

# **What are Attendance, Experience, Education, and Location Worth?**

**Southern Baptist Church Compensation Study  
2024:**

**Analysis of full-time senior pastor  
compensation and vacation**

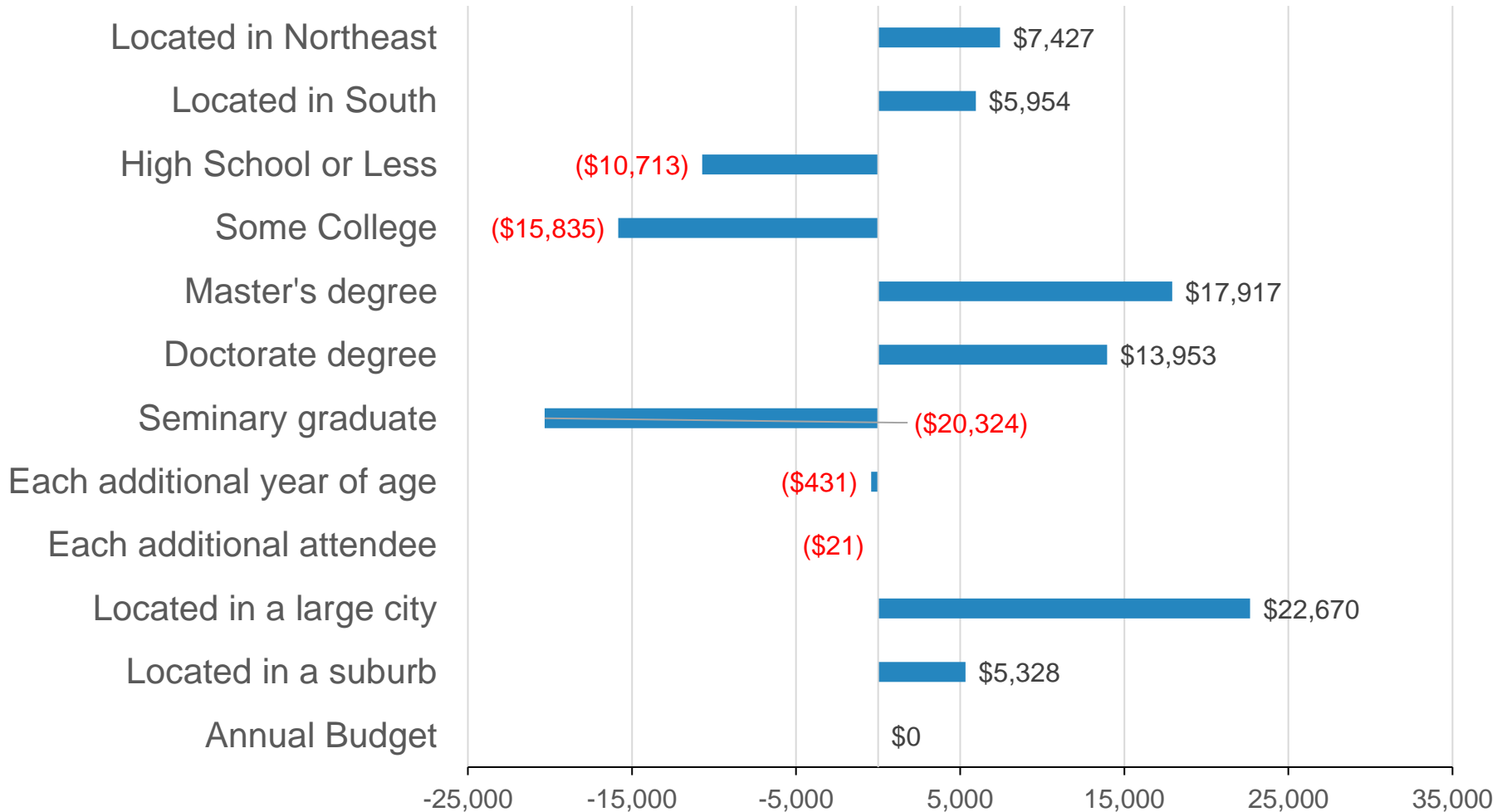
**Lifeway** research

# Methodology

- The 2024 Southern Baptist Church Compensation Study was conducted by Baptist state conventions along with GuideStone Financial Resources and Lifeway Research
- The study was conducted between April 1 and June 30, 2024
- Data acquired by the study can be accessed at [LifewayResearch.com/compensation-data](https://LifewayResearch.com/compensation-data)
- Responses from 2,696 full-time senior pastors were used for the analysis shown in this report

# What are attendance, experience, and location worth in compensation?

Among full-time senior pastors



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Results of regression analysis. Dependent variable: Total compensation

# How to View Differences in Total Compensation

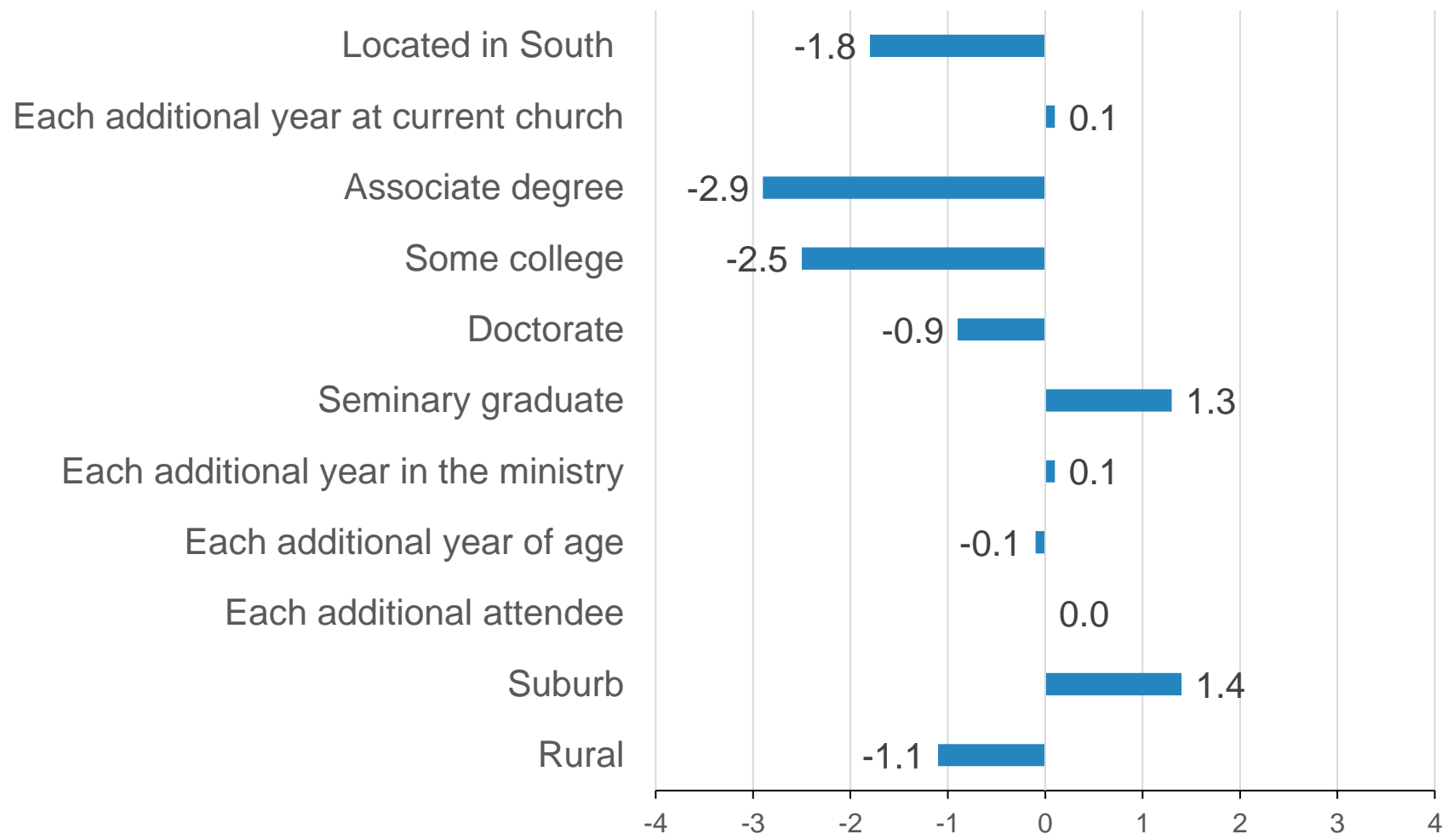
- Independent variables tested (region, years at current church, education, years in ministry, resident membership, annual budget, seminary, age, average weekly attendance, community location) account for 41% of the variance in total compensation (R-Square of the model), so other factors that were not measured or not measurable also can impact pastor compensation.
- The model begins with a constant compensation of \$73,253. The impact of each independent variable moves this up or down.
- The variables have relationships and cannot always be straightforwardly interpreted in isolation. It may appear that being a seminary graduate has a negative impact of \$20,324, but this is probably compensated because many of these pastors likely have either a Master's degree (+17,917) or a Doctorate degree (+13,953).

# What's It Worth in Total Compensation?

- Each additional **year** of pastor age does have a negative impact of \$431, but this could be related to where these individuals pastor and the size of their churches.
- **Larger churches** have a negative impact on pastor pay. For every additional 100 attendees, pastors' compensation is on average \$2,148 lower. This is likely influenced by the effect of having annual budget in the model. For each \$1,000 increase in a budget, pastor pay increases by \$47.
- Pastors who are located in a **Large City** have an average higher pay of \$22,670 compared to those in other types of communities. Those in **Suburbs** tend to have compensation that is \$5,328 higher.
- Pastors whose highest level of education is an Associate's or Bachelor's degree see no impact on their salary from these accomplishments.

# Change in days of vacation for location, attendance, education, & experience

Among full-time senior pastors



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Results of regression analysis. Dependent variable: Number of days of vacation

# How to View Differences in Total Vacation

- Independent variables tested (region, years at current church, education, years in ministry, resident membership, seminary, age, average weekly attendance, community location) account for 15% of the variance in days of vacation (R square of the model), so other factors that were not measured or not measurable also can impact pastor vacation time.
- The model begins with a constant of 17.1 days of vacation; the impact of each independent variable moves this up or down.
- Pastors in the South tend to receive 1.8 less days of vacation than those in other regions.

# What's It Worth in Vacation Time?

- Each **year** the pastor ages, gains more experience, and adds a year at the current church, the total expected vacation impact is +0.12. This means it takes around 8 years to add a day of vacation on average.
- **Larger churches** tend to give their pastors slightly more vacation. For every 159 attendees pastors get 1 more vacation day on average.
- Churches in **suburbs** on average give pastors an extra 1.4 days of vacation while those in **rural areas** have 1.1 less days.
- Vacation varies by **education**. Those with Associate's degree, Some college, or Doctorate receive on average 2.9, 2.5, and 0.9 less days of vacation, respectively.
- **Seminary graduates** receive an extra 1.3 days of vacation.



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