

Appendix A

Role & Purpose of the Office of the General Assembly

The Office of the General Assembly (OGA) seeks to maximize the mission effectiveness of the 640 churches and 14 presbyteries of the EPC in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas.

It's the structure that connects these churches and presbyteries and supports the whole EPC by providing the theological and governance essentials that ensure the distinctives that make the EPC what it is – Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical and Missional.

By pooling the resources of more than 640 churches and 14 presbyteries we produce much greater Great Commission results than if we worked separately.

How does this happen?

Through the Office of the General Assembly

- EPC churches participate in fulfilling the Great Commission by supporting the global mission of EPC World Outreach. Twenty percent of giving to the EPC is devoted to funding EPC WO, which oversees more than 70 global workers in more than 30 countries globally. Medical, retirement, dental, AD&D and life insurance are provided for those global workers. Beyond this effort, our churches are also connected to theologically aligned churches and organizations doing Great Commission work in the global church.
- EPC churches participate in church planting. The GA level of the EPC provides infrastructure to the church planting efforts throughout our denomination.
- EPC churches participate in the revitalization of plateaued or declining churches. The GA level of the EPC provides funding to churches that want/need to become healthier.
- EPC churches are served by biblically-based position papers and pastoral letters addressing contemporary issues.

In terms of the life and ministry of the local church, through the Office of the General Assembly

- EPC churches are helped in calling pastors who are properly credentialed. Medical, retirement, dental AD&D and life insurance is provided for those pastors, as well as for full-time staff.
- EPC churches have access to what can be called “an additional staff member” in Orlando who can respond in these times of need knowing our distinctive ethos. Listening and responding to churches dealing with questions and problems of a theological, pastoral, strategic, constitutional, disciplinary, legal are a normal part of what OGA staff do. That staff also is called regularly to help with church and pastor transitions and crisis communication strategy.
During the COVID-19 shutdown OGA staff have been difference-makers helping churches and presbyteries hold virtual meetings.
- EPC churches without online giving platforms; (so crucial in the shutdown) have been provided one.
- EPC churches and their members suffering from natural disasters have access to diaconal funds through the Disaster Relief Fund.

Through meetings hosted or promoted by the OGA

- EPC church leaders connect with like-minded leaders, sharing best practices and challenges- Stated Clerks, Ministerial and Candidates Committee chairs, Church development committee chairs, moderators, Executive Pastors and Directors of Administration, and church pastor groups.
- Church leaders can participate in equipping opportunities through the Leadership Institute, which is evolving from an annual event at General Assembly to a year-long ministry.

Through the OGA

- EPC pastors are helped in seeking calls.
- More than 60 chaplains ministering in a variety of venues are credentialed and supported.
- Diaconal funds are available to help EPC pastors in medical crises.

Through the OGA that our annual General Assembly meeting takes place. The decisions of our annual meetings are implemented by the OGA.

Finally, through the OGA the essential functions that protect the integrity and boost the efficiency of our global ministry takes place – finance, legal and administration, technology infrastructure and security, insurance, etc.