

Guidelines for Severance Benefits Southeastern Minnesota Synod

Statement of Principles

- A. Associates in ministry, pastors, and church staff workers are highly valued and dedicated people whose chief interest is to be able to continue their service to some expression of the church.
- B. For most church workers continued service is more highly valued than severance benefits.
- C. However, the service motive of church workers must not prevent the church from making appropriate arrangements to care for these people during a time of transition.
- D. It is the intention of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod to encourage congregations to be as fair and caring for its church workers as is possible within the available resources.
- E. Severance benefits are intended to be a substitute for unemployment compensation (clergy and church staff workers do not qualify for unemployment compensation).
- F. Severance benefits will be based on two factors: length of service in the church including service in the predecessor church bodies (not just length of service in the congregation) and age at time of termination.
- G. Severance benefits shall be based on the employee's average weekly salary during the last 12 months of employment, including salary and housing in the case of an ordained pastor.
- H. Severance benefits shall also include participation in the ELCA plans Pension, Family Protection, Major Medical/Dental, and Permanent Disability for the weeks of severance benefits or until the date the employee obtains other employment. The congregation will contribute to the ELCA Pension Plan directly during the time of severance benefits.
- I. A new employment incentive would be offered as follows: Employees who secure other employment prior to the expiration of the severance benefits will be eligible for a new employment incentive payment. The payment, which will be a lump sum payment, will be the greatest of the following amounts:
 - 1. Thirty percent of the base salary for the unexpired severance weeks. If the employee's new weekly salary is less than the base salary, an amount equal to the difference between the employee's new weekly salary and the base salary for the duration of the unexpired severance weeks.

Severance Formula

Age	Years of Service								
	2-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	45-39	40+
60+	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40
50-59	5	9	13	17	21	25	29	33	
20-49	1	5	9	13	17	21	25		

To calculate **weeks** of severance benefits, match age with years of service at time of transition severance.