

Draft Sample Presbytery Candidate Indebtedness Policy

This sample is distributed for information to presbyteries that may wish to develop a comprehensive policy on candidate indebtedness. It is only a sample and is not meant to imply any additional requirements on the presbyteries by the Seminary Debt Task Force.

When Presbytery is the Presbytery of Care

- 1) Require an inquirer to meet with the Board of Pensions regional representative or the Presbyterian Foundation representative during the inquiry year, in order to assess net worth, and to make a plan for financing the cost of seminary; or
- 2) Require the inquirer, during the inquiry year, to participate in a "Fiscal Fitness" workshop being sponsored by the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA), with the presbytery picking up the travel and accommodations costs of that workshop from the presbytery's candidates loan fund;
- 2) The presbytery will share the cost, with the Synod, of attending a Career and Counseling Center for career guidance in pursuit of ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- 4) A designee of the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry will counsel with an inquirer regarding the inquirer's level of indebtedness vis a vis prospective salary that can be expected based on the current median income for the denomination reported by the Board of Pensions, and based on the minimum effective salary established by the Presbytery.
- 5) The Committee on Preparation for Ministry will work with each inquirer and candidate towards using his or her available assets to pay for the cost of seminary tuition and room and board rather than incurring indebtedness. If indebtedness cannot be avoided, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry will monitor, with the inquirer or candidate, the level at which this increases as well as the assets that may be made liquid to assist with seminary debt repayment.
- 6) The Committee on Preparation for Ministry will make available on an annual basis to each candidate or inquirer a list of options for pursuing grants and interest free loans and funding that may be available through the Financial Aid for Studies Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and PC(USA) seminaries.
- 7) The Committee on Preparation for Ministry will be an advocate with the congregation of which the candidate is a member, and with other congregations of the presbytery as appropriate, in order to generate financial support for the candidate in the form of grants.

When Presbytery is the Presbytery of Call.

- 1) Any minister serving a first call following graduation from seminary, who comes with any educational indebtedness, shall be required to show evidence of having attended a financial planning workshop such as a Fiscal Fitness workshop sponsored by the Board of Pensions, or other financial planning workshop. If the minister has not attended such a workshop, he/she shall be required to do so within twelve months of start-up, the cost of registration fee, accommodation and travel for such a workshop to be considered legitimate reimbursable expense from study leave allowance.
- 2) The Committee on Ministry shall encourage calling congregations to utilize further educational debt reduction as a point in negotiating salary with a prospective pastor who is a recent seminary graduate.