

Legal/Admin/Governance Comparison – Types of PCA Church Plants Parent/Child vs. Scratch Plant

The following helps define similarities and differences between PCA church plants, with a major distinction being whether the plant has a Parent/Child or a Scratch Plant organization. Several factors unfold at launch, growth, and particularization / legal independence phases. Key variables include legal status as employer and employee, governance, and provision of essential administrative services. This chart helps the planter and organizers of the church plant know what needs to be done and who (e.g., Parent, presbytery, planter) has what responsibility and accountability. A network may mix/match these factors for its situation(s).

Legal/Administrative Factor	Parent/Child	Scratch Plant
1. Pastor role	Assistant Pastor of Parent	Evangelist of Presbytery
2. Legal incorporation	Whenever appropriate	Upon launch
3. Employment status	W-2 employee of Parent	W-2 employee of plant corporation
4. Governance	Commission of the Parent's Session; bylaws established & updated as needed	Commission of the presbytery; bylaws established upon incorporation
5. Tax-exempt status	When local donors want to give locally, not through the Parent church	When local donors want to give locally, not through MNA
6. Taxpayer ID / EIN	Later, after incorporation	After incorporation during launch
7. Bank account	After EIN is obtained and when accounting is separated	After EIN is obtained and church funds are handled separately from planter's bank
8. Budget	Created by approval of the Commission of the Parent Session	Created by approval of the Commission of the presbytery
9. Income (initial)	Received and receipted by Parent, designated to planter's fund	Received and receipted by MNA, designated to planter's fund. Presbytery's financial sponsoring church receives monthly allocation from MNA to disburse as approved to the planter's bookkeeper.
10. Income (later)	Received directly by the plant	Received directly by the plant
11. Donation management	Handled initially by Parent and later by the plant's system and staff	Handled initially by MNA and later by the plant's system and staff
12. Financial administration	Handled by the Parent until plant becomes legally independent	Arranged and overseen by the presbytery's Commission
13. Payroll administration	Handled by the Parent until plant becomes legally independent	Arranged and overseen by the presbytery's Commission
14. Commercial insurance	Handled by the Parent until plant becomes legally independent	Arranged and overseen by the presbytery's Commission
15. Human Resource management	Handled by the Parent until plant becomes legally independent	Arranged and overseen by the presbytery's Commission
16. Employee benefits	Handled by the Parent until plant becomes legally independent	Arranged and overseen by the presbytery's Commission
17. Housing allowance	Resolution by Parent Session	Resolution by Presbytery Commission
18. Records management	Handled by the Parent until plant becomes legally independent	Arranged and overseen by the presbytery's Commission
19. Contract approvals	Handled by the Commission of the Parent's Session until plant becomes legally independent	Arranged and overseen by the presbytery's Commission until plant becomes independent
20. Membership	Approved by the Commission of Parent's Session until plant becomes particularized	Approved by the presbytery Commission until plant becomes particularized
21. Self-governance and legal independence	Particularization by presbytery, members' covenant, call/install pastor, elect/ordain/install officers, update bylaws, and operate independently	Particularization by presbytery, members' covenant, call/install pastor, elect/ordain/install officers, update bylaws, and operate independently