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THE BOARD OF BENEFITS SERVICES OF
THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.

**Annual Insurance and
Retirement Benefits Information**

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Calendar year 2021



September 2020

Dear Friends,

This booklet is made available to assist consistories in complying with promises made under Formulary No. 5 of the RCA's *Book of Church Order (BCO)* and to outline resources that are available through the Board of Benefits Services (BOBS). We hope that you will find this resource helpful throughout the year.

As stated in the *BCO*, a consistory shall fulfill the provisions of the call form (Formulary No. 5) for all ministers serving the church under call or contract by paying the stipulated contributions to the RCA 403(b) retirement plan. In addition, consistories must “provide benefits including group life insurance, long-term disability insurance, and medical insurance” for a minister and his/her immediate family (*BCO* Appendix, Formulary No. 5). In addition, if the minister and his/her family elect medical coverage through a spouse's employer-sponsored group plan, the church must compensate the minister for “any medical premium costs incurred by [the pastor's] immediate family, up to the premium cost of the Reformed Benefits Association plan meeting the minimum standards stipulated for the year compensated” (*BCO* Appendix, Formulary No. 5). These stipulations apply equally to full-time and part-time ministers.

There are, however, a few exceptions to this general rule. Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 7 of the *BCO* states that “a consistory shall fulfill the provisions of the call form (Appendix, Formulary No. 5) for retirement and insurance for all ministers serving the church under call or contract unless (a) regarding retirement, the minister is covered by the retirement plan sponsored by the Regional Synod of Canada or the retirement plan of the communion where the minister's membership is held, (b) the classis determines that the minister is serving the church part-time, as defined by the Board of Benefits Services, and that circumstances warrant that the consistory be exempt from this requirement, or (c) the minister is serving less than part-time as defined by the Board of Benefits Services” (2019 edition, p. 15).

In the sections that follow, you will find the following information:

- Section 1: General Benefits Requirements
- Section 2: RCA 403(b) Retirement Program
 - Retirement Contribution Requirements and Examples
 - Retirement Program Adoption Agreement

- Simplified Contribution Platform (SCP) and Retirement Contribution Remittance
- Contribution Verification and Retirement Security Form
- Retirement Plan Reallocation
- Section 3: Medical and Other Insurance
 - Minimum Standards for Medical Insurance
 - Health Savings Account (HSA)
 - Life and Long-term Disability Insurance
- Section 4: Definition of Part Time
- Section 5: Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Section 6: Participating in Social Security
- Section 7: Treasurer's Frequently Asked Questions
- Section 8: Preparing to Retire
- Section 9: Contact Information and Resources

If you have a question, please contact one of us at the Board of Benefits Services. You will find contact information in Section 9.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly Oliveira". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Kelly Oliveira
Executive director of benefits services

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1606
New York, NY 10115
616-541-0869 • (Fax) 616-698-6606 • koliveira@rca.org

Section 1: General Benefits Requirements

It is helpful to know what benefits an RCA ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament is entitled to, whether you are an RCA congregation that provides the benefits or an RCA ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament that receives them. Note: this only includes ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament; see point on next page regarding commissioned pastors.

The benefits requirements are dependent on a couple of factors:

- 1) Church type: RCA church, formula of agreement church, or others
- 2) Minister type: RCA ordained or formula of agreement ordained
- 3) Working status: full time or part time

Benefits Cheat Sheet

- RCA Minister of Word and Sacrament: full time (call or contract) serving RCA churches, classis, regional synod
 - Participation in RCA 403(b) plan. 11 percent of salary or effective buying power per household (EBPH), whichever is greater.
 - Group life insurance.
 - Long-term disability insurance.
 - Medical insurance¹.
- RCA Minister of Word and Sacrament: part time (call or contract) serving RCA churches, classis, regional synod
 - Participation in RCA 403(b) plan. 11 percent of salary; may apply for an exemption.
 - Group life and long-term disability insurance. Working a minimum of 17.5 hours per week, will be automatically

¹ Group medical insurance is available through the Reformed Benefits Association (RBA). The RBA is a nonprofit corporation established by the Board of Benefits Services of the Reformed Church in America Inc. and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Churches and other eligible employers may enroll in benefits through the RBA or pay for the cost of comparable coverage for eligible ministers. If the minister and his/her family elect medical coverage through a spouse's employer-sponsored group plan, the church will compensate for "any medical premium costs incurred by [the pastor's] immediate family, up to the premium cost of the Reformed Benefits Association plan meeting the minimum standards stipulated for the year compensated" (BCO Appendix, Formulary No. 5). These stipulations apply equally to full-time and part-time ministers.

enrolled. Ministers working between 17.5–29 hours per week may apply for an exemption².

- Medical insurance: must work at least 20 hours per week to enroll in Reformed Benefits Association.

- RCA minister serving Formula of Agreement church: full time
 - Participation in RCA 403(b) plan. 11 percent of salary or EBPH, whichever is greater.
 - Participation in group life and long-term disability insurance.
 - Medical insurance (see footnote 1 on previous page).

- RCA minister serving Formula of Agreement church: part time
 - Participation in RCA 403(b) plan. 11 percent of salary, may apply for exemption².
 - Participation in group life and long-term disability insurance.
 - Medical insurance (see footnote 1 on previous page).

- Commissioned pastor serving an RCA congregation:
 - Commissioned pastors are considered to be “lay employees” of the congregation. With the authorization of the employer (church), they may participate in the RCA 403(b) retirement program. The annual employer contribution is agreed upon by the commissioned pastor and the church. They may participate in group life and long-term insurance.

- Formula of Agreement minister serving an RCA congregation:
 - Participate in the retirement and benefits program of her/his ordination.

Section 2: RCA 403(b) Retirement Program

Retirement Contribution Requirements and Examples

The contribution amount payable to the RCA 403(b) retirement account of eligible full-time ministers must be at least the amount of the effective buying power per household (EBPH) or 11 percent of compensation, whichever is greater.

The EBPH amount represents the minimum amount of employer basic contributions that should be made on behalf of ministers working full

² Only if the classis determines that the minister is serving the church part time, as defined by the Board of Benefits Services, and that circumstances warrant that the consistory be exempt from this requirement, or the minister is serving less than part time as defined by the Board of Benefits Services.

time, prorated over the number of months worked in a calendar year. This amount is established annually by the Board of Benefits Services and is updated based on the change in the Consumer Price Index over the 12-month period ending in June of the prior year. **The EBPH annual amount for 2021 is \$7,106.**

The EBPH amount **does not** apply for part-time ministers. The annual contribution required for a part-time minister's retirement plan account is calculated as 11 percent of the eligible pay of the minister.

Eligible pay is the total amount of base salary, wages, or other payments paid to a minister, including any employee contributions to the RCA 403(b) retirement plan. Eligible pay **does not** include any office allowance, vehicle allowance, education assistance allowance, bonus, or salary gross ups that are provided to assist with Social Security obligations. Eligible pay **does** include housing allowance and any taxable compensation added for ministers who are purchasing medical insurance for themselves and their families through a private insurance company, through a federal or state marketplace, or through the spouse's employer-sponsored group plan.

Eligible pay is defined as 100 percent of compensation if a parsonage is not provided. If a parsonage is provided, eligible pay is defined as 140 percent of compensation. (Actual compensation is grossed up by 40 percent; the contribution is then calculated as 11 percent of the 140 percent of compensation.)

An RCA 403(b) contribution calculator is available on the RCA Board of Benefits Services website under [Employer Resources](#).

Following are a few examples of how 403(b) retirement program contributions should be calculated for ministers who are designating a housing allowance and for ministers who are provided with a parsonage.

For ministers who are designating a housing allowance

Example 1: A full-time pastor who will work a full year in 2021. The minister will receive \$65,000 in compensation, of which \$15,000 is designated as housing allowance.

- The eligible pay is \$65,000 (\$50,000 taxable income + \$15,000 designated as housing allowance).
- The calculated contribution is \$7,150 (\$65,000 eligible pay x 11 percent contribution rate).
- The EBPH amount for 2021 is \$7,106.

- The required church contribution is \$7,150 (the greater of the EBPH and the 11 percent calculated contribution).

Example 2: A full-time pastor who will work a full year in 2021. The minister will receive \$40,000 in compensation, of which \$10,000 is designated as housing allowance.

- The eligible pay is \$40,000 (\$30,000 taxable income + \$10,000 designated as housing allowance).
- The calculated contribution is \$4,400 (\$40,000 eligible pay x 11 percent contribution rate).
- The EBPH amount for 2021 is \$7,106.
- The required church contribution is \$7,106 (the greater of the EBPH and the 11 percent calculated contribution).

Example 3: A full-time pastor who will work six months in 2021, with a start date of July 1, 2021. The minister will receive \$35,000 in compensation for the six-month period, of which \$7,500 is designated as housing allowance.

- The eligible pay from July to December is \$35,000 (\$27,500 taxable income + \$7,500 designated as housing allowance).
- The calculated contribution for the period from July to December is \$3,850 (\$35,000 eligible pay x 11 percent contribution rate).
- The six-month, prorated EBPH amount for 2021 is \$3,553.
- The required church contribution for the six-month period is \$3,850 (the greater of the prorated EBPH and the prorated 11 percent calculated contribution).

Example 4: A full-time pastor who will work six months in 2021, with a start date of July 1, 2021. The minister will receive \$20,000 in compensation for the six-month period, of which \$5,000 is designated as housing allowance.

- The eligible pay from July to December is \$20,000 (\$15,000 taxable income + \$5,000 designated as housing allowance).
- The calculated contribution for the period July to December is \$2,200 (\$20,000 eligible pay x 11 percent contribution rate).
- The six-month, prorated EBPH amount for 2021 is \$3,553.
- The required church contribution for the six-month period is \$3,553 (the greater of the prorated EBPH and the prorated 11 percent calculated contribution).

Example 5: A part-time pastor who will work a full year in 2021. The minister will receive \$45,000 in compensation, of which \$10,000 is designated as housing allowance.

- The eligible pay is \$45,000 (\$35,000 taxable income + \$10,000 designated as housing allowance).
- The calculated contribution is \$4,950 (\$45,000 eligible pay x 11 percent contribution rate).
- The required church contribution is \$4,950.
- EBPH is not applicable because of the part-time status.

For ministers who are provided with a parsonage

Example 1: A full-time pastor who will work a full year in 2021. The minister will receive \$50,000 in compensation and will be provided with a parsonage.

- The eligible pay is \$70,000 (\$50,000 x 140 percent gross up for the parsonage).
- The calculated contribution is \$7,700 (\$70,000 eligible pay x 11 percent contribution rate).
- The EBPH amount for 2021 is \$7,106.
- The required church contribution is \$7,700 (the greater of the EBPH and the 11 percent calculated contribution).

Example 2: A full-time pastor who will work a full year in 2021. The minister will receive \$40,000 in compensation and will be provided with a parsonage.

- The eligible pay is \$56,000 (\$40,000 x 140 percent gross up for the parsonage).
- The calculated contribution is \$6,160 (\$56,000 eligible pay x 11 percent contribution rate).
- The EBPH amount for 2021 is \$7,106.
- The required church contribution is \$7,106 (the greater of the EBPH and the 11 percent calculated contribution).

Example 3: A full-time pastor who will work six months in 2021, with a start date of July 1, 2021. The minister will receive \$25,000 in compensation for the six-month period and will be provided with a parsonage.

- The eligible pay from July to December is \$35,000 (\$25,000 x 140 percent gross up for the parsonage).
- The calculated contribution is \$3,850 (\$35,000 eligible pay x 11 percent contribution rate).
- The six-month, prorated EBPH amount for 2021 is \$3,553.
- The required church contribution is \$3,850 (the greater of the EBPH and the 11 percent calculated contribution).

Example 4: A full-time pastor who will work six months in 2021, with a start date of July 1, 2021. The minister will receive \$20,000 in compensation for the six-month period and will be provided with a parsonage.

- The eligible pay is \$28,000 ($\$20,000 \times 140$ percent gross up for the parsonage).
- The calculated contribution is \$3,080 ($\$28,000 \times 11$ percent contribution rate).
- The six-month, prorated EBPH amount for 2021 is \$3,553.
- The required church contribution is \$3,553 (the greater of the EBPH and the 11 percent calculated contribution).

Example 5: A part-time pastor who will work a full year in 2021. The minister will receive \$35,000 in compensation and will be provided with a parsonage.

- The eligible pay is \$49,000 ($\$35,000 \times 140$ percent gross up for the parsonage).
- The calculated contribution is \$5,390 ($\$49,000 \times 11$ percent contribution rate).
- The required church contribution is \$5,390.
- EBPH is not applicable because of the part-time status.

*Calculations for the above examples are based on the RCA 403(b) program plan document. The document requires that contributions “must be **at least** the amount of the EBPH or 11 percent (11%) of compensation, whichever is greater.” The EBPH does not apply to part-time participants.

Complete plan document is available at
<http://images.rca.org/docs/bobs/403bRevised.pdf>

Contribution Limits

The IRS has set limits on the contributions that may be made to a participant's RCA 403(b) account. [Visit the “Requirements for employers” section of the Employer Resources page.](#)

- (1) 402(g) limitation on salary deferrals:
The limit will be increased by IRS to reflect cost of living adjustment. The 402(g) limit applies to all salary reduction contributions (including designated Roth contributions) to 401(k) and 403(b) plans combined.

(2) 415(c) annual contribution limit:

The annual additions (including salary deferrals, employer contributions) cannot exceed the lesser of 100 percent of includible compensation or annual limit (adjusted periodically by IRS to reflect cost of living).

The includible compensation is defined as taxable compensation plus salary reduction contributions to 403(b) plan, elective deferrals to section 125 cafeteria plan, etc.

Please note that the includible compensation does not include tax-excludable clergy housing allowance. When the church and minister determines the designated housing allowance, please make sure the required annual contributions to RCA 403(b) will not exceed the taxable compensation.

RCA 403(b) Retirement Program Adoption Agreement

The RCA 403(b) Retirement Program is a multi-employer plan. Each employer (RCA church or entity) is required to formally adopt the RCA 403(b) Retirement Program by completing and submitting an RCA 403(b) Retirement Program Adoption Agreement.

Why is this important? The Adoption Agreement is a legal document required for each adopting employer for compliance purposes. It also provides the RCA church or entity certain degrees of flexibility to customize retirement benefits for its situation. This customization could include setting eligibility requirements to enroll lay employees, offering matching contributions for certain employees, vesting schedule for optional contributions, etc.

If your church currently does not have an Adoption Agreement, or the Adoption Agreement on file is no longer accurate, you can download the form at images.rca.org/docs/bobs/AdoptionAgreement.pdf, complete it, and submit it to the Board of Benefits Services. An electronic version of the Adoption Agreement is available upon request through retirement@rca.org. If the treasurer is not sure about the status of the Adoption Agreement, please inquire by contacting our office by phone (866-221-5480) or email: retirement@rca.org.

Simplified Contribution Platform (SCP) and Retirement Contribution Remittance

In 2018, Fidelity and the Board of Benefits Services worked together to transition churches to an online retirement contribution remittance

system. The online system has improved the process of remitting contributions to your pastor's retirement account and has helped to avoid processing errors that previously happened with the paper-based remittance process.

The Simplified Contribution Platform (SCP) looks very much like the paper remittance form that many churches used previously. After setting up the bank information, only a few clicks are needed to finish each contribution request. Automated reminders and reporting functions help the church to keep track of the payment schedule.

Any contributions that are sent to Fidelity with a check will be returned to the church so they can be properly remitted electronically.

If your church needs to set up a new user, please provide the contact information through Fidelity: <https://fidelityinvestments.tfaforms.net/660093>. Fidelity will send the user a temporary password and tutorial guide to help configure the system. The username will be your email address, so please make sure you have access to it.

If you have any questions about Fidelity's SCP system, please contact Fidelity's SCP team at 1-800-917-4369.

Contribution Verification and Retirement Security Form

Each year, the Board of Benefits Services ensures that your RCA-ordained minister receives the correct amount of contribution to his/her retirement account in accordance with the terms of the RCA 403(b) retirement program document and the *Book of Church Order*.

The necessary information for BOBS to perform this annual review is collected as part of the annual Consistorial Report Form (CRF), through the Retirement Security Form (RSF) sub-section of the CRF.

The RSF should be completed for each RCA-ordained minister and any lay employees who participate in the RCA 403(b) retirement program at your church. The information is kept confidential and only accessed by the BOBS staff.

The information that BOBS needs to perform this review is:

- Total annual base salary paid to your minister, including portion designated as housing allowance, if any
- Amount of salary designated as housing allowance, if any
- Indication if parsonage was provided
- Work status: either full time or part time

Once the CRF is closed, the Board of Benefits Services reviews the submitted compensation information and verifies that the proper amount of church contribution was paid into your minister's RCA 403(b) account. Any contributions shortfall are communicated to the church treasurer and minister along with a request for payment.

It is extremely important that churches take the time to complete the RSF so BOBS can verify that the proper amount of retirement contribution was paid to your minister's account.

RCA Retirement Plan Reallocation

Since 2015, the RCA Board of Benefits Services has been offering participants the option to reallocate funds from their RCA retirement plan account to their RCA 403(b) retirement program account. This provides eligible RCA retirement plan participants an opportunity to consolidate their retirement savings into one account.

Eligibility and the amount that can be reallocated is determined by BOBS in accordance with the IRS annual contribution limits, IRS regulations, and participant's RCA-related taxable earnings within the last five calendar years.

For more information about the RCA retirement plan reallocation, please check our FAQs at <https://www.rca.org/benefits/retirement>.

Section 3: Medical and Other Insurance

Group medical insurance is available through the Reformed Benefits Association (RBA). The RBA is a nonprofit corporation established by the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Churches and other eligible employers may enroll in benefits through the RBA or pay for the cost of comparable coverage for eligible ministers.

In 2021, the RBA will offer three medical insurance plans for its members: the premium plan, the consumer plan, and the co-pay plan. In addition, they will offer group dental and vision, group and supplemental life, and a couple of ancillary insurance products.

Open enrollment through the RBA will be held October 19-23, 2020. Coverage for those who enroll will begin January 1, 2021. RBA will be sending information regarding open enrollment in October. More information about the RBA can be found at www.reformedbenefits.org.

When considering a severance package for a departing pastor who is enrolled in medical insurance through the RBA, please be aware that the RBA medical plan does not allow insurance continuation as part of a severance agreement. If a church wants to provide medical insurance, they must provide the pastor with a cash amount (this is considered taxable income), and the pastor must enroll in COBRA through the RBA or find an independent plan.

Churches are not able to reimburse a pastor for medical insurance that is purchased through a private insurance company, through the marketplace, through Medicare, or through a spouse's employer-sponsored plan. Any funds provided to a pastor to cover non-RBA medical insurance must be considered taxable income.

If the minister and his/her family elect medical coverage through a spouse's employer-sponsored group plan, the church must compensate the minister for any medical premium costs incurred by his/her immediate family, up to the medical premium cost of the Reformed Benefits Association plan meeting the minimum standards as stipulated for the year compensated.

Minimum Standards for Medical Insurance

Formulary No. 5 states, "Such insurance coverages shall meet or exceed the minimum standards stipulated by the Board of Benefits Services." The minimum standard of coverage established by the Board of Benefits Services will be met by offering coverage that approximates the consumer plan, as offered by the RBA.

The consumer plan carries a coinsurance of 80 percent, an individual deductible of \$2,800, and a family deductible of \$5,600. The maximum, in-network, out-of-pocket cost is \$5,000 for an individual and \$10,000 for a family. Coverage is 80 percent after the deductible has been met and until the out-of-pocket maximum has been reached. Once the out-of-pocket maximum has been met, the plan covers 100 percent of eligible medical expenses.

Churches may not provide Medi-Share, or similar programs, for their pastor in lieu of traditional health insurance. Although Medi-Share is Christian-based and encourages participants to live a healthy lifestyle, the government does not recognize these programs as health insurance. They are a bill-sharing service. BOBS is mandated to uphold the requirements set forth by the *Book of Church Order (BCO)*, which requires churches to provide health insurance. Therefore, Medi-Share and similar programs are not suitable alternatives.

Health Savings Account (HSA)

A participant in the consumer plan may establish a health savings account (HSA) that can be funded with pretax dollars. This HSA can be established by the employee through a local bank or credit union. Many RCA employers contribute to the HSA accounts of their minister. **It is recommended that employers fund no more than half of the HSA annual maximum contribution for an individual or family.** An employee may also make pretax salary deduction contributions to an HSA up to the annual maximum for an individual or family. For 2021, the IRS has set the maximum contributions to an HSA at \$3,600 for a single person and \$7,200 for two or more persons enrolled in a qualified plan.

Those over age 55 are allowed a “catch-up” contribution of \$1,000 annually. An employee may not contribute to an HSA if he or she is over 65 years of age and enrolled in Medicare.

Life and Long-term Disability Insurance

The *BCO* also requires that churches cover the premiums for group life and long-term disability (LTD) insurance for eligible RCA ministers. Employers must directly pay for the premiums for group life and LTD. In order to not jeopardize the terms of a group plan, ministers cannot pay the premiums through their personal credit card or bank account.

RCA ministers who enroll in medical insurance through the RBA will also be enrolled in the RBA basic life plan. Participants in the RBA can enroll in supplemental life insurance plans offered through the RBA.

Eligible RCA ministers who work a minimum of 17.5 hours per week will be enrolled in the LTD insurance program administered by BOBS. In addition, RCA ministers who do not enroll in life insurance through the RBA and who work a minimum of 17.5 hours per week will be enrolled in the group life insurance plan administered by BOBS. Eligible participants will have the opportunity to enroll in supplemental life plans through the Board of Benefits Services during open enrollment from November 2-20, 2020.

Part-time ministers who regularly work a minimum of 17.5 hours and no more than 29 hours per week may be exempt from participating in the insurance programs, as stated in the *BCO*. To apply for an exemption from providing insurance coverage to a minister serving a church in a part-time capacity (as defined by BOBS), a waiver of insurance form must be completed and submitted to BOBS. The waiver

is available on the RCA website at: <http://images.rca.org/docs/bobs/BenefitExemptForm-parttime-minister.pdf> or by contacting BOBS and must be signed by the eligible minister, the consistory, and the supervising classis. Ministers who work 30 hours per week or more are not eligible to be exempt from benefits.

Ministers without charge can continue to be covered by group life and LTD insurance for 90 days after their last day worked. The most recent church where a minister without charge served must pay the premium for this extended period. Life insurance, for those enrolled through the RBA, requires that a member is actively working so life insurance terminates as of the last day worked. Upon termination, members have the opportunity to port/convert their policy with Reliance. Options for conversion or porting a policy is communicated in a letter from the RBA to the terminated staff.

More information about the life and LTD insurance programs offered through the Board of Benefits Services can be found at www.rca.org/ltd-and-group-life. You will also find information about 2021 insurance rates, beneficiary designation, and payment options on this webpage.

Per Internal Revenue Code Section 79, employer-paid group life insurance may generate taxable, imputed income. More information is available on the employer page of the BOBS website. Click on the link and scroll down to insurance on the employer page (rca.org/benefits). Or, see the IRS webpage (irs.gov/government-entities/federal-state-local-governments/group-term-life-insurance).

Section 4: Definition of Part Time

Amendments to Formulary No. 5 and other parts of the *BCO* were proposed to the 2016 General Synod, and that synod adopted them (see *MGS 2016*, pp. 264–266). Following approval by the required number of classes, they were declared effective by the 2017 General Synod (see *MGS 2017*, p. 42). The amendments provide greater consistency between the requirements of the BCO regarding insurance benefits and what is available through third-party insurers.

Similar to the requirement that BOBS set the minimum standard for medical insurance for ministers, these amendments require BOBS to define part-time employment.

Because different vendors have varying eligibility requirements, the definition of part time varies based on the product.

For life and LTD insurance purchased through the Board of Benefits Services, part time is defined as working a minimum of 17.5 hours but not more than 29 hours per week. A definition of part time for the RCA 403(b) retirement program is a work week of fewer than 30 hours.

If insurance is obtained through the RBA, its terms of participation require that any insured member must work a minimum of 20 hours per week to be enrolled in medical, dental, and vision insurance. For further clarification, contact the RBA.

For life, LTD, and medical insurance, full time is defined as anyone working a minimum of 30 hours per week.

Section 5: Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Board of Benefits Services has contracted with Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services to provide free, confidential, Christian counseling services to eligible RCA pastors, retirees, denominational staff (including RCA missionaries), and their households.

This contract includes an expanded network of providers so pastors and their households can seek services in their community. In any given year, up to three visits per issue are provided through an outpatient clinic in your area or an online telehealth session. Also available is access to an online library containing articles about health, wellness, financial, tax, and legal matters; videos; forms calculators; and assessments.

The employee assistance program is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To receive services, call 833-244-2490 and identify yourself as an RCA member.

Section 6: Participating in Social Security

The General Synod of 1996 directed the general secretary to inform newly ordained ministers that it is their responsibility to fully participate in the Social Security system (R-8, 305). The report from General Synod states the following reasons for not opting out:

- The Reformed tradition views government as a necessary means by which order is preserved.
- According to John Calvin, paying taxes is one way that citizens exercise their duty to the government and thus to one another.

- Those who would offer a conscientious objection to public insurance need to deal with the reality that, in modern society, the care of widows, orphans, and the elderly depends on established government programs.
- A minister of Calvinist persuasion will, it would seem, face a very difficult assignment if he or she is called before the IRS to give an account of his or her specific “religious considerations.”
- If your opt-out decision was challenged by the IRS, no one in the official denominational structure will be able to support your view.

Section 7: Treasurer’s Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who does what: BOBS or Fidelity? Who should I contact if I need assistance?

The RCA Board of Benefits Services is the administrator of the RCA retirement plan and the RCA 403(b) retirement program. Fidelity is the custodian and record-keeper of our plans.

Treasurers should always contact BOBS for assistance, unless they are experiencing an issue related to use of Fidelity’s PSW service or Simplified Contribution Remittance Platform (SCP) for remitting contributions. This includes any requests for and submission of forms.

2. What needs to be done when a lay employee who is a participant in the RCA 403(b) retirement program terminates employment or retires?

The treasurer should complete and send BOBS a Termination and Retirement Form. The form is found at images.rca.org/docs/bobs/TerminationandRetirementform.pdf. The treasurer can also contact BOBS to request a form.

3. How are contributions handled for a pastor being shared by two churches?

When a minister is serving in more than one church, the churches must decide which church will remit the contributions to Fidelity on behalf of the minister. One church will need to remit the contributions for both churches and seek reimbursement from the other church.

The division code for the remitting church will be documented in the minister’s Fidelity record.

4. Our treasurer or the person at our church who is responsible for RCA 403(b) retirement program contributions is changing. What do we need to do?

When there is a change in contact person at your church, notify BOBS of the change and provide us with new contact information. BOBS will update our records and Fidelity's records. Simply send an email to retirement@rca.org stating that there has been a change and list the new person's name, phone number, and email address.

It is important to advise BOBS as soon as possible, especially if the departing treasurer was set up to remit retirement contributions online to Fidelity. The new contact person must be registered as a SCP user in order to continue remitting the contributions. To enroll in SCP, use this link: <https://fidelityinvestments.tfaforms.net/660093> or contact the SCP team by phone (800-917-4369) or email: SCPhelp@fmr.com. More information about SCP can be found on pp. 9-10.

It is also important that the benefits other than retirement, i.e., group life insurance and LTD insurance, continue to be paid timely in order to avoid an interruption of insurance coverage.

If you have other questions not addressed in this section, please send them to us at retirement@rca.org.

Section 8: Preparing to Retire

Retirement is an exciting event. To help remove some of the anxiety from this transition, we offer some information and resources to help you through our administrative process and insights into other things that may need to be considered.

As an RCA Minister of Word and Sacrament, your first step toward retirement is to notify your classis and have your classis declare you retired (using the Blue Form). Once your retirement date has been approved by your classis, the clerk will send out notice of your upcoming retirement. We also encourage you to notify our office so that we can send you the forms and information you will need as you plan your financial future. Note that all forms come from and should be returned to our office for processing, not to Fidelity.

A few items to consider when making your plans:

- Determine the amount you may need to withdraw as a lump sum for immediate needs.
- Budget for the time after you retire to determine how much income you will need from your retirement account(s) on an ongoing monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. While the amount you elect can be changed, you need to start somewhere.

Some helpful resources:

- Take advantage of the Fidelity retirement planning tools found on NetBenefits by accessing your account online at www.netbenefits.com/atwork.
- Connect with a Fidelity retirement planning expert consultant by calling 800-343-0860.
- Consult your financial planner. It is important to note that all funds rolled out of the RCA 403(b) retirement plan program may not fall under the auspices of the housing allowance letter provided by the Board of Benefits Services, which states that distributions from the RCA retirement plan and RCA 403(b) retirement program may be declared as housing allowance.
- Financial Planning with Everence: Through a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment, BOBS will pay for half of a one year financial planning experience with a financial planning team who are experts in clergy finance. Contact retirement@rca.org for more information.
- Financial Counseling with LSS: BOBS has partnered with LSS to provide up to six free financial counseling sessions for RCA clergy and any adult in their household. To set up your first session, visit: lssmn.org/rca.

The following is an outline of a participant's distribution options under each RCA plan when a participant has accumulated retirement savings.

RCA retirement plan #72175

- Request systematic withdrawals (monthly, quarterly, or annually), with the amount determined by the participant and paid out over a minimum of ten years.
- Annually request a 5 percent lump sum upon reaching the age of 59½.
- Request a one-time, 10 percent lump sum for the purpose of buying a primary residence upon reaching age 59½. The proof of intention of purchase is required.
- Purchase a commercial life annuity.

There are no IRS-required minimum distributions under this plan.

RCA 403(b) retirement program #72433

- Request systematic withdrawals (monthly, quarterly, or annually), with the amount determined by the participant and paid out over a minimum of ten years.
- Before distributions begin, request a one-time, 25 percent lump sum of employer contributions available at the time of retirement.
- Purchase a commercial life annuity.

The IRS requires minimum distributions upon reaching age 72.

Frequently asked questions

1. When may I begin distributing funds from my RCA retirement plan #72175 account and/or RCA 403(b) #72433 account?

Upon reaching age 59½, lump sum distributions are available from each plan. Upon reaching age 60, a participant may request to be declared retired by his or her classis. Once you are declared retired, you are eligible to begin systematic (monthly, quarterly, or annually) distributions from either or both plans.

2. Who do I contact for information and forms for distribution at age 59½ and upon retirement?

The RCA Board of Benefits Services is the administrator for the RCA retirement plan and 403(b) retirement program. All forms can be requested from our office and are available online at www.rca.org/benefits/retirement.

Contact Fidelity directly only for loans, in-plan Roth conversions (only apply to employee contributions) and minimum required distributions (MRDs), and CARES loan and distributions.

3. I have funds in both RCA plans, from which should I begin taking distributions first?

That is entirely up to you. Upon retirement, you may begin taking distributions from either or both plans. The RCA retirement plan is a non-qualified, deferred compensation plan; as such, it cannot be rolled over and is not subject to the MRD requirements.

The RCA 403(b) retirement program is a qualified plan; as such, it is eligible for rollovers (with some restrictions) and has a minimum required distribution upon reaching the age of 72.

4. May I purchase a life annuity with either or both plans?

Yes. Purchasing a life annuity requires you to find an annuity product that must be approved by the Board of Benefits Services. Contact us for more details about the process to purchase a life annuity.

5. What happens to my account(s) if I die?

The disposition of your retirement plan account(s) is done according to your wishes, per your beneficiary form. If you are married, by default, your spouse is your primary beneficiary at 100 percent. If you wish to name another beneficiary, you must complete the spousal consent form with your spouse's notarized signature. Upon your death, a spousal beneficiary has two options:

- (a) Join the plan. In this case, a spousal beneficiary account will be opened in his or her name, and the assets from your account will be transferred to his or her beneficiary account. The spousal beneficiary will have all the same rights and privileges, except for the housing allowance.
- (b) The spousal beneficiary may receive a full payout. A non-spousal beneficiary may not remain in the plan and must receive a full payout. If the amount to be received is \$5,000 or greater, the non-spousal beneficiary may defer the payout to future date of their choosing over a maximum of 10 years.

Please be sure you have completed a beneficiary form for both plans and have them on file. These can be completed and updated by accessing your account online at www.netbenefits.com/atwork.

Contact the Board of Benefits Services with your questions or to schedule a discussion: retirement@rca.org.

Section 9: Contact Information and Resources

General questions:

- 866-221-5480; retirement@rca.org

RCA retirement program:

- Thos Shipley, retirement program plan administrator:
212-870-3086; tshipley@rca.org

RCA life insurance and long-term disability insurance plans:

- Cineca Anthony, life and LTD administrator: 866-221-5480;
retirement@rca.org

RCA 403(b) correction, reallocation, and other special projects:

- Feifei Liu, benefit actuarial analyst: 212-870-3244;
feifeiliu@rca.org

Retiree chaplains and assistance program:

- Mornier Rich, coordinator of retiree chaplains program and executive assistant to chaplain ministries: 212-870-3244;
mrich@rca.org

Clergy financial health, communications, and grant projects:

- Billy Norden, retirement and financial education coordinator:
616-258-6457; bnorden@rca.org

Executive director of Benefits Services:

- Kelly Oliveira: 616-541-0869; koliveira@rca.org

For participant address changes, visit www.rca.org/addresschange.

Mailing address

Board of Benefits Services
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1606
New York, NY 10115

Fax: 833-627-7620

- *When faxing an important document, confirm receipt by also emailing us at retirement@rca.org.*

Fidelity Investments

- Register and login: www.netbenefits.com/atwork or
800-343-0860

Reformed Benefits Association (RBA)

- benefits@reformedbenefits.org or 800-701-8992

BOBS website: www.rca.org/benefits has several resources available for churches and pastors. A few of those resources are listed below.

- **Life and LTD insurance plans for RCA ministers:** Premium calculator, imputed income calculator, highlights of benefits
 - www.rca.org/ltd-and-group-life
- **RCA 403(b) retirement program and RCA retirement plan:** Plan document, tax limitations, distribution forms, summary of investment performance, reallocation FAQ
 - rca.org/benefits/retirement
- **Information for treasurers:** RCA 403(b) retirement program contribution calculator, summary of benefits for RCA ministers (Annual Insurance and Retirement Benefits Information Guide), and Adoption Agreement
 - rca.org/benefits/employers
- **Privacy policy:** The benefits page of the RCA website contains the Board of Benefits Services privacy notice. The notice spells out the information we may collect, information we may disclose, to whom we might disclose the information, how to opt out, and our policy regarding confidentiality and security.
 - For more information, visit www.rca.org/benefits/policy.
- **Other information:** housing allowance letter, change of address form, etc.



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