

Salary Guidelines for Youth & Family Ministry Positions

Salary Guidelines for Children, Youth and Family Staff

Technically, there are no standard “salary guidelines” for employing staff in Christian education or children, youth, and family ministry.¹ Salaries will vary depending on position expectations, years of experience and education, and geographic location (in terms of cost of living). Trinity Lutheran College graduates, for instance, have been offered full-time jobs with compensation packages totaling \$30,000 to \$50,000, depending on weight given to the above factors.

Consider the Value of the Position

The primary factor for setting a salary should be the value the local congregation places on the position. As congregations begin designing positions, the church must decide the position’s level of significance and contribution to the congregation’s life and ministry. Some churches design a “children’s director” or “youth worker” position seeking an individual to primarily plan and implement a calendar of activities, retreats, and/or mission trips. Other churches design “children’s ministry coordinator,” “director of youth and family ministry,” or “minister of faith formation” positions with the intent of seeking individuals who can work alongside the congregation to cast vision, coordinate large numbers of ministries, and train others to provide leadership in the ministry program.

Accordingly, the diversity in position expectations will have a corresponding effect on the qualifications desired of candidates. In turn, these qualifications and responsibilities should affect the compensation package. Generally speaking, the higher the salary, the wider the net is cast for potential applicants, as well as the possibility that a staff person will remain a longer time in the position. It really becomes a local decision to determine the value placed on the position versus adherence to any published rubric or guideline.

Consider the Total Package

A base salary is only one component of a total compensation package that can be offered to an employee. Other forms of compensation to consider include:

- medical insurance
- dental insurance
- vision insurance
- retirement plan contribution
- continuing education funds
- paid vacation leave
- paid continuing education leave
- paid sick leave
- professional expense allowance
- sabbatical plan
- mileage/car allowance

These benefits are determined at the discretion of the congregation, of course, but can also be determinants in someone considering the position. It might go without saying that the more generous a congregation is with these items, the more attractive the position would appear to a potential candidate. (Remember that the above considerations would be in addition to other employment expenses incurred by a congregation, such as the employer’s share of federal employment taxes.)

Base Salary Comparison Information

The following tables provide a variety of recommended guidelines or survey results that might be useful in determining appropriate base compensation (not including benefits).²

ELCA Northwest Washington Synod – Recommended Compensation for Rostered Persons (2009)

Source: www.lutheransnw.org

	<u>B.A.</u>	<u>M.A.</u>
Associate in Ministry ³ , no exp.	34,315	38,435
Associate in Ministry, 3 years exp.	39,463	43,583
Associate in Ministry, 5 years exp.	42,895	47,013
Associate in Ministry, 8 years exp.	48,043	52,161

ELCA Southwestern Washington Synod – Recommended Compensation for AIMs⁴ (2008)

Source: www.lutheranssw.org

Associate in Ministry, no exp.	32,772
Associate in Ministry, 3 years exp.	35,751
Associate in Ministry, 5 years exp.	37,930
Associate in Ministry, 8 years exp.	41,446

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Northwest District – Salary and Benefits Guideline for Rostered Persons and School Personnel (2009)

Source: <http://www.nowlcms.org>

	<u>B.A.</u>	<u>M.A.</u>
Director of Christian Education ⁵ , no exp.	35,366	40,832
Director of Christian Education, 3 years exp.	40,188	45,333
Director of Christian Education, 5 years exp.	43,404	48,870
Director of Christian Education, 8 years exp.	--	53,692

ELCA Minneapolis Area and Saint Paul Area Synods – Children, Youth & Family Ministry Salary/Qualification Guidelines (2008)

Source: www.mpls-synod.org

	<u>B.A.</u>	<u>M.A.</u>
Children, Youth & Family staff, no exp.	32,140+	39,481-49,030
Children, Youth & Family staff, 1-5 years exp.	32,880-39,380	42,780-53,270
Children, Youth & Family staff, 6-10 years exp.	37,460-43,490	46,070-57,740
Children, Youth & Family staff, 11+ years exp.	39,481-49,030	49,410-65,320

State of Washington – Salary Allocations for Certified Public School Teachers (2008-2009)

Source: www.k12.wa.us

	<u>B.A.</u>	<u>B.A.+ 45 cr</u>	<u>M.A.</u>
Certified Instructional Staff, no exp.	34,426	37,285	41,274
Certified Instructional Staff, 3 years exp.	35,786	38,864	42,632
Certified Instructional Staff, 5 years exp.	36,693	39,937	43,558
Certified Instructional Staff, 8 years exp.	39,218	42,825	46,341

ELCA Youth Ministry Network – Salary/Benefits Survey of Youth Ministry Professionals⁶ (2003-2008)

Source: www.elcaymnet.org

<u>Averages (all full-time):</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2008</u>
Non-rostered lay persons	30,048	31,536	36,242
Region 1 (Pacific Northwest), non-rostered	31,184	32,326	36,140
Bachelor's degree	29,828	31,272	34,825
Master's degree (non-clergy)	42,659	35,391	39,488
Less than 1 year exp.	26,635	29,833	35,970
Over 3 years exp.	30,588	28,827	36,245
Over 5 years exp.	31,373	31,081	34,925
Over 10 years exp.	36,121	34,511	34,444

Southern Baptist Convention Church Worker's Compensation Study (2006)

Source: www.kybaptist.org

Youth ministry staff person	40,763
Children's ministry staff person	40,635
Christian education staff person	53,332

Children's Ministry Magazine Annual Salary Survey (2008)

Source: www.childrensministry.com

	<u>2008</u>
Children's ministry, 1-2 years exp.	17,500
Children's ministry, 2-5 years exp.	27,500
Children's ministry, 6-9 years exp.	32,500
Children's ministry, 10-15 years exp.	32,500
Children's ministry, 16-20 years exp.	47,500
Staff persons with B.A. degree	42,500
Staff persons with M.A. degree	47,500

Group Magazine Annual Salary Survey (2005, 2008)

Source: www.groupmagazine.com

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2008</u>
Youth ministry, 1-2 years exp.	33,557	32,500
Youth ministry, 2-5 years exp.	38,241	37,500
Youth ministry, 6-9 years exp.	39,208	37,500
Youth ministry, 10-15 years exp.	43,724	42,500
Youth ministry, 16-20 years exp.	54,143	47,500

¹ Exceptions are churches or organizations that employ a rostered leader recognized by a denomination, such as an ordained pastor, deacon, or licensed lay minister. In these situations, denominations may have stated guidelines.

² The Children, Youth & Family Center does not necessarily endorse these figures as suitable guidelines. They are simply provided as a reference for conversation.

³ An Associate in Ministry (AIM) is a person available for call to a ministry within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. AIMS are required to have a bachelor's degree, successful completion of biblical and theological education, and a supervised internship.

⁴ Figures represent guidelines for *minimum* compensation, not maximum.

⁵ A Director of Christian Education (DCE) is a rostered ministry in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Salary figures listed here for DCEs are computed on the base salary for a church worker/teacher, with a factor of 0.10 added. The Northwest District suggests adding values to positions with significant responsibilities, such as a Director of Christian Education.