

Parsonage Guidelines

HOUSING GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

WHEREAS, Resolution 2013-12 adopted by the Annual Conferences requested that the Bishop establish an ad hoc Housing Task Force to review current “Housing Guidelines and Standards” and recommend revisions as needed regarding parsonage and housing allowance policy and report back to the 2014 Annual Conference; and

WHEREAS, clergy housing remains an important and integral part of our United Methodist connectional system, reflecting both our theology and practice of ministry; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the local church to provide for adequate housing for its appointed pastor and “Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards” [2012 UM Discipline, 252.4(e)], the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference must have in place such policy and standards, and

WHEREAS, the “Housing Guidelines and Standards” for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference have not had a comprehensive revision since 1991;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the following revised “Housing Guidelines and Standards” as reviewed by the ad hoc Housing Task Force appointed by the Bishop are adopted effective January 1, 2015.

A – Introduction

Our United Methodist Connectional System is built upon the basic assumption that by working cooperatively we can most effectively carry forward the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. United Methodist clergy are bound together in covenant as members of the Annual Conference, a covenant of sharing in the ministry of Christ as sisters and brothers. United Methodists continue the historic practice of an itinerant clergy, deployed by the bishop and the superintendents, in consultation with the pastor and the local churches. In this way we seek to provide a matching of pastors and congregations which will most effectively carry forth the ministry of each local congregation and the conference as a whole.

The appointment process is dependent upon a number of factors and among them the provision of adequate housing for full time pastors and pastoral families is crucial. Since the mission of our Conference and the commitment of our pastors is primarily focused on serving the local church and strengthening the effectiveness of its ministry, housing for pastors should contribute to effective local church ministry. At the same time, housing should provide the pastor and the pastor’s family with a residence which is adequate to their needs, comfortable, and provides the privacy and security which individuals and families associate with “home.” As members of the covenant community of clergy, it is further stated that no clergy person will be asked to waive any of the compensation (to include salary, parsonage or housing allowance, and health insurance) to which they are entitled by the Discipline and/or the policies of the Annual Conference.

The Conference has determined that the parsonage system shall continue to be the norm for the provision of housing for full time pastors. In certain situations the provision of a Housing Allowance may provide a more effective approach to housing needs, and pastors or local churches may initiate the exploration of the option, in consultation with the District Superintendent. The amount of such an Allowance shall be adequate to provide housing comparable to a parsonage in the ministry area of the local church meeting the minimum standards set forth in these Guidelines, and to meet anticipated utilities expenses for such a residence. Further instruction concerning the establishment of a Housing Allowance will be found in Section F of this document. However, since the maintenance of a parsonage by the local church is considered the norm, an important function of our connectional relationship is the establishment of both basic and newly built or acquired Parsonage Standards.

Every church and parsonage is unique as are the needs of the pastors appointed to the churches. The most comprehensive parsonage standards cannot address the variety of parsonages and pastor's needs and/or desires. However, it is clear that guidelines need to be presented in order that equitable standards be developed across the conference.

Further, we need to understand that the whole church, local, district, and conference has an interest in the maintenance of present parsonages, the purchase and building of new parsonages, and the sale of parsonage property.

Finally, it is hoped that guidelines and standards will enhance the sense that the pastor and the local church share in the responsibility for the parsonage, and need to work cooperatively in maintaining it properly and in accord with principles of Christian stewardship. "The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family." [2012 Discipline, ¶ 258.2(g)(16)].

As our Conference also provides housing for its District Superintendents, these Housing Guidelines and Standards shall also pertain to all conference provided housing.

B – Parsonage Standards

Christians, both laity and clergy, are called to be servants of Christ, Christ's church and all of God's children. We are all called to a lifestyle of compassion and giving. We follow One who preaches Good News to the poor, the Son of Man, who had "no place to lay his head." Yet the practical necessities involved in being engaged in ministry and providing a "home" for oneself and one's family in the world in which we live call for a standard of housing for pastors which is appropriate for that world and comparable to the expectations of the majority of laity with whom they live and work.

The following standards seek to respond to this complex reality. In meeting the appropriate standards, emphasis should be given to durability, functionality, and reasonable comfort.

Good stewardship encourages maintenance on a timely and, where possible, preventative basis, with a view to long-term savings. Additions and changes in construction or major decoration should be undertaken with a concern for good stewardship. The Pastor and the Trustees or Parsonage Committee may negotiate items not specifically dealt with in the following Standards and Additional Guidelines. In addition, since it is ultimately the responsibility of the church to provide for adequate housing, if the parsonage to be provided to a pastor is a rented property not owned by the church, the lease, contractual obligation, and maintenance for that home is to be the church's responsibility.

1. STRUCTURAL GUIDELINES

In the material below, the word "standard" is used to indicate items with which compliance is required, unless otherwise negotiated. Parsonages not in compliance with these Standards would be expected to move to compliance at the following times: a pastoral change, when equipment needs to be replaced, when the parsonage is being replaced, when parsonage family needs change or in any case as soon as practicable. Churches should attempt to make parsonages accessible for people with disabilities.

The Standards for an existing parsonage include:

- Living Room
- Dining Room
- Kitchen – all appliances standard sized
 - Range – gas or electric
 - Exhaust fan
 - Refrigerator/freezer at least 20 cu. ft

- Ample cabinets for storage
- Ample counter space w/minimum of 4 drawers
- Fire extinguisher
- Lights: Central overhead, over sink, over stove
- Master Bedroom
 - Full length hanging space in closet
 - Provision of additional closet space or wardrobe if needed.
- Two Additional Bedrooms
 - Full length hanging space in closet
 - Provision of additional closet space or wardrobe if needed.
- 1 ½ Bathrooms (It is recognized that in some instances it may be structurally difficult to add a ½ bathroom to an existing parsonage. If so, this item should be negotiated, following the procedure detailed in “D – Operational Standards, Problem Resolution”)
 - Tub with shower in full bath
 - Ample towel racks for family and guests
 - Large medicine cabinet or storage area
 - Grab rails in master bathroom and a ramp and if not permanent, a portable ramp when the pastor and/or family necessitates.
- Laundry – standard-sized washer and dryer with regular and permanent press cycles
- Garage (It is recognized that there may be situations in which providing a garage or carport is extremely difficult. If so, this item should be negotiated, following the procedure detailed in “D – Operational Standards, Problem Resolution”)
 - One car capacity
 - Carport permissible only if garage impossible
 - Adequate storage space for lawn equipment, gardening tools, lawn furniture, snow removal equipment (may be cared for by means of storage shed)
- Storage
 - Accessible
 - Dry
 - Adequate for cleaning and maintenance materials (Local churches need to be aware of the pastoral family’s need for adequate storage, as pastoral families move among parsonages of widely varying sizes. Therefore, if storage space in the parsonage is inadequate to the family’s needs, another storage location providing sufficient and appropriate space, privacy, and security shall be made available by the church to the pastoral family.)
- Study/Office
 - The local church shall provide the pastor with a study/office. Preferably, the study should be in the church building. However, a study/office in the parsonage is acceptable, and in certain situations preferable.
 - The study/office shall be a private room for the pastor’s exclusive use; it should be warm, attractive and conducive to study; it should be convenient and physically accessible to both pastor and parishioners, and ensure the privacy of the pastor and the pastor’s visitors. If it is located at the parsonage, it should ideally have a separate entrance. It should have a locked area where the pastor can safely leave her/his confidential and personal items. The door to the Pastor’s Study shall be in compliance with the Conference Safe Sanctuary policy. The Study/Office, whether in the church or parsonage, shall have access to internet service. (Study furnishings are detailed under Furnishings Standards).

2. FURNISHINGS STANDARDS

- Floor coverings (hardwood, carpeting, tile, etc.) for living spaces.
- Window treatments: Drapes and/or curtains, shades, blinds, drapery hardware; windows and ropes in good working order.
- Storm windows and screens intact and in good working order; storm doors with
- Plexiglas or safety glass windows and screens.
- Adequate electrical service with at least two outlets per room.
- Appropriate lawn care equipment, and adequate storage space.
- Outside entrances and garage well lighted
- Adequate central heating system and cooling system (or window units) in good working order.
- Adequate smoke detectors.
- Basic cable (including one cable box) or satellite access when cable is not available, telephone and internet access is to be provided by the church. Premium channels and multiple cable boxes in all instances are the choice and financial responsibility of the pastoral family.
- Water conditioner, if needed.
- Study furnishings shall include a desk, desk chair, adequate shelving for the pastor's library, at least two additional chairs, and a four-drawer metal filing cabinet with lock.
- A security system adequate to insure the safety of the parsonage family.

3. ADDITIONAL ITEMS

The pastor and the Trustees or Parsonage Committee may negotiate items not specifically dealt with in these Guidelines. In meeting the appropriate standards, emphasis should be given to durability, functionality and reasonable comfort. Good stewardship encourages maintenance on a timely, and, where possible, preventative basis, with a view to long-term savings. Additions and changes in construction or major decoration should be undertaken with a concern for good stewardship.

C – Guidelines For Building Or Acquiring A New Parsonage.

In the following material, the word "Guideline" is used to indicate recommendations to give guidance to pastors, local churches, Trustees and Parsonage Committees. These Guidelines are in addition to the above Parsonage Standards.

1. STRUCTURAL GUIDELINES – NEW PARSONAGE

When a church builds or purchases a new parsonage, it should not be located in such proximity to the church building that it interferes with the private life of the pastoral family or it cannot be rented. The parsonage should conform to Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA) codes as applicable in the community where the parsonage is to be located.

The Standards for a newly built or acquired parsonage include:

- A Family Room
- Kitchen:
 - A minimum of 30-40 sq. ft. of counter space
 - Dishwasher
 - An eating area
- Master Bedroom – minimum of 4' of closet rod per person
- One Additional Bedroom (total of four) – minimum of 4' of closet rod per person
- One Additional Bathroom (2 ½ total) – at least a powder room on the first floor.

- Laundry Room – preferably on 1st or 2nd floor rather than the basement
- Garage
 - Two car capacity, with overhead door
 - Hard-topped driveway with adequate parking space
- Basement – Dry, full basement where practical
- Additional Closets
 - Linen closet
 - Family-sized coat closet
 - Pantry

The Standards for a newly constructed or acquired parsonage must also comply with 2012 Discipline ¶¶ 2544.3(b) and 2544.4(d) relating to disability accessibility:

In the case of the purchase of a parsonage, the board of trustees shall either:

- (1) purchase a parsonage that has on the ground-floor level:
 - (a) one room that can be used as a bedroom by a person with a disability;
 - (b) one fully accessible bathroom; and
 - (c) fully accessible laundry facilities; or

(2) purchase a parsonage without the accessible features for persons with disabilities specified above and remodel it within one year's time, so that it does have those features.

2. FURNISHINGS STANDARDS – NEW PARSONAGE

The Furnishings Standards for a newly built or acquired parsonage include:

- Minimum 200 amp grounded electrical service with circuit breakers; two outlets per wall per room in living areas (to eliminate excessive use of extension cords)
- Telephone jacks throughout house.
- Adequate central heating/air conditioning (or other means of central ventilation, e.g. attic fan), and
- programmable thermostats with at least two zones (living area, sleeping area).

D – Operational Standards

- Utilities – all utilities shall be furnished by the local church, including gas, electricity, fuel, water, telephone, sewage, garbage, trash disposal and the monthly basic TV cable fee where required. Heating/air conditioning, electrical and plumbing systems shall be inspected periodically for safety and optimum performances.
- Decorations – Both the interior and the exterior of the parsonage should be well kept so as to preserve its physical condition and its aesthetic appeal. Redecorating should be undertaken periodically, with major emphasis given but not limited to, times of a change of parsonage families. The tastes of the pastoral family shall be given preference as long as they are consistent with the potential needs of future parsonage families.
- Ground Maintenance – All permanent plantings, such as trees, shrubs and lawn (including seed, fertilizer, lime, etc., for them) shall be the responsibility of the church. Maintenance, lawn mowing and snow plowing shall be mutually arranged between the pastor and charge. If it is agreed that the pastor will maintain the lawn, the church will provide adequate and well-maintained lawn equipment, e.g. a power lawn mower, weed trimmer, etc. It is the pastor's responsibility to provide care for any personally desired flower or vegetable garden and play equipment. The possible removal of such equipment and restoration of the parsonage grounds, if needed, shall be negotiated between that pastoral family and the Trustees or Parsonage Committee prior to a pastoral transition (see E – Transitional Standards, for further guidance.)

- Parsonage Committee – The Discipline gives the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee and the Trustees joint responsibility for the parsonage. The chairpersons of these bodies may appoint a Parsonage Committee to consult with the pastor on a regular basis concerning the parsonage and its maintenance. The chairperson of Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and the Trustees shall be members of the Committee. The Committee shall care for the maintenance, repair, decoration and other concerns related to the parsonage, which are the responsibility of the local church in a manner which is timely, prudent and in accordance with the needs of the parsonage family. In the absence of a Parsonage Committee or functioning committee, which cares for the tasks assigned to the Parsonage Committee, the chairpersons of the PPRC and the Trustees shall assume these responsibilities jointly.
- Annual Review of the Parsonage – The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as the private home of the pastor's family. The chairperson of the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee, the chairperson of Trustees, and Pastor shall make an annual review of the church owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance and compliance with basic standards. Needs reported by the pastor between visitations should be taken care of promptly in order to reduce costs. An annual report will be made to the charge conference. [2012 Discipline, ¶ 258.2(g)(16)]. The inspection shall take place at a mutually agreed upon time.
- Repair and Improvement Budget – It is suggested that an annual budget item for maintenance and improvement of the parsonage be included in the church budget. An optimum figure of 2% to 5% of the replacement cost of the parsonage is suggested as a way of enabling the church to have a consistent program of maintenance, which will be less costly in the long run.
- Problem Resolution – The District Superintendent shall be consulted by the pastor or charge when difficulties or misunderstandings arise in the care and maintenance of parsonages and furnishings which cannot be satisfactorily resolved on the local church level. If resolved, that resolution is to be reported back to the District Board on Church Location and Building. If the problem remains unresolved, any of the parties may request the involvement of the District Board on Church Location and Building, which shall adjudicate the problem. Regular inspection by the District Superintendent and/or the District Board will be conducted until a parsonage meets basic standards or is otherwise exempted. The building or purchasing or selling of a parsonage shall be done in accordance with the 2012 Discipline, ¶¶ 2536-2544.
- Parsonage Family's Responsibilities – The Pastor and family shall take proper care of all parsonage property observing the rule to always leave the parsonage, grounds and appliances clean and in good conditions. The parsonage family is specifically responsible for:
 - Providing bedding, bath and linens, cooking ware, silverware, dishes, lamps, small appliances, etc.
 - Providing the furniture (Living Room, Dining Room, Kitchen Dinette, Family Room, Bedrooms, etc.)
 - Repair and maintenance needs should be addressed promptly. The pastoral family shall care for those minor needs which it has the ability to care for, and shall notify the Trustees or Parsonage Committee promptly of those needs which have been cared for and those needs which cannot be cared for by the pastoral family.
- Damage in excess of normal wear and tear, which is incurred during their occupancy, including such items as repairs of holes in walls, cleaning of stains, fumigating for pets, and yard damage. Disagreements as to final responsibility for damage in excess of normal wear and tear shall be mediated and decided by the District Superintendent. The Cabinet is authorized to use appropriate remedies to cover the cost of repairs including recommending that the church withhold final pastoral compensation payment.
- Choice of and arrangements with telephone long distance carrier (direct billing is encouraged).

- Inviting church officials and incoming pastor's family for review of the premises prior to a change of appointment.
- Insurance Coverage – Property and liability insurance is provided through the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference for the parsonage dwelling and for any furniture, appliances, etc. owned by the local church. Pastor's personal property is not included in the Conference Property and Liability Insurance Program. Personal property and liability (both provided through tenant's/renter's insurance) is the responsibility of the pastor.
- Parsonage Record – The Trustees and/or the Parsonage Committee shall prepare and keep up to date a complete listing of all appliances, window and floor coverings owned by the Church. In addition, a Parsonage Record should have an up-to-date record in which are placed all guarantees, repair parts lists, and the instructions for the use of equipment belonging to the parsonage. The record should also indicate when and from whom purchased and whom to call for service. When a donation of an item is made, it should be clearly designated whether the item is a personal gift to the pastor's family or if it is to remain in the parsonage.
- Special Accommodations relating to children, pets, disability access or unique situations shall be negotiated between the pastor and the Trustees or Parsonage Committee.

E – Transitional (Pastoral Change) Standards

In every instance in this section of the document, "pastor" refers to a pastor and spouse where there is one. Christian concern for one another dictates that outgoing and incoming parsonage families and the Trustees or Parsonage Committee work cooperatively to insure a smooth and comfortable transition when there is an appointment change.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OUTGOING PASTOR

- The outgoing pastor shall leave the parsonage in clean, empty and orderly condition (with refuse ready for proper disposal).
- She/he shall make arrangements to care for any cleaning, repairs or disposal which fall beyond the scope of normal wear and tear or accumulation (e.g., pet damage).
- Such cleaning or repairs shall be cared for before the parsonage is vacated.
- Should the outgoing pastor fail to care for such matters, the Trustees or Parsonage Committee shall care for them and bill the outgoing pastor for expenses incurred.
- The outgoing pastor shall leave her/his successor:
 - Tagged keys for all locks.
 - The Parsonage Record Book, updated to the time of the current move, including a list of emergency and other useful phone numbers and notes on where to find such things as screens, garden tools, lawn mower, gas can, etc.
 - Forwarding address and phone number.
- The outgoing pastor shall tour the parsonage with the incoming pastor to acquaint her/him with the features, operation and needs of the parsonage as soon as possible after the appointment is announced.
- The outgoing pastor shall not attend services or have contact with former members for one year from their former parish. This is to ensure the church makes the necessary adjustments to their new leadership. In the case of any kind of ceremony (baptisms, weddings, etc.), the outgoing pastor should have conversation with the current incoming pastor. The incoming pastor must make all decisions relative to any involvement of the outgoing pastor.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INCOMING PASTOR

- The incoming pastor shall consult with the Chairperson of the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee and the Trustees or Parsonage Committee as soon as practicable with regard to matters of operation, repairs, maintenance and decoration of the parsonage. The pastor and the Chairperson shall determine a plan for any necessary action, which shall be undertaken in timely and prudent fashion.
- The incoming pastor shall familiarize her/himself with the facilities and operational procedures of the parsonage, in order to insure the continuance of proper operations and maintenance.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARSONAGE COMMITTEE

- The Chairperson or Designated Representative of the Parsonage Committee or Trustees shall consult with the outgoing pastor prior to that pastor's moving with regard to necessary and/or desirable repairs, maintenance and redecoration of the parsonage. They shall also consult about any necessary replacement or addition of items mandated by the above standards. Radon testing, water testing and/or inspection and testing with regard to any other matter concerning health and safety shall be undertaken every six to eight years, as well as any time circumstances indicate the need for such testing or inspection. Records of such testing shall be kept in Parsonage Book. Any corrective work or acquisition of corrective equipment shall be the responsibility of the Trustees or Parsonage Committee, in accordance with the above standards.
- The Chairperson or Designated Representative of the Parsonage Committee shall consult with the incoming pastor as to any special needs of the incoming parsonage family and as to considerations of taste and style before matters of replacement, addition or redecoration are undertaken. Final decisions about such matters shall rest with the Trustees or Parsonage Committee, in accordance with the above standards, but the desires of the parsonage family shall guide the Trustees or Parsonage Committee decision wherever practicable.
- At the time of pastoral transition, the Trustees or Parsonage Committee shall care for major housekeeping items, including cleaning and waxing of floors, washing of windows, cleaning of rugs, drapes or other window treatments, and any other necessary major items.
- The Chairperson or Designated Representative of the Parsonage Committee shall consult with the incoming pastor shortly after family has taken up residence to insure that the pastor is familiar with the parsonage, its equipment and operation, and has the necessary information she/he needs to care for those aspects of the ongoing operation and maintenance of the parsonage which are the pastor's responsibility.
- That the Annual Conference develop a training program for Staff Parish Committees centering on the need to assume the responsibility for meeting standards and guidelines for parsonage maintenance.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOTH PASTOR AND PARSONAGE COMMITTEE

The Chairperson or Designated Representative of the Parsonage Committee and the pastor are responsible for fostering a cooperative, positive relationship between the pastor and the Trustees or Parsonage Committee, and developing a sense of shared pride in the parsonage as an enhancement of the ministry of the pastor and the local church and as a comfortable and fulfilling residence for the pastor

F – Housing Allowance Guidelines

1. HOUSING RESPONSIBILITY

While the Discipline recognizes that a local church has a responsibility to provide for adequate housing for the pastor(s), the provision of a housing allowance may in certain situations provide a more effective approach to

housing needs. In certain family situations, the provision of a Housing Allowance for the pastoral family may be the most just arrangement and requires special attention and negotiation among the parties, i.e. when members of the family have particular disabilities requiring accommodations not provided even in a parsonage that otherwise meets these Standards and Guidelines. The following Guidelines are designed to assist in establishing a housing allowance.

2. ESTABLISHING AND CONTINUING A HOUSING ALLOWANCE

A pastor or a local church may initiate the possibility of a housing allowance in lieu of use of a church-owned or leased parsonage. Exploration, discussion and negotiation shall be in consultation with the District Superintendent. Final approval from the local church to implement a new housing arrangement must come from the Administrative Board/Council upon recommendation from the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee. If all three parties agree to provision of a housing allowance, the following shall apply:

- a) A housing allowance shall include the lesser of:
 - an amount necessary to rent or lease housing that meets current EPA "Housing Guidelines and Standards" in the ministry area of the local church or the community where an existing parsonage is located; (Such an amount may be determined in consultation with a local board of realtors.) or
 - the actual cost of housing (rent or mortgage).
- b) A housing allowance shall also include an amount sufficient to provide the utilities required by current EPA "Housing Guidelines and Standards" including gas, electric, fuel, water, telephone, etc.
- c) The housing allowance shall be reviewed annually and adjusted, if necessary, to meet changes in actual cost of housing.
- d) When an appointment change is anticipated and the District Superintendent meets with the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee to discuss the pastoral change, they will arrive at an understanding as to the type of housing preferred by the local church. The District Superintendent will also use the consultation process to come to an understanding as to the housing preferred by the pastor that will be changing appointments.
- e) Negotiations with the local church regarding the housing to be provided needs to be resolved prior to the introduction of the intended pastoral appointment to the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee and the results of the negotiations, including amount of the housing allowance if to be provided, needs to be confirmed by the District Superintendent in writing to the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee chairperson and the incoming pastor at the time the appointment is announced. If the District Superintendent, the local church, and the pastor to be appointed cannot agree on a negotiated housing allowance, the local church must provide housing according to the "Housing Guidelines and Standards." This may be done by the purchase or rental of housing by the local church.
- f) When an appointment change is anticipated, the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee of a church that is presently providing a housing allowance will need to review current housing cost, mortgage rates, and other incidental costs in comparison to the housing allowance presently being provided. (Note: Upon an appointment following a long pastorate with a housing allowance a church will probably need to increase substantially its housing allowance due to increased costs of housing and mortgages.)

3. SALE OR RENTAL OF PARSONAGE AND USE OF PROCEEDS

In the event that it has been agreed that a housing allowance will be provided in lieu of use of the church-owned parsonage, the local church may sell the existing parsonage or maintain and rent it to a third party. The following applies to such circumstances:

- Sale of Parsonage
 - If the parsonage is sold with the intent to provide a housing allowance for the pastor, the proceeds of the sale shall either

- (1) be used, together with other capital campaign funds, to finance the building of a new church, educational building or parsonage as governed by the Discipline; or
 - (2) be retained and invested to create an investment corpus equal to 100% of “current average housing cost” (as defined in F.3.a.ii.). Interest from the investment corpus may not be used for any other purpose until the 100% level is reached. (Note: Sale of a parsonage for other than housing allowance purposes is governed by other EPA policy and The Book of Discipline.)
 - (3) It is recommended that the investment corpus shall be invested with the Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation.
- Investment income from the proceeds shall be added to the corpus until the corpus equals 100% of the current average housing cost in the ministry area of the local church. “Current average housing cost” is defined as that amount needed to purchase a house without financing in the ministry area of the local church, which meets the current EPA “Housing Guidelines and Standards” and can be determined in consultation with the local board of realtors. (Rationale: If in the future a housing allowance is no longer to be provided and a parsonage must be purchased, the funds would be available.)
- The current average housing cost shall be recalculated annually and the 100% corpus adjusted accordingly.
- Investment income beyond that necessary to meet the 100% corpus may be used to provide the agreed upon housing allowance.
- Proceeds and investment income from the sale of a parsonage shall be invested in accordance with the above until such time as a local church Charge Conference and the Cabinet shall decide (for missional reasons) that a parsonage is no longer necessary on that charge. (Note: Use of principal proceeds will need to conform to the Discipline.)
- In the event that a parsonage is to be built or purchased and provided to the pastor in lieu of a housing allowance, the corpus may be used for that purpose. A newly acquired or constructed parsonage shall meet current EPA “Housing Guidelines and Standards.”
- The provisions of section 3(a) “Sale of Parsonage” shall apply to parsonages sold after July 1, 1981, when housing allowance guidelines were first adopted.
- Rental of Parsonage
 - The local church may retain the existing parsonage and rent it to a third party.
 - Unless there are compelling missional reasons, rental to a third party should be at an amount equal to the fair market rental value of a house similar to the parsonage in the community where the parsonage is located. (Assistance in determining fair market rental value may be found using online resources such as www.zillow.com.)
 - Rental income is to be used to help provide the agreed upon housing allowance and parsonage expenses.
 - The parsonage shall continue to be maintained in the manner provided for in current EPA “Housing Guidelines and Standards,” including annual inspection.
 - Whenever possible, the lease term should be for one year (renewable annually by agreement) commencing June 15 and ending June 14 of the following year. This will keep the parsonage available for future appointment needs.
 - Precautions must be taken to insure that the church does not become financially dependent on rental income to maintain the parsonage. The financial arrangements need to include long term maintenance and capital improvement funds. The church needs to continue to be able to pay utilities, maintenance and improvements without depending on rental income, so that the parsonage is available for future appointment needs.

4. CLERGY COUPLES

The following shall govern housing situations where two clergypersons are married and serving two separate pastoral appointments:

- Where no parsonage is provided by either church, each church is responsible for providing an adequate housing allowance for its pastor. While “housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration” [2012 Discipline, ¶ 252.4(e)] each member of a clergy couple is entitled to payment of fair and equitable compensation. It is noted that individual housing for members of a clergy couple “is not a matter of right” (Judicial Council Decision 562). It is also noted that there is nothing in the Book of Discipline which would prevent a pastor that does not need housing from negotiating for additional compensation.
- When there is more than one parsonage available, the District Superintendent(s), in consultation with the clergy couple and the churches, shall determine appropriate living arrangements. If the clergy couple resides in the parsonage of one church, the churches may share equitably in the total cost of utilities for the resident parsonage. Additional remuneration may be provided to each pastor to reflect the attendant decrease in housing costs to each church and the additional Social Security and pension implications for the clergy couple.
- Each church shall continue to be responsible for its own parsonage’s maintenance, taxes, capital improvements and mortgage (if any).
- Nothing in these “Housing Guidelines and Standards” is intended to conflict with UM Judicial Council Decisions 510, 547, 562 and 634 and Memorandum 1133 relating to housing allowance and clergy couples.