



## Readiness for Retirement Savings Matching Program

A recent study by the National Foundation for Credit Counseling found that roughly three out of every four American adults regularly worry about their financial health. Similar studies by lending institutions have found that a third of Americans have no retirement savings whatsoever.

Studies conducted by the ELCA have found that although ELCA rostered ministers are in a better position financially than most Americans, many still experience substantial financial stress, which can stand in the way of satisfaction and effectiveness in ministry.

Resourceful Servants, an initiative of the ELCA and its ministry partners, supports leaders and congregations in the ELCA by promoting the financial wellness of seminarians, rostered ministers and congregations through direct financial assistance and resources for financial education.

Leaders and congregations that are financially well experience greater health and vitality overall and are better able to carry out the Great Commission—making disciples for Jesus Christ.

For many rostered ministers, financial stress, caused by a lack of retirement savings, is a barrier to effectiveness and satisfaction in ministry.

To address this challenge, Resourceful Servants offers the Readiness for Retirement Savings Matching program. This program seeks to encourage a habit of saving among rostered ministers, and to provide them with matching funding to more rapidly grow their retirement accounts.

## Program Details

Through the Readiness for Retirement program, eligible rostered ministers have the opportunity to build up their retirement savings. Recipients' increased individual contributions of \$600 to their ELCA retirement plan accounts with Portico are matched dollar for dollar, for a period of one year.

Rostered ministers serving a call who have less than 15 percent of their compensation contributed to their ELCA retirement plan account with Portico (when combining employee and employer contributions) are eligible to apply.

The impact of this investment is substantial. For the average ELCA rostered minister, an increase of \$600 in individual contributions to one's retirement account will translate into over \$2,000 at retirement. When the \$600 in matching funding is factored in, this \$1,200 investment now has an estimated value at retirement of over \$4,000.

There is sufficient funding to match the contributions of 100 rostered ministers. Matching funding is provided through generous donations from the staff and trustees of Portico Benefit Services and the Lilly Endowment.

Rostered ministers will receive an email on August 16, 2021, that announces the launch of the program and provides a direct link to the Resourceful Servants Financial Wellness Assessment.

Through the Financial Wellness Assessment, rostered ministers can apply for the Readiness for Retirement program. If they qualify for the program, they will be directed automatically to the application as part of the assessment. The due date to complete the process is September 23, 2021.



## Financial Counseling

The Readiness for Retirement program offers a session with an expert financial counselor at Lutheran Social Service Financial Counseling at no cost to the rostered minister, through Financial Choice, a program sponsored by Portico.

This session serves to:



provide a financial check-up to go over fundamental financials (e.g., savings, retirement, debt, credit score)



help with preparation for life transitions (e.g., marriage, having a baby, moving to your own apartment, retirement)



offer tools for gaining greater control of one's finances, paying off debt and achieving other financial goals

Even the most skeptical rostered ministers said that the session and preparing for it helped them to better understand and talk about their financial situation. One said that in preparation for the session, he and his spouse had a real, honest discussion about finances for the first time in their 20-year marriage.

## Voice of the Recipient

About their involvement in Resourceful Servants, previous recipients said:

*Resourceful Servants has been an inspiration to me to change my habits and plan better for the future.*

*It helped me see new ways of how saving in small chunks has turned into a nest egg and given me options.*

*I hope I can share the knowledge I've gained with my family and children, so they can start out right in their adult lives.*



## Key Steps and Dates

### Key Dates

- ✓ **Beginning Aug. 16 - Qualify and Apply** for the Readiness for Retirement Savings Matching program through the Financial Wellness Assessment
- ✓ **Sept. 23** – Due date to **complete** the application process
- ✓ **Mid-Late October** - Applicants will be **notified** as to whether they were selected.

### For More Information

To learn more and to participate, rostered ministers should visit the [Readiness for Retirement Savings Matching program page on resourcefulservants.org](https://resourcefulservants.org), beginning August 16.

There, they can review the **Readiness for Retirement Savings Matching Program Overview** booklet as well as complete the online Financial Wellness Assessment and, if eligible, the program application.

The ELCA, as church together, is grateful for rostered ministers and all they do to participate in God's mission in the world and hopes this program can be a blessing to them and those around them.