



AMERICAN CONFERENCE *of* CANTORS
Sacred music. Spiritual leadership. Jewish life.

Considerations for Low-Residency Limited-Service Remuneration

February 2026

The ACC conducts a salary survey at regular intervals to best understand the current state of salary and benefits for cantors. The vast majority of working ACC cantors are employed on a full time or limited-service basis, where that limited-service position assumes that the cantor resides within the community and often works 20-hours per week or more. We have good data to understand cantorial compensation for these types of positions.

Presently, we do not have formal data for positions on a very limited basis, nor do we have data for ongoing positions where the cantor does not reside within the community and routinely travels to the community. We do have some data points to help guide congregations and cantors entering into a low-residency limited-service relationship. As you determine the remuneration that your synagogue can offer a cantor, please consider the following:

DFSSM student cantor compensation

Student cantor positions have a clear compensation structure and often have a scope similar to low-residency limited-service positions. However, there is also an understanding that the students are receiving mentorship, guidance, and development through their internship. While the hours of a student pulpit and a low-residency limited-service pulpit may be similar, we know that our ACC members will bring a seasoned professionalism and experience to their work and should be compensated differently than students.

- High Holy Days - \$3800
- Single Service - \$320
- Weekend Visit - \$810

For example, a student cantor visiting a congregation for the High Holy Days and 18 times over the course of the year are compensated \$18,380. Another student might visit a congregation 9 times and not serve on the High Holy Days and is then compensated \$7290.

ACC Cantor High Holy Day Compensation

High Holy Day compensation varies widely from \$5k-\$20k+, with \$8k-\$10k being typical. Where your congregation fits in this range should be determined by congregational size and the scope of duties.

Shabbat and Weekend Compensation

As you structure your job description and hopes for your low-residency cantor, consider conceptualizing your weekend in half-days with a rate associated with those half days. For instance, if the half-day rate is \$600 and your cantor visits only for Shabbat evening and

morning through midday, consider compensation of \$1200. If you'd like them to stay and offer programming or services through Saturday evening, add another \$600. Finally, if they are with you for the entire weekend through Sunday afternoon, consider a total weekend compensation of \$2400. Depending on your congregation's size and means, other amounts could be substituted for the \$600 suggested here.

JCPC guidelines require that all positions we post have clear remuneration and benefits communicated to cantors. The low-residency limited-service application suggests that you either provide a single compensation amount inclusive of High Holy Days and all weekends desired, or a separate High Holy Day and weekend rate, as appropriate for your congregation.

For example, a congregation could decide to offer \$10k for the High Holy Days and \$1200 for Friday and Saturday 10 times over the year. Your compensation would then be \$22k. Another congregation could offer \$6k for the High Holy Days and \$1800 for Friday-Sunday 16 times during the year and compensate \$34,800. Another congregation still could not need a cantor for the High Holy Days and set a Shabbat service rate of \$550/service for a specified number of times during the year.

Benefits

Please consider what additional benefits you can offer to your cantor. A 15% retirement contribution is standard through the movement for full-time and many limited-service clergy. Is this possible for your community? Even a modest annual contribution could make a difference for your cantor's future. Supporting your cantor's professional development and organizational dues are other wonderful benefits you could offer.

Account for Expenses

Be sure to account for your cantor's travel expenses in your overall budget.

An ACC Cantor shall be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses, including but not limited to:

- Airfare and baggage fees
- Ground transportation to and from the pertinent airports
- Car rental fees (if necessary)
- Mileage (according to IRS guidelines) covering all trips made in connection with the pulpit work
- Lodging (perhaps in a hotel with a refrigerator)
- Meals (perhaps a per diem for food)
- Music ordering, copying (with all appropriate permissions), mailing, transcription, etc. (to be discussed/approved in advance)

If your congregation has had student cantors in the past, please consider that it may be more appropriate to put your experienced cantor in a higher level of accommodations, when possible.

Relationship

We recommend that Low-Residency Limited-Service Relationships be initiated on a one-year term, the scope of duties and remuneration outlined in a Letter of Intent that both parties sign. In any type of limited-service position, it is essential that all parties have a clear understanding of boundaries and expectations. After an initial year of relationship, the congregation and cantor can decide to renew for an additional number of years or move on to form new sacred partnerships.