

Compensation and Insurance

Southern Baptist Church Compensation Study
2026

Lifeway Research

Methodology

- The 2026 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 29 and June 29, 2026
- Data acquired by the study can be accessed at LifewayResearch.com/compensation-data
- Responses from 3,888 **full-time** senior pastors, staff ministers, and office personnel were used in this report
- Responses for senior pastors were weighted by average attendance to more accurately reflect the population

What is included in Compensation?

- **Office and Custodial Personnel:** Salary
- **Non-Ordained Ministers:** Salary
- **Ordained Ministers:** Salary + Housing Allowance + Fair Rental Value of Church-owned Housing + Utilities for Church-owned Housing

What is included in Pay Package?

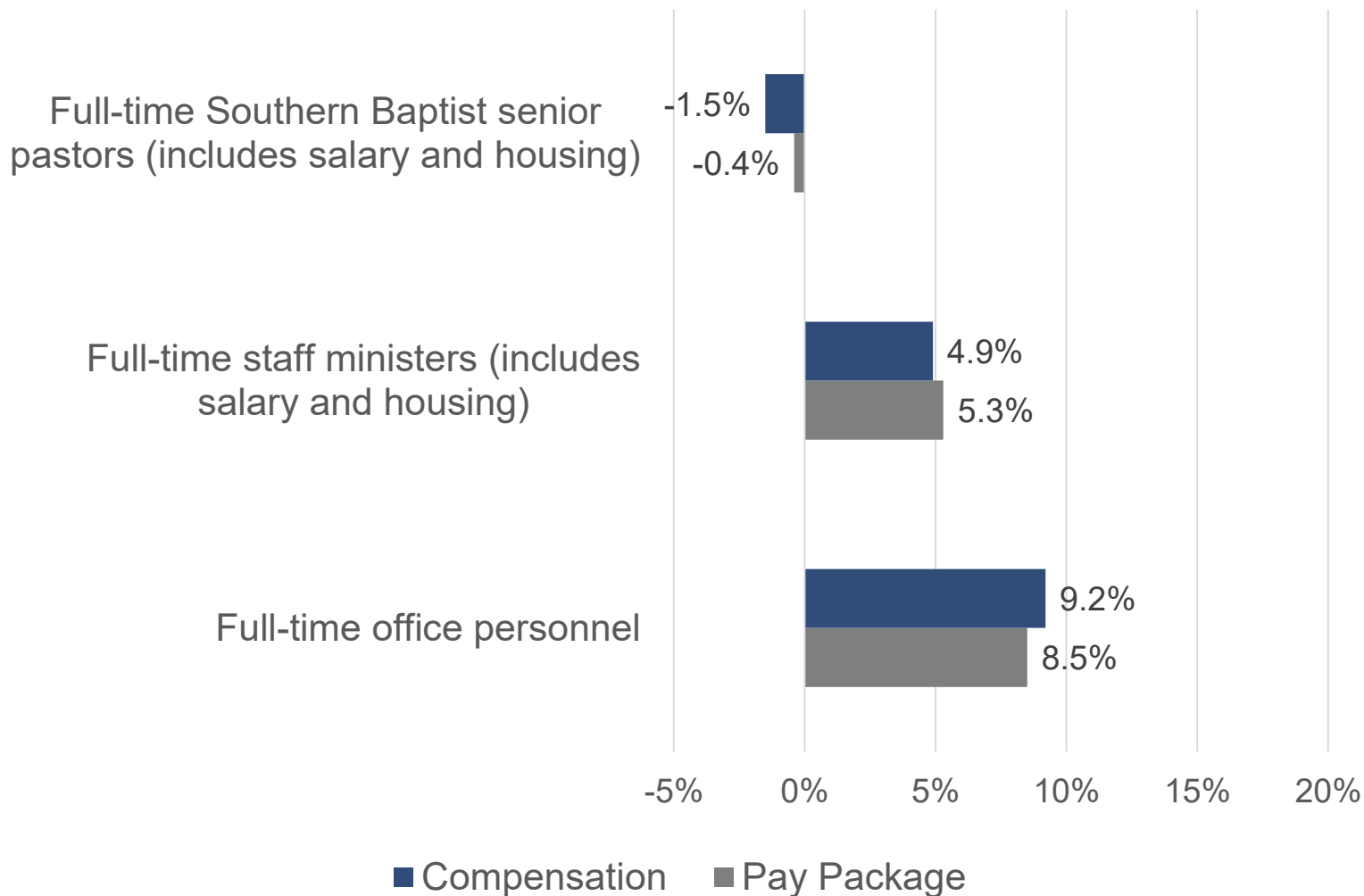
- **Office and Custodial Personnel***: Salary + Retirement Benefits Paid by the Church + Insurance Paid by the Church
- **Non-Ordained Ministers***: Salary + Retirement Benefits Paid by the Church + Insurance Paid by the Church
- **Ordained Ministers**: Salary + Housing Allowance + Fair Rental Value of Church-owned Housing + Utilities on Church-owned Housing + Social Security Equivalent** + Retirement Benefits Paid by the Church + Insurance Paid by the Church

* The Employer portion of Social Security is not included in the figure for Pay Package. The study assumes that the church pays the employer portion of Social Security for these employees.

**While the Social Security Equivalent could be included with compensation since it is taxable, the Compensation Study has chosen for a number of years to treat the Social Security Equivalent as a benefit so as to be consistent with the general treatment of social security for non-ministers.

Changes to church staff compensation and complete pay package over the last two years (2024 – 2026)

Among Southern Baptist Churches

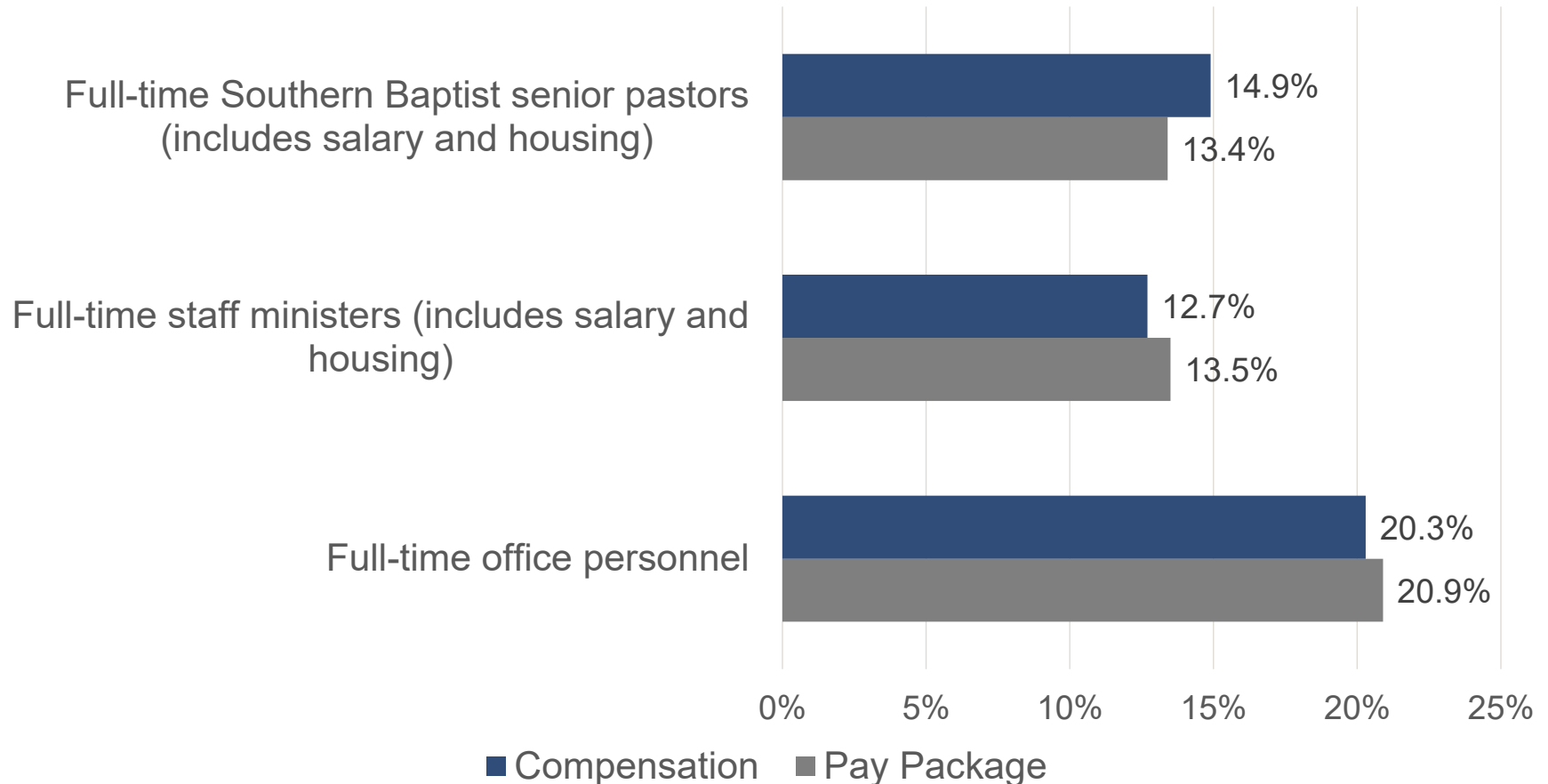


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Note: The Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) for this two-year period is +6.3%

Changes to church staff compensation and complete pay package over the *previous* four years (2022 – 2026)

Among Southern Baptist Churches

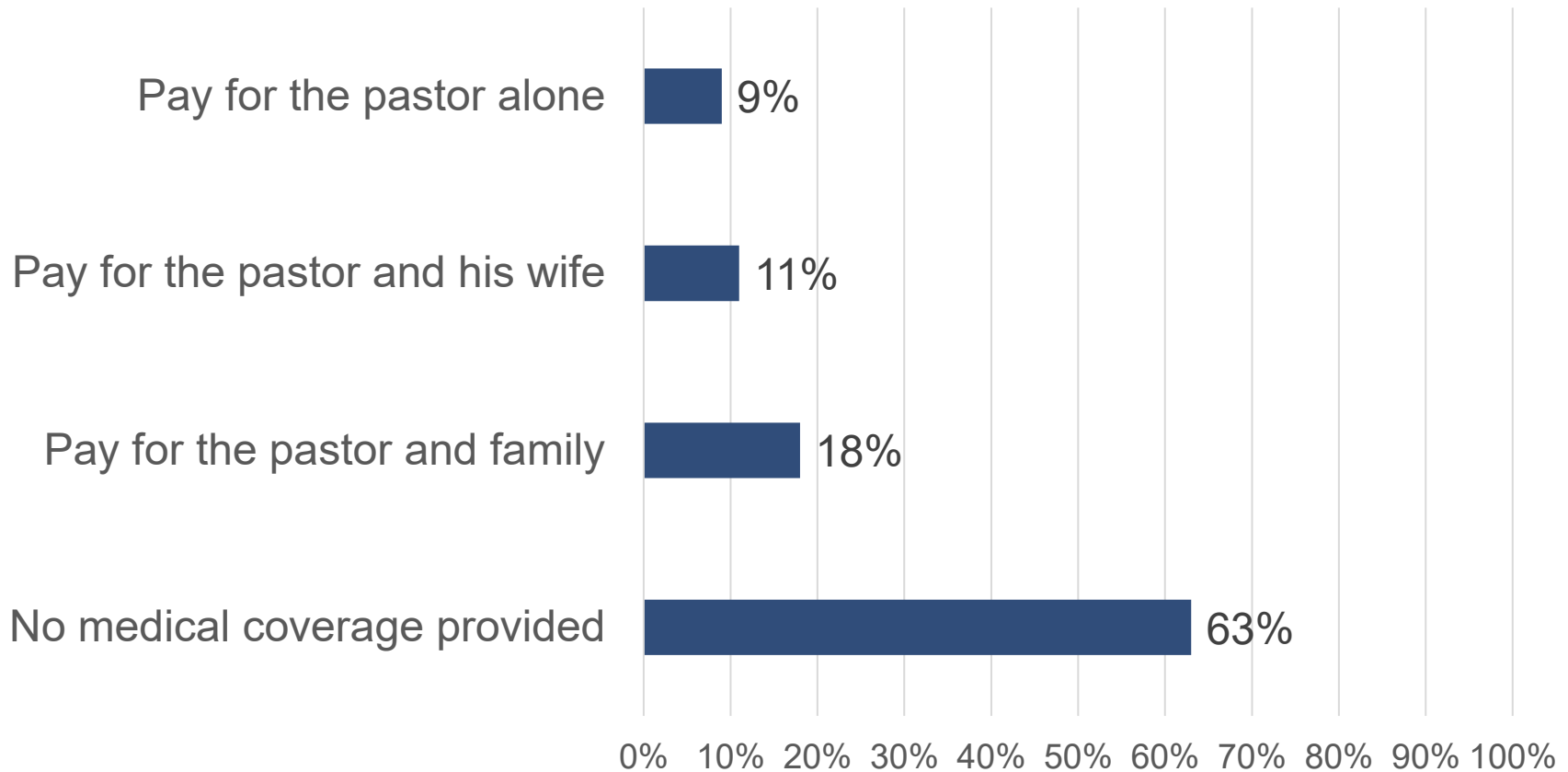


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Note: The Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) for this four-year period is +12.7%

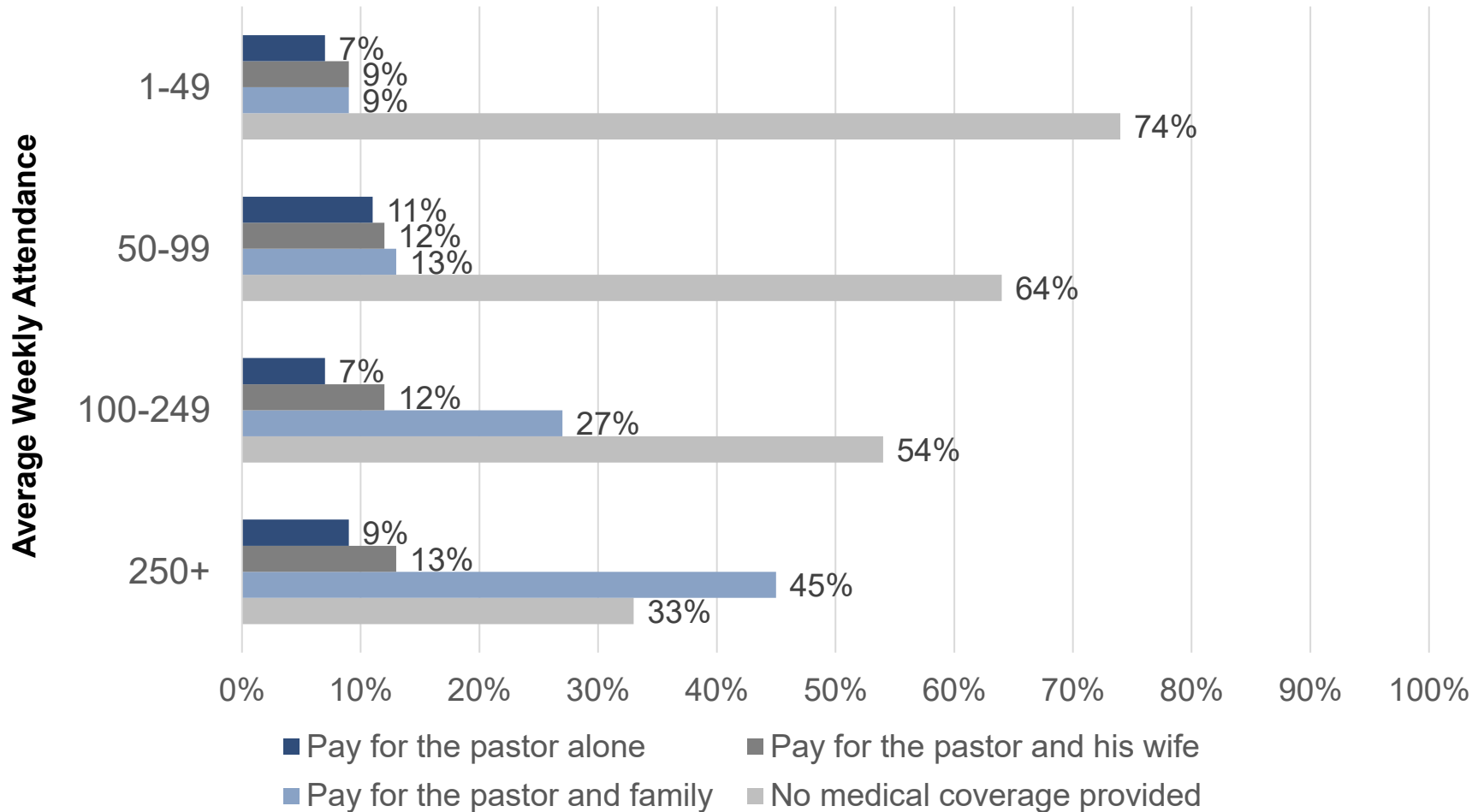
Percentage of churches paying some or all of the full-time senior pastor's medical insurance

Among Southern Baptist Churches



Percentage of churches paying some or all of the full-time senior pastor's medical insurance

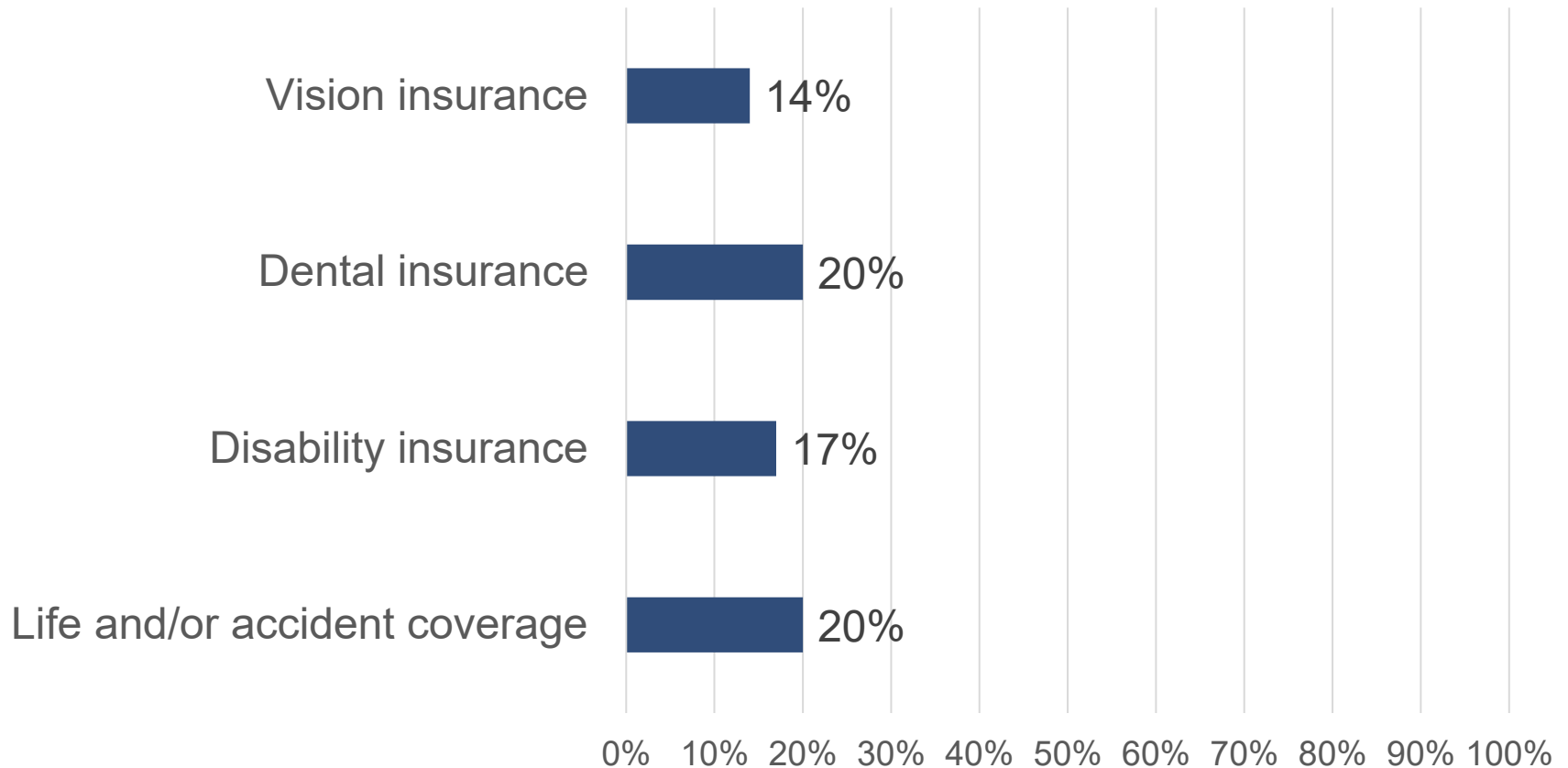
Among Southern Baptist Churches



Lifeway Research

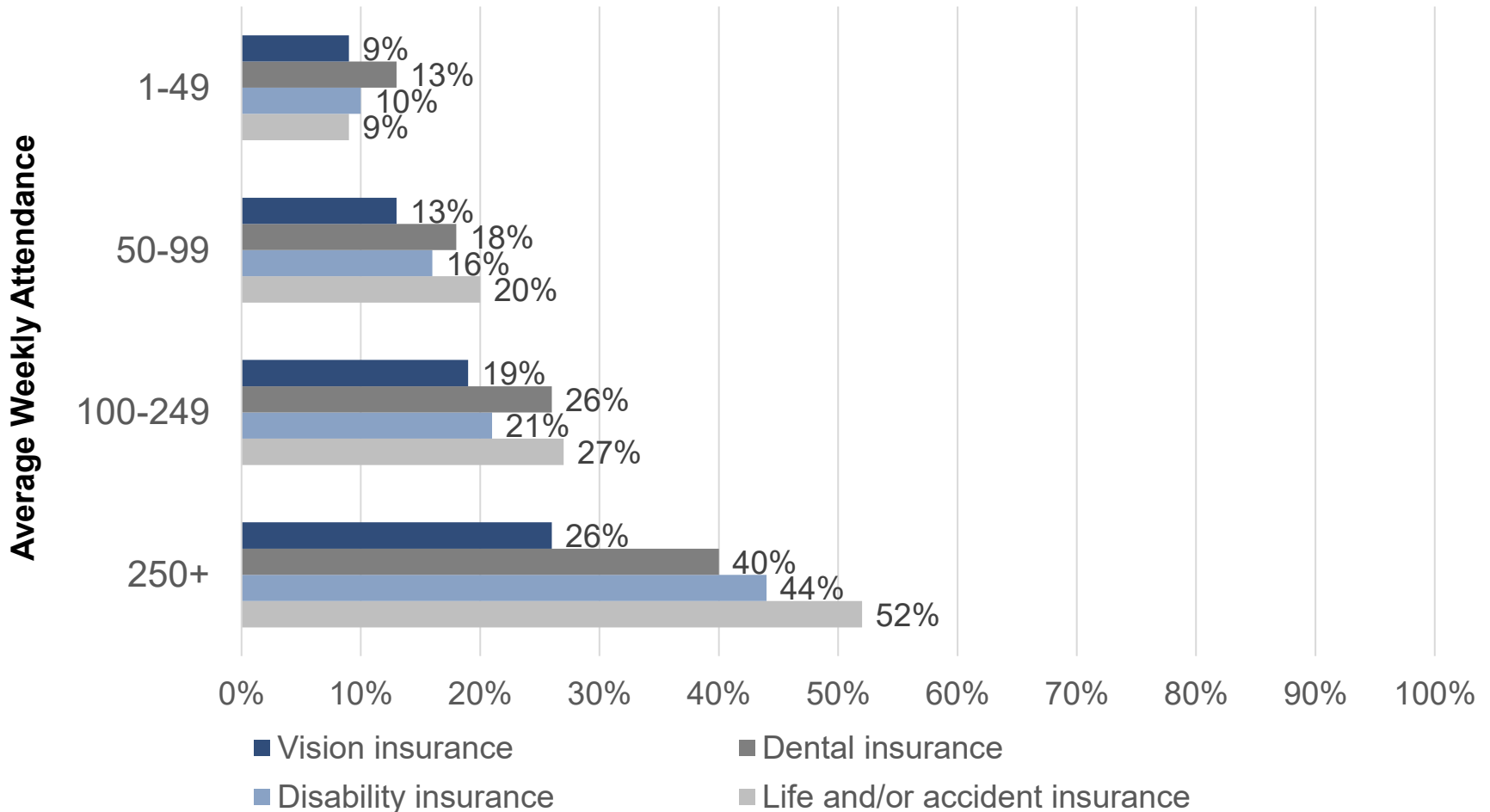
Churches fully or partially pay for the following benefits for full-time senior pastors

Among Southern Baptist Churches



Churches fully or partially pay for the following benefits for full-time senior pastors

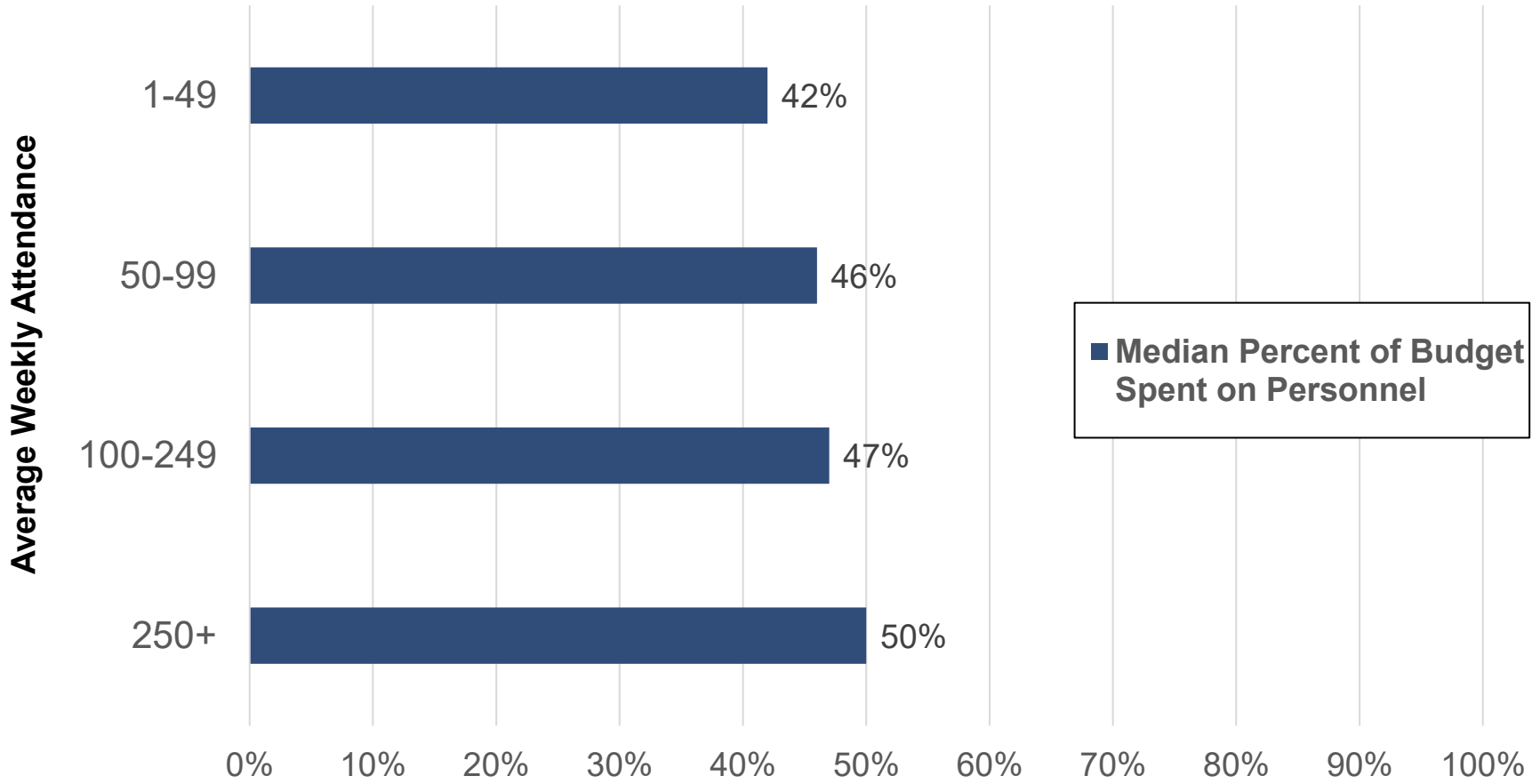
Among Southern Baptist Churches



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SBC churches spend an average of 45% (and a median of 46%) of their budget on employee compensation and benefits

Among Southern Baptist Churches



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