



## The Assistance Program — Seminary Debt

The Seminary Debt Assistance Program was created to reduce the financial pressures on new ministers serving small churches. Helping ministers repay their seminary educational debt makes it easier for them to accept positions at small churches and effectively minister to their congregations. Under this program, ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are in their first seven years of ministry and are serving a PC(USA) church of 150 or fewer members with an annual budget of \$250,000 or less, and who are serving in a full-time, called pastoral position can receive a grant of up to \$1,500 per year, for up to four years, to repay educational debt incurred while seeking a master of divinity degree. A minister may receive up to \$6,000 over the course of four years.

### To Qualify and Apply

To qualify as a prospective candidate, you must:

- serve in a full-time, called position as a minister of the Word and Sacrament to a church with fewer than 150 members and a budget of \$250,000 or less
- attend a one-day financial planning seminar (*Getting in Shape...Fiscally*), offered by the Board of Pensions at your seminary or presbytery
- receive permission from your presbytery

Presbyteries that submit applications are also required to have a policy on student/clergy indebtedness.

**Please note:** It's a good idea to apply early, as the total amount of grants awarded in any one year will be limited. Applications must be made through your presbytery.

*“...they began their journey  
for the sake of Christ....  
Therefore we ought to  
support such people,  
so that we may become  
co-workers with the truth.”*

3 John 1: 7-8 NRSV

### About the Assistance Program

The Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions comprises a range of programs designed to meet specific assistance needs of Presbyterian pastors and other church workers at various points in their lives. These programs complement the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and provide an important safety net to church workers and their families who have specific needs that exceed personal resources or other means of support. Through the Assistance Program, the church community provides care for:

- church workers' *urgent financial needs* through Shared, Emergency Assistance, Adoption Assistance, and Transition-to-College Grants
- retired church workers' *financial and housing needs* through Income and Housing Supplements
- pastors' *vocational leadership needs* through Seminary Debt Assistance, Middle Governing Body Grants, Presbyterian CREDO, and Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants

The Assistance Program is funded by gifts, legacies, income from endowments, and half the Christmas Joy Offering.

*For information about the Assistance Program or to apply for assistance, call 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN) or visit [Pensions.org](http://Pensions.org).*