**Guidelines for a Minister of Word and Sacrament Contract**

1. **All** contracts (full-time or part-time) with ministers ordained in the RCA, non-RCA ordained ministers, or retired ministers must be written and approved by the consistory of the local church and by the GLCC before they can be in effect.
   1. Contracts should be submitted to the classis clerk who will meet with the Calls and Contract Approval Team (CCAT) to consider their approval, amendment, or disapproval. A church or congregation shall not enter into a contract with a minister except by the approval of the classis.
   2. The Classis Executive Team will consider any complaints regarding the decisions of the CCAT and refer them to the classis for consideration, if necessary.
2. All contracts must be written and submitted for annual review by the classis CCAT. This review should take place whenever salary adjustments are made or near the end of each calendar year. (*BCO*, 1.II.7.4, 1.II.7.9)
3. All contracts with ministers must meet the Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament approved by the classis unless a waiver is approved by the classis CCAT. (*BCO*, 1.I.2.7, 1.II.12.3, 1.II.7.1.n)
   1. A consistory shall fulfill the provisions for retirement and insurance for all ministers serving the church under contract unless (a) regarding retirement, the minister is covered by the retirement plan of the communion where the minister’s membership is held, or (b) the classis determines that the minister is serving the church part-time and that circumstances warrant that the consistory be exempt from this requirement. (BCO, 1.I.2.7, p. 14) (*See retirement Exemption Form*)
   2. If a consistory and a pastor agree to less than the minimum salary or benefits, a waiver request shall be sent to the Classis Clerk for approval. (*See waiver application*.) The waiver request must state the amount and the reasons for the exemption. The compensation forfeited by the waiver is not required to be repaid unless a repayment agreement is stipulated in the waiver request.
4. All contracts shall specify the guidelines for the dissolution of the relationship between the church and the person working under contract. Contracts with ministers serving churches without an installed minister shall be a maximum of one year. (*BCO*, 1.II.7.4) These contracts may be renewed after proper review by the classis.
5. Contracts with ministers serving on an interim basis shall specify that the ministers cannot be called to be the installed pastor of the church in which s/he serves unless prior approval is given by the classis. These contracts shall be intentionally terminated prior to the arrival of the pastor receiving a call.
6. Contracts with ministers over age 70 are limited to 12 months or less, and are renewable.
7. Three types of ministers under contract can be found in the RCA *Book of Church Order:*
   1. Ministers serving churches without an installed pastor (*BCO*, 1.II.7.4),
   2. Specialized transition ministers (*BCO*, 1.II.7.6), and
   3. Assistant ministers serving on staff in churches (*BCO*, 1.I.2.8)
8. Contracts may *not* be issued for the position of associate minister since associate ministers serve under a call. (*BCO*, 1.I.2.5)
9. A contract is used to limit the term of employment of one or more of its ministers. The *BCO* does not allow a church to dissolve the pastoral relationship between a minister serving under a call and itself without classis approval. The relationship with a minister under contract can be ended following the terms in the contract.
10. All RCA ministers who are members of classis and receive contracts from churches may be commissioned by the classis to the form of ministry in which they are engaged, but are not installed in the local church in the same way as ministers serving under a call.