

## Frequently asked questions Ministry and Finance Apportionment meetings

*Question: Why was the Allowance for Unpaid Apportionments line item removed from the conference budget and how will it affect a church's apportionment giving?*

*Answer (from Norlan Hinke):*

I think there was confusion that people thought that was actually the reserve account. The income and expense item that had no money behind it that was just a figure. The line item anticipated that there were not going to be 100 percent of payments, and the historical trend was about 80 percent paid. Before the line item for unpaid apportionments was added to the budget format, we had spending limits for each board and agency which inflated their individual budgets thus acting like an allowance for unpaid apportionments. It was the decision of CFA many years ago to bring that to light by showing it separately in the budget and asking boards to only request what they needed, no inflated amounts, which has worked well. That increased everybody's apportionments 20 percent in anticipation of those who didn't pay. There will be enough money coming in from those who did pay by eliminating it and it's not going to impact dollars and cents. It's not going to impact income, it's simply reduces the apportionments 20 percent, and it does put the pressure that we really need churches to pay their apportionments as best they can. We know there's some churches that are just in very difficult financial situations, and we'll work with every church possible to help you figure out a plan to improve your financial status and try to make the apportionment payments. If you have any questions or suggestions the Council of Finance and Administration is totally open to them.

*Question: What is the conference contingency plan? Is it still in place?*

*Answer (from Maggie Biggs):*

The contingency plan was activated by the Council of Finance and Administration in April 2020. What that did was prioritize our spending. For the conference missions budget, the grants that are paid out from our boards and agencies had to be decreased by 50-60 percent so that we could have set funding through the end of the year since we did not know how COVID-19 would affect our local churches. The plan is still in place.

*Question: What is the budget for conference missions and how has it been reduced?*

*Answer (from Maggie Biggs):*

For 2018 and 2019 there was no change in the conference missions budget total, but it did take a dip in 2020 when it was cut not quite in half but significantly lower. It does decrease about 30 percent in the year 2021. Under the conference ministries section of the budget, which includes the connectional resources and the clergy and congregational support areas, that between 2020 and 2021 that budget has decreased 37 percent. We've tried to not pick on one area by any means, but to look at every area of the annual conference budget to see how we can reduce costs and keep our keep our budget as low as we possibly can.

*Question: What will the conference do if churches don't or can't pay our apportionments in full? Will this affect who we get as a pastor? Will the church be allowed to ask for help from the conference?*

*Answer (from Harlan Gillespie):*

The cabinet intends that every appointment of a pastor includes the full development of a local church, and every pastor I believe intends to do that. The church will still be allowed to ask for help from the conference for support and development.

*Answer (from Bill Poland):*

We want to engage the pastor and leadership of the congregation to learn why? Is there financial stress that we can provide resources to help address. Is it theological/political? We are interested in finding a way forward in the love of Christ.

*Question: Our church isn't struggling to pay apportionments or our bills during this time. What can we do to help?*

*Answer (From Maggie Biggs)*

If there are churches whose apportionments are lowered by quite a bit in 2021. I'm hopeful that will take the opportunity to reach out to other churches in need of ministry assistance. Churches in need could also reach out to those churches they know are under good footing and be able to help each other. We can be in this together and try to make it through this period of time that's so difficult.