

# Compensating Staff Fairly

## Introduction

Our congregation has worked hard to pay our staff fairly. In the past decade we have struggled, as we also have added needed staff positions. We have made considerable progress in both areas. We have added an associate minister, administrator, custodian, part-time RE assistant, and music staff. We increased minister's salaries to recruit new settled ministers, but have not been able to keep them at the levels in the ranges their performance would suggest appropriate. We have increased staff salaries with fair compensation in mind, but still fall short for some positions.

As we look toward recruitment of a settled DRE and an interim minister, we are particularly sensitive to fair compensation for these positions. Traditionally, we paid our professional religious educator poorly. We have made substantial increases the past four years, but will need to increase further if we want to attract a DRE with higher level credentials.

Below is information about fair compensation, adapted from what is provided by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

## Fair Compensation

Fair and adequate compensation is essential to the recruitment, retention and motivation of qualified personnel. Compensation rewards are experienced in both financial and non-financial terms, and it has been customary to assume that persons who work for religious organizations are drawn to the non-financial ones.

In 1995, UU congregations adopted guidelines for Fair Compensation work. The work supporting those guidelines is continued through two groups, the UUA Compensation, Benefits, and Pension Committee (CBPC) and the District Compensation Consultants. The CBPC, appointed by our UUA Trustees to provide pay and benefit recommendations for congregations, is primarily laypersons with expertise in human resources, retirement plans, and personal financial management. The District Compensation Consultants are volunteers appointed by District staff and serve the local congregations.

Our Principles and Purposes encourage and challenge us to approach this as a religious issue.

This challenge is tied to our first two principles: the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and justice, equity and compassion in human relations. These two principles call us to provide our best for those who serve our congregation.

## UUA Salary Program Principles

Several basic principles underlie our UUA salary range recommendations:

- Base salaries for church staff should be comparable to wages received by others performing similar duties in not-for-profit organizations of the same management size.
- Salary ranges should be adjusted for differences in wage rates around the US.
- Salaries are linked to the size of membership of congregations, which is the key indicator of church financial resources.
- Salary recommendations must be realistic in terms of congregational finances.
- Salaries should be accompanied by the standard array of employer-paid benefits for eligible staff members.
- There should be no discrimination in compensation based on gender, age, race, or other personal individual characteristics.

You can read more about how the recommended salary ranges were developed at [www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/compensation.html](http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/compensation.html). UUA salary range recommendations link salaries recommended for ministers to the salaries paid to the executive directors of not-for-profit organizations with an overall staff comparable to that of UU congregations of various sizes. The position of Credentialed Religious Educator in a UU congregation was matched to the position of training director in not-for-profits. Several separate educator ranges were provided to align with the program for credentialing within this valuable body of personnel in UU churches. Comparing the duties of administrative and office management positions in church work and in not-for-profit employment found many valid comparisons. UUA Midpoint salaries for administrative and other office positions align with those in the not-for-profit organizations.

This approach does not lend itself as well to establishing salary ranges for church musicians since there are few comparable positions in not-

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for-profit organizations. For 2006, we continued to link church musician salary ranges to those of various grades of religious educators.

*actual wages paid, not on differences in cost of living.* Rather, wage rates reflect actual wages paid as reported to the IRS by employers.

### The Minimum is not the Goal

As with most organizations, our Association has built the salary recommendations around the Midpoints of the ranges. These Midpoints represent a typical salary for a jobholder in the not-for-profit sector. In other words, the initial minimum amount is not the goal for persons in a particular position. It represents a point below which only one-quarter of those in the survey are paid. The Midpoint of the range, on the other hand, represents where a competently performing staff member would be after mastering the requirements of the position.

While the Minimum may be a suitable starting salary for a qualified new employee, it is expected that most staff will grow toward the Midpoint of their range within five years.

### Annual Adjustments

As in most other employment situations, it is expected that church staff members will receive an annual salary adjustment linked to changes in the cost of living. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is published regularly by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. This index has been forecast at approximately three percent between January 2005 and January 2006.

To encourage improvement in performance, it is also expected that annual merit adjustments will be offered to most employees. Over time, for those performing their duties at a solid, acceptable level, merit increases should drive salaries past the Midpoint toward the Maximum goal. In addition to rewarding competence, these adjustments are conducive to longer service. Actively moving towards Fair Compensation helps all employer-congregations avoid the expenses and dislocation of recruitment and training of new personnel.

### Geographic Variations

In 2001, our Association began to use five Geo Index or Wage Rate Areas applicable to 240 cities or surrounding communities where UU congregations are located. This is continued for salaries recommended for 2006. Please note that what we call Wage Rate Areas are based on

### Recommended Salary Ranges Effective 1/1/2006 through 12/31/2007 Geo Index 3 – National Average

Number of Members	Large I (500-749)			Our Staff
Ministry	MIN	MID	MAX	
Parish Minister	66,600	88,200	110,000	84,663-*0
Associate Minister	53,300	70,650	88,000	63,081-*0
Religious Education	MIN	MID	MAX	
Credentialed Religious Educator-Master's Level	54,300	59,800	65,200	
Credentialed Religious Educator	51,000	56,400	61,100	
Credentialed Relig. Educator- Assoc. Level	47,500	52,300	57,000	
Religious Educator	41,000	48,300	55,400	44,000-*1
Music	MIN	MID	MAX	
Music Director	47,500	56,400	65,200	9,200-*2
Choir Director	38,000	45,100	52,200	17,455-*3
Organist	30,900	36,700	42,400	11,520-*4
Admin & Operations	MIN	MID	MAX	
Business Administrator	45,300	56,600	67,800	42,673-*5
Congregational Administrator	30,000	35,900	42,000	
Office Administra.	25,500	30,000	34,400	27,025-*6
Office Assistant	21,500	25,300	29,000	
Bookkeeper	29,500	34,700	39,800	18,216-*7
Membership or Volunteer Coord.	26,200	30,800	35,400	
Custodian	19,800	23,500	26,800	22,807-*8

\*0 This includes the Social Security equivalent we pay our ministers.

\*1 Caroline is not credentialed, but has a master's degree.

\*2 Tony works 8 hr/week year round.

\*3 Doug works 9 hr/week year round; Elizabeth works 3 hr/wk for 30 weeks + 5 hr/wk for 40 weeks.

\*4 Nathan works 13 hr/week year round.

\*5 Michael's target range is figured at a 70/30 split of the Business and Congregational Administrator ranges.

\*6 Marian works 37.5 hours per week.

\*7 Joe works half-time.

\*8 Naoko is full-time at 22,807; Kathy half-time at 10,753.

Don works half-time as Events Coordinator at 15,747.