



The Assistance Program — Transition-to-College Assistance Grants

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 Grants, Emergency Assistance Grants, and Adoption Assistance Grants
- Pastors' *vocational and leadership* training needs through Seminary Debt Assistance, and Presbyterian CREDO
- Retired church workers' *income and housing needs* through Income Supplements and Housing Supplements

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

Transition-to-College Assistance Grants

The Transition-to-College Assistance Grant (TCAG) program, begun in 2007, is for qualifying members.

Purpose

Although assisting with the full cost of a college education is beyond the scope of the Assistance Program, the Board of Pensions has initiated this program to help mitigate transitional expenses. Through the TCAG program, eligible families of college freshmen can receive assistance to help defray significant one-time expenses, such as the purchase of a computer, dorm room furnishings, and the like.

Background

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has always affirmed the importance of an educated clergy and laity. Beginning with John Calvin's establishment of the Academy in Geneva in 1559 and continuing through the years, Presbyterians have founded numerous colleges and academic institutions in the United States and around the world.

In light of this tradition and the results of a pastor survey indicating college education costs are a significant area of concern, the Board of Pensions decided to implement the TCAG program.

The program is funded by gifts and bequests to the Board of Pensions Assistance Program; no Benefits Plan dues are used.

Grant Description

A one-time grant is available to qualifying members of the Benefits Plan for each dependent child entering his or her freshman year of an accredited college or university.

The grants range in amounts from \$500 to \$1,000, depending on the member's household income.

Eligibility

Generally, eligibility criteria relate to financial need, Plan participation, and enrollment of a dependent child as a freshman in an accredited college or university.

For the 2011-2012 academic year, grant applications will be accepted between August 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012.

You are eligible for this grant if you meet ALL of the following:

- Your household's total Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is equal to or less than \$106,600
- You have been a member of the Benefits Plan Traditional Program for at least five years and are currently an active member
- You have a dependent child who is covered under the Board's Benefits Plan
- Your child is beginning his or her freshman year as a full-time student at an accredited college or university



Grant Payment

An eligible church worker whose total household Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) (for husband and wife) is equal to or less than \$106,600 (twice the ordained churchwide median salary) will receive a grant based on the household's AGI. The minimum grant is \$500.

Total Adjusted Gross Income	Grant Amount
Less than the Churchwide Median (CWM)	\$1,000.00
Greater than 100% but less than 120% of the CWM	\$900.00
Greater than 120% but less than 140% of the CWM	\$800.00
Greater than 140% but less than 160% of the CWM	\$700.00
Greater than 160% but less than 180% of the CWM	\$600.00
Greater than 180%, up to 200%, of the CWM	\$500.00

Final determination of these grant ranges and amounts will be made by the Board of Pensions.

Accredited college or university - a junior college, college, or university accredited by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) through one of its regional accrediting organizations.

Adjusted Gross Income - income reported on Federal Income Tax Form 1040, line 37; form 1040A, line 21; or 1040 EZ, line 4.

Churchwide Median - refers to the annual churchwide median salary of ordained ministers serving churches.

Traditional Program - the Traditional Program under the Benefits Plan includes healthcare, disability, death, and pension benefits. Coverage under this program is distinct from Affiliated Benefits Program coverage.

For information about applying for assistance, visit the Board of Pensions website at Pensions.org or call 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN).