

Clergy Couple Housing Policy



Clergy Couples Housing Policy Arkansas Annual Conference June 1, 2013 (updated September 17, 2019)

- 1) It is the policy of the Arkansas Annual Conference that the normal provision of housing for full-time clergy should be a church-owned parsonage.
- 2) When a housing allowance is provided in lieu of a parsonage, it is a benefit like a parsonage, provided for the family unit.
- 3) Clergy couples share one housing benefit since it is not compensation. However, the two charges to which the clergy are appointed may share the cost of this benefit.
- 4) For two charges with parsonages, the couple will have the option of living in one parsonage. The District Superintendent will determine, in consultation with the clergy and the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committees of the two charges, which parsonage should be the residence for the clergy couple. If the second charge keeps the parsonage furnished, maintained, and empty for a pastor, it shouldn't have to share in the cost of the first parsonage. However, the clergy couple should only have to pay utilities in the parsonage they are living in, even if they might occasionally stay at the second parsonage.
- 5) For two charges with housing allowances, the charges together should provide the benefit at negotiated levels, each paying an appropriate percentage. The District Superintendent will negotiate this amount with the charges during the appointment process. The couple should not get a double housing allowance, because anything over a reasonable amount for housing constitutes additional compensation.
- 6) If both charges have parsonages, the charge where the couple does not live may rent the parsonage. Because they are producing income off of a benefit, that charge should pay the charge that is providing the parsonage a negotiated amount for upkeep of the benefit to the clergy. Selling the second parsonage is discouraged unless at least 20% of the proceeds is held in an account for a down payment on a new parsonage when one is needed.
- 7) If one charge provides a parsonage and the other a housing allowance, the usual practice should be for the couple to live in the parsonage, assuming the parsonage is adequate to conference standards. The charge with the housing allowance should pay half of the normal housing allowance to the charge with the parsonage to balance the cost of providing the benefit.
- 8) Because housing is a benefit, exchange of money to recompense parsonage expenses (repairs, maintenance, remodel) should be made directly to the charge providing the parsonage. To pay the clergy person directly constitutes additional compensation, since the benefit is already being provided.
- 9) Charges with clergy couples should be mindful that appointments are not permanent, and that they may have to return to full payment for benefit packages if their next appointed clergy is not part of a couple. Therefore, churches with clergy couples are encouraged to keep full benefit packages in their budgets or set aside money for an eventual return to full benefit expenses.