakes, or personality clashes.

General

1. Recommended severance is full salary, housing, medical, and pension payments of one (1) month for every year of service to the particular church, paid monthly, with a minimum of 3 months and maximum of 12 months.
2. Severance payments should end when new employment is found that includes compensation equivalent to or greater than the former position. If the compensation for new employment is less than the severance payment, the church should pay the difference for the remaining length of the severance agreement.
3. Reimbursement for unused vacation time up to 1 month may be part of the severance package.
4. Severance agreements must be approved by the congregation at the time of the congregational meeting to dissolve the relationship and must be reported to the presbytery through the COM.
5. Consideration should be given to outplacement services through an approved career development or personal counseling, typically for the length of the severance. The presbytery can be used to escrow payments for use by the pastor with unused funds to be returned to the church.

Consultation with CPC

If the Session is unable to resolve difficulties in the church between a congregation and a pastor, it shall consult with CPC, which will attempt to mediate the matter as provided by the *Book of Order* (G-3.0303d).

If the Session and the pastor are unable to reach a satisfactory resolution, then COM will evaluate the situation and make recommendations, such as the following:

- To request that Presbytery appoint an administrative commission to replace the Session, as provided by the *Book of Order* (G-3.0303e).
- To recommend the dissolution of the pastoral relationship.
- To recommend a severance package to Presbytery.
- Send a written statement of alleged misconduct to the Stated Clerk (D-10.0100).