

The Commission on Equitable Compensation

The Commission on Equitable Compensation exists to assist churches in need of financial support on a short-term basis. It is our goal to see transformation come through the implementation of new vision by making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The Commission's purpose is to provide short-term grants that assist in this process of making disciples. These grants are designed to help chartered churches and missions continue in ministry as they revise their future, thus helping them to return to a self-supporting status. It is our prayer as a commission, that we can be both a facilitator and an encourager in the ministry of churches in need of short-term financial assistance.

Based on a recommendation by the Strategic Leadership Team, the scope of the Equitable Compensation Commission has expanded to include what was formerly support by New Church Development for missions and District support for missions.

GUIDELINES FOR 2016

Equitable Compensation funds will be granted in accordance with the following guidelines. Only the Equitable Compensation Commission at the request of a District Superintendent may grant exceptions.

Who is qualified to receive minimum salary funds?

- All full-time pastors who are not excluded in Section 2.
- Ministers serving full-time pastoral assignments with an average attendance of 100 in worship. If a congregation falls below 100 in average worship attendance, the first year the maximum support will be reduced by 10%. If the congregation continues to have less than 100 in worship for 3 years, consideration will be given to the church becoming part of a circuit or part-time if the church wants to remain eligible for Equitable Compensation Funding. The exceptions are student appointments and part-time pastors.

Who is not eligible for minimum salary support?

- All pastors who are retired.
- Part-time pastors are not eligible for minimum salary support except in those cases where ministry within the discretion of the District Superintendent and Cabinet warrant special support. The amount of support available will not exceed 50% of the amount available on a full-time basis.
- Full-time appointments with less than 100 in average worship attendance.
- Ministers on Leave of Absence.
- Associate Pastors.
- Any ordained conference member not under pastoral appointment.
- Those who are appointed from other Annual Conferences under Disciplinary appointment of ¶¶346.1 and 346.2.

The maximum allowable salary support is 20% of minimum salary. To be eligible, a pastor must live in the bounds of his/her parish and give full-time service to that charge. Studies pursued in an approved college or university is considered part of the work of the ministry if approved by the District Superintendent.

Applications for Equitable Compensation funds are submitted once a year and must be received by the Conference office on or before April 1st for funding for the following year. Applications for new Equitable Compensation support may be submitted with a deadline of November 1st. In 2015, applications for 2016 funding will be due to the office by November 15, 2015.

The application must include:

- The signature of the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee.
- A Vision and Mission statement as envisioned by the whole body of the church.
- A Written Ministry Plan for implementing the Vision and Mission statement into the life of the church.
- A Treasurers report, including all assets, for the current year to date status of the financial condition of the church.
- A request for funds by the Charge Conference and the signature of the District Superintendent.
- A copy of the congregations Stewardship Commitment Plan.
- Summary of the Measurable Goals accomplished to date as reflected in Evangelism, Worship, and Outreach.
- The Missional Vital Signs Yearly Report
- Any new request must include a cover letter by the District Superintendent naming the missional strategy involved in the request and the timeline during which this funding would be needed.

Additional support, up to \$2,000, is available for “Missional Congregations.” “Chartered Churches” with documented outreach to the poor, through service and evangelism may also apply for “Missional” support, with the approval of the District Superintendent. The church must be receiving an Equitable Compensation grant in order to be eligible for this additional support.

Before a church is granted salary support, the church must conduct, or agree to conduct, a Stewardship Commitment Plan.

Churches whose salary support is at “The Minimum” may apply for assistance with utilities, health insurance, or moving expenses. Churches/missions must submit a plan for ministry when making an initial application for equitable compensation funds. This plan must demonstrate the need for assistance and the manner in which the church/mission will be working to eliminate that need in a timely way.

Churches/missions may receive the requested assistance for up to five years. In year six (6) the original request will be reduced by 25%; in year seven (7) by 50%; in year eight (8) 75%. There will be no assistance granted after the eighth year.

Any funds granted to those churches approved, will first have to pay any outstanding balances owed to the Florida Conference. Those items that must be paid in full include:

- Church’s portion of the salary of the pastor
- Health Insurance premiums
- Property and Casualty premiums
- Pension premiums
- Workers Compensation premiums
- “The Clergy Support” line item from apportionments.

The approved funds from the grant will be used to pay the balances of any outstanding debt and the balance of the funds will come to the church.

Reimbursement Accounts:

Charges receiving Equitable Compensation Funds may establish a reimbursement account not to exceed \$2,000. This will be paid for out of the budget of the charge.

Salary reduction for pension purposes:

Clergy receiving Equitable Compensation funds may designate a portion of their compensation to the “Before Tax” contribution for the pension program.

MINIMUM SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS

	2016	2017
Full Connection	\$41,300	
Provisional Members	\$39,100	
Associate Members	\$37,900	
Local Pastor with M. Div. or 5 years Course of Study	\$36,800	
Local Pastor with less than than 5 years of Course of Study	\$35,800	

ADDITIONAL EQUITABLE COMPENSATION INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Missional Congregations:

Missional situations are those missions or organized churches in areas that demand an effective ministry but are not financially capable of providing such ministries without Conference assistance. There will be an annual review by the District Superintendent, to determine if each Missional situation in the district meets the guidelines.

The Equitable Compensation Commission may provide amounts up to \$2,000 for Missional support, and an additional \$2,000 may be granted for Haitian and Hispanic congregations in exceptional circumstances. Request for salary support from Equitable Compensation Commission for Missional situations shall be made by the deadline and shall accompany the Equitable Compensation Request form.

Eligibility for extended Missional support

A mission must meet the following criteria to receive extended support and will be annually reviewed to determine continued compliance until they are able to establish independence. Chartered congregations are not eligible.

- Provide evidence that the mission has a vision statement, rooted in the Great Commission, which actually functions to shape the decisions about deployment of people and financial resources in ministry.
- Provide evidence that the pastor exerts effective leadership in casting and realizing the vision.
- Provide evidence of the mission's effectiveness in making and growing disciples.
- The mission makes a number of new disciples (first time professions of faith or "restorations") at least equal to 10% of its average worship attendance.
- The mission has a system of nurturing discipleship for all persons, long time Christians and newly professed ones.
- The mission carries out a consistent program of teaching the stewardship dimension of discipleship including sacrificial proportionate giving by all disciples.
- The mission has a worship average attendance of at least 100, or grew in attendance in the past 12 months at a rate that would project reaching 100 in no more than 5 years.
- Provide evidence that the mission is taking responsibility for a greater and greater percentage of its total expenditures. The goal is financial independence in a reasonable time frame.

Transforming Congregations

Congregations which are in need of transformation, according to the Conference's definition adopted in 2003, may receive a grant of no more than \$10,000 per year for up to five years, if they cannot afford the salary of available pastors with the requisite transformational skills and leadership ability. The Cabinet will follow these guidelines in making appointments according to "fit" and will use funds from the Commission to supplement salaries if needed to achieve the "fit."

- The congregation has a vision statement that actually functions to shape decisions about deployment of people and financial resources.
- The vision is rooted in the Great Commission.
- The projected pastor is committed to stay at the church for at least 6 years.
- The congregation wants “transformation” for Missional rather than for survival reasons. They understand the need they have for transformation and agree to cooperate in transforming with the pastor appointed to lead.
- The leaders of the congregation are committed to transforming. They have an understanding of what transformation is, what it is going to cost in terms of sacrifice and fundamental change in congregational life, and how long this will take.
- The church is willing to re-evaluate its leadership structures and put leaders in place who are willing to implement the changes transformation requires in the local church context.
- The church will enter a transformation process approved by the District Superintendent, the department of Congregational Vitality, and/or the District Committee.

A church in transformation, while experiencing fundamental and often painful change, is still a part of the UM connection. Some churches undergoing transformation may have difficulty fulfilling the following responsibilities: connectional giving, pension and health insurance contributions for pastor, property insurance, worker’s compensation premiums.

*In order to receive help from the Commission on Equitable Compensation the church will affirm these as responsibilities they intend to fulfill. If the church has been unable to fulfill these responsibilities they will develop a covenant, signed by the “Leadership Team” and carry out a plan to reach annual fulfillment within 5 years. The process of transformation may temporarily cause a reduction in the number of people participating in the life of the church and a reduction in financial strength. In this situation temporary accommodation can be arranged, without lessening the church’s long-term commitment to fulfill their connectional responsibilities. The Superintendent recommends the church for this program in partnership with the Office of Congregational Transformation.

Utilities, Health Insurance, Moving Expenses:

The Equitable Compensation Commission recommends that each local church pay the Pastor’s utilities and the group hospitalization premium. In hardship situations pastors may apply through their District Superintendent to the Equitable Compensation Commission for \$720 in utility payments not covered by the local church. The Equitable Compensation Commission will pay up to \$5000 of the base Health Insurance plan.

The Equitable Compensation Commission joins with the Cabinet in recommending that each receiving church pay actual moving expenses within the bounds of the Florida Conference. Pastors at minimum salary level may apply through their District Superintendent to the Equitable Compensation Commission for funds not to exceed \$500 or 75% of the total cost if not paid by the local church.

Parsonage Fund:

This fund is intended for the purchase and upgrading of parsonages and not for rental property or pastors living in their own homes. Application can be made through the District Superintendent for grants not exceeding \$3,600. The funds, if granted, will be paid upon the submission of receipts for the work completed to the parsonage, or the proof of a mortgage.

Ministry Support

Upon recommendation by the District Superintendent, application for Ministry Support for missions or chartered churches may be received that meet the following criteria:

- Clear missional vision rooted in community outreach and evangelism by the congregation
- Clearly defined measurable outcomes
- Financial accountability
- Annual evaluation at the District level

Property Expenses

Requests for funds for property issues for missions will be first handled within the mission's local budget and then if additional funds are needed they could become a limited part of a request by the districts to Equitable Compensation. This committee will review requests for property cost support and if necessary offer some limited support for property matters, sending any larger requests on to the Cabinet Development Fund summit.

2017 Budget Request

The Council on Finance and Administration is requested to appropriate _____ (to be determined at the December 2015 meeting) for the Equitable Compensation Commission for the fiscal year 2017. The Conference Treasurer shall remit funds to the District Superintendents and or the church as certified by the Executive Director of the Equitable Compensation Commission.

	2016	2017
Salary Support		
Equitable Salaries	\$175,000	
Transformation Grants	\$30,000	
Missional	\$25,000	
Haitian/Hispanic	\$24,000	
Pensions	\$25,000	
Utilities and Moving	\$8,000	
Health Insurance	\$45,000	
Parsonage Fund	\$35,000	
Workers Compensation	\$1,000	
Administration	<u>\$2,000</u>	
Sub Total	\$370,000	

Ministry Support

Property Support

Grand Total

Respectfully submitted by:

Brian Carr, Chairperson

Clarke Campbell-Evans, Executive Director