

Program Examples

More than 60 organizations have launched experiments in pastoral excellence over the last 10 years. The following are examples of programs that developed comprehensive strategies to support pastors. For a complete list of programs, [click here](#).

Denomination-based programs

Christian Reformed Church in North America

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Program

As a denomination-wide initiative, the Christian Reformed Church's Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program represents how a comprehensive strategy of support requires institutional cooperation beyond the pastor and the pastor's direct supervisor. The CRC offers a variety of services and programs that work in coordination with the

denominational office, Calvin Theological Seminary and other CRC-related organizations. Through this coordinated effort, the CRC offers peer groups for pastors and spouses of pastors, as well as learning tools and events, and has recently expanded its work to congregations with the [Sustaining Congregational Excellence program](#).

[Learn more »](#)



Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ Pastoral Excellence Program

Pastoral Excellence

An Educational Resource from Faith & Leadership

www.pastoralexcellence.com

The Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ program exhibits the way a strategy for supporting pastors addresses the needs of clergy through the various stages of congregational ministry. The conference customizes its peer group offerings based on where pastors are in their ministries. The program provides conference-wide [New Clergy Groups](#) for pastors less than three years into ministry, [Clergy Communities of Practice](#) for more seasoned pastors looking to hone ministry practices and develop friendships, and other education events that involve both clergy and laity.

[Learn more »](#)

Other institutions that support pastors

Boston University School of Theology

Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence

The strategy of the Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence program is significant both for its focus on urban contexts and for its connection to the school's M.Div. curriculum. The program first developed peer learning groups among urban pastors to support their ministries and to discover what helps sustain pastoral excellence in urban contexts. The book [Sabbath in the City: Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence](#) captures what was learned from the experience of those groups. The findings were embedded into the school's curriculum to help students preparing for ministry in urban contexts develop habits and practices that will sustain them throughout the life of their ministries. The program continues to offer peer groups and work with pastors and congregations in the Greater Boston area.

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Institute for Clergy Excellence

Huntsville, Alabama

The Institute for Clergy Excellence represents a comprehensive strategy for an institution that supports clergy but is not itself a denomination or seminary. Instead of offering a standard curriculum, the institute supports self-selected clergy groups by providing conditions and resources pastors need in order to engage in peer-directed activities and development. ICE's approach expects a level of initiative from pastors to form and maintain their own groups, recognizing that learning and development occur when groups take charge of their own agendas.

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Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention

Pastoral Excellence Program

Lott Carey's Pastoral Excellence Program exemplifies the potential for peer groups to cultivate imagination for ministry through border crossings. The program provides ministry immersions in African and African Diaspora contexts for pastoral peer groups. Participants travel as a part of a peer group, serve alongside pastors abroad, and upon return to the U.S. gather for conferences and other educational events to reflect on those experiences. Lott Carey's approach integrates the effectiveness of peer learning with the significant impact that cross-cultural travel has for expanding pastors' global vision of the church and its ministry in the world.

[Learn more »](#)

Texas Methodist Foundation

Institute for Clergy & Congregational Excellence

The Texas Methodist Foundation's Institute for Clergy & Congregational Excellence is an example of how an institution supports a particular denomination's efforts to provide ongoing development and learning for clergy. TMF provides a framework of services and programs designed to connect the development of pastors with the life of the denomination and its congregations. TMF offers facilitation for [Clergy Development Groups](#), groups where both [clergy and laity participate](#), and groups where denominational leaders (both bishops and district superintendents) can explore their roles.