

'In Support of Excellence'

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: What is the “In Support of Excellence” initiative?

A: Many American Baptist pastors are suffering in silence, woefully undercompensated and squeezed by crushing debt. The “In Support of Excellence” (ISOE) initiative is committed to supporting pastors by equipping them and their lay leaders with financial management best practices, leadership coaching, self-care strategies, targeted relief from economic distress and seed funds to incubate new ministry models.

Q: Why should I care?

A: Too many capable American Baptist pastors are leaving the ministry—not because of moral failure or lack of pastoral fervor. No! Faithful and reliable American Baptist pastors are leaving their congregations because they simply cannot make ends meet for their families. As a result, churches and communities are left without the life giving leadership of visionary pastors.

- Together, we can reverse this dangerous trend.
- Together, we can retain great pastors who serve their churches and communities.
- Together, we can impact our society by coming alongside our pastors with this initiative.

Q: Who can participate in the “In Support of Excellence” initiative?

A: The ISOE initiative targets American Baptist pastors whose leadership potential is stifled by overwhelming financial and economic burdens, such as seminary debt; medical bills; debt incurred by themselves, spouses or children; and, most importantly, debt incurred from undercompensation.

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To qualify and participate in ISOE, a pastor must:

- be an American Baptist pastor of a congregation of 500 members maximum;
- attend each “Learning Lab” session in its entirety;
- enroll key church leaders in the ISOE financial leadership track;
- participate and openly share experiences within their cohort; and
- be available to mentor others upon program completion.

Q: How will pastors benefit from participation?

A: With your support, pastors will be equipped with the following:

- practical personal and congregational financial management skills;
- a safe space to discuss the financial pressures of ministry;
- key church leaders trained in financial management best practices;
- the opportunity to apply for grants to alleviate financial hardships;
- information about repairing their credit; and
- the opportunity to work with a certified financial planner.

Q: Whom do I contact for more information?

A: For more information regarding the “In Support of Excellence” initiative, contact the Rev. Jamaal Nelson, ABHMS project director, at jamaal.nelson@abhms.org or 1-800-222-3872, x2491, or Leda Carter, ABHMS administrative assistant, at leda.carter@abhms.org or 1-800-222-3872, x2028.

