

Interpreting The American Baptist Personnel Services Profile

The American Baptist Personnel Services (APBS) Profile is the basic document used to introduce American Baptist professional leadership to a search committee. There are two distinct advantages to using the Profile system. First, it presents information on candidates in identical format allowing for easier comparison. Second, it provides for a larger pool of individuals matching the specific criteria of a search committee. It is not expected that a search committee's final selection will be based on the ABPS Profile alone.

The following is intended to assist you in understanding the ABPS Profile. The Profile has limited space and requires the use of abbreviations—this interpretation sheet explains the abbreviated symbols.

Name and Address (located on front upper left)

The name and address box lists a preferred contact location. Although two telephone numbers are given, we request the search committee to be sensitive and use the preferred contact number supplied by the candidate.

Availability (located on front upper right)

There are three categories of availability: “open to move,” “might consider” and “not interested.” Most searches will provide Profiles of persons “open to move.” If the search is widened to include “might consider” or “not interested,” the search committee needs to be aware that these individuals may not wish to be considered if contacted.

Professional Information (located on front upper right)

This section identifies a person's status in professional ministry. All designations are valid designations within ABC life. The designation indicates a different journey or stages along the journey. Do not eliminate someone from consideration because of a particular status. Use the information to develop questions to ask the candidate and your area minister.

- ABC Ordination - persons ordained within ABCUSA prior to January 1, 1965, or ordained subsequent to that date that have satisfied the requirements of track I, II, or III of the revised ordination standards published in May, 1997.
- Ordination Recognized by ABC - individuals ordained by a denomination other than ABCUSA whose ordination has been recognized by a regional administrative unit of ABCUSA.
- Other ABC Ordination (Temporary) - ordained within ABCUSA since January 1, 1965, but have not satisfied the requirements of track I, II, or III of the revised ordination standards published in May, 1997. This category is maintained until the region transfers the individual to a category 4 or 7.
- Commissioned - persons commissioned by a national or regional board.
- Certified Lay Minister - individuals having completed a certified lay ministry program and certified by an ABCUSA region.
- Licensed - persons licensed by an ABCUSA congregation as a preliminary step towards ordination.
- Lay Professional - individuals employed professionally by the church or agency of ABCUSA working a minimum of 20 hours per week or who are applicants for professional employment with a church or agency of ABCUSA.

Work History (located on front)

The five most recent positions held by the individual—including seminary “supervised ministry” positions—are listed. When secular work is listed, make note of the skills that are transferable to ministry. This is important for persons who enter professional ministry later in life or are “second career” persons.

Ministry Specialties (located on front middle)

The primary or secondary specialties are areas of professional skills where some competence is claimed and where a major amount of energy will be used in ministry. Individuals have rated themselves in their chosen areas of ministry specialties. In addition, the individual has asked three others to rate their skills in the specified areas. The rating scale is listed on the Profile. The options and their definitions are listed on pages 24 and 25 of the ABPS manual.

Work Experience (located on front left)

Space is provided for 22 work experiences. From this list the individual has identified (with an asterisk) one or more experiences as having a special focus toward ministry. The level of experience is noted on the Profile. The last year column indicates the most recent year an experience occurred.

Profile History (located on front center bottom)

- Last Change – last date any information was changed on the Profile.
- Full Update – last time a full update was done. ABPS requires a full update including current work experience dates and new rating forms every three years. A Profile is considered current within that time frame.
- Generated Date – date a Profile was printed. You should always request Profiles generated within the last three months. Should you receive a Profile older than that, request an updated copy from your area minister.

Education and Continuing Education (located on front right)

An asterisk (*) before a school indicates the institution is accredited by an approved accrediting organization and is listed in the current edition of either the Higher Education Directory or the Association of Theological Schools directory. If an institution is not accredited, you may want to clarify this with the candidate or the school. In the verified column a “Y” indicates that the degree and the date it was awarded have been confirmed by the school. The absence of the “Y” indicates the ABPS has not yet verified the degree. Should a blank appear on the Profile, you may want to request the individual to provide verification of the degree. The status code (letters) for the degree or education experiences are:

PR – still in Progress
NC – Not Complete

CO – certificate or diploma has been earned – Completed
HO – degree is Honorary

Benefits (located on front right bottom)

Compensation and benefits are considered negotiable with the candidate—housing is part of compensation. Each candidate will have different needs for various benefits, but the standard full-time package always includes vacation, retirement and medical components. Please refer to the attached sheet for additional information.

Personal Narrative (located on back left)

The narrative is a personalized picture of the candidate. As you read, keep four questions in mind. What additional objective information is given? What attitudes are revealed? How does the person communicate with me? How do I feel about the person after reading the narrative?

Work Style Ratings (located on back right)

The work style rating is a subjective picture of how a ministerial leader tends to function in a variety of situations. Please refer to the attached sheet for additional helpful information.

References (located on back bottom)

The first reference is always an ABCUSA executive or authorized area minister. This reference may not know the individual in depth, but will be able to verify the individual's denominational standing. The second and third reference will most likely have a more detailed knowledge of the person's ministry skills.

Personal Information (located on back bottom)

Listing of personal information is optional for ABPS participants. Clergy couple—when the candidate is part of a clergy couple and the couple is open to serving together—a statement will appear on the Profile that reads “Clergy Couple – spouse’s profile available from area minister.” If you would like to review the spouse’s Profile, ask the area minister to request a copy from ABPS.

Interpreting the Work Style Rating

The work style rating is a picture of how the candidate tends to function in a variety of situations. The asterisk (*) indicates the candidate's own feeling regarding their work style. The numbers indicate how three persons selected by the candidate have observed the individual functioning. The following suggestions are offered to assist you when reading the work style ratings.

1. Do not look for patterns. Consider each item independently.
2. Not every item will provide useful information. Use only those items that appear to give a clear indication of a tendency.
3. Lack of agreement between the person's self-rating and the ratings given by others does not necessarily indicate a problem. The candidate has listed their preferred work style, but has been observed operating in another equally effective manner.
4. Raters may not always agree because they might have experienced or observed different styles of the candidate. This may indicate an ability to function effectively in a variety of settings.
5. It may be helpful for the search committee to determine, in advance, the specific items of the 20 available that are most important and focus on those. When desired information is not clear, develop some questions to be asked during the interview.
6. The rating section is designed to create a tentative picture of the candidate and should not be used to eliminate a candidate from consideration.
7. Underline those items where there is agreement by both the candidate and all the raters. This may indicate what you could expect to observe when you meet the person.
8. Look at those items of interest to you on which there is no agreement. You can only speculate as to the reason for the differences. This may be an area to explore during the interview.

Interpreting the “Benefits” Box

A search of the ABPS system can be conducted for either cash compensation or cash and housing compensation combined. Cash may be more appropriate in areas where housing costs are low or a parsonage is provided. Cash and housing may be a better choice when housing costs are high or a housing allowance is anticipated. We suggest that you talk with your area minister regarding which option works best in your region.

Most ABPS searches are computed with a salary figure in mind. Churches can request that the search be run for Profiles at or below the maximum amount they can afford to pay for either cash salary or cash and housing compensation. ABPS does not list the candidate's preferred compensation on the Profile. However, your search committee can be assured that most of the Profiles you receive will meet your congregation's salary capabilities. Occasionally, you will receive an extra Profile that was not generated during the computer search that will match other aspects of your search, but may slightly exceed your salary requirements. Remember all compensation is negotiable.

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Here is a description of each entry in the “Benefits” box on the ABPS Profile:

1. Housing Needed – lists the number of individuals for whom housing is required.
2. Housing Preference – indicates if the candidate prefers to live in a parsonage or prefers a housing allowance. If the Profile says parsonage or cash, then the candidate will consider either option.
3. Vacation – indicates the number of weeks desired for vacation. Congregations offering less than four weeks should consider ministers cannot take long weekends or go away for holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter.
4. Continuing Education – congregations that want to encourage their ministers to enhance their skills for ministry should offer one to two weeks of continuing education per year.
5. MMBB Retirement – full MMBB retirement benefits (including death and disability insurance) cost sixteen percent (16%) of the total cash salary plus housing. Most ministers request full retirement benefits.
6. Medical Insurance – most ministers want medical coverage. Some churches have secured medical coverage through a commercial plan. MMBB endorses a medical plan when needed. Some regions have a preferred medical plan. We suggest you consult with your area minister.
7. Social Security Offset – ordained ministers, considered “self-employed” by Social Security, pay their full Social Security and Medicare tax (15.3%) of total compensation (cash salary plus housing and utilities allowance). Many congregations choose to reimburse their pastoral staff for the usual employer part of the Social Security and Medicare tax (7.65%).