



## **Proposed Sabbatical Policy for Week of Compassion October 2020**

### **Current OGMP Handbook (Fall 2019) regarding Sabbatical, Page 34-35:**

*The General Minister and President may be eligible to take a three (3) month sabbatical at the conclusion of the General Assembly following his or her second biennium of service and fourth biennium of service.*

*Other Senior Staff members may also be eligible for a sabbatical. Employees should review their employment agreement and consult their supervisor.*

*The OGMP provides full salary and benefits during the sabbatical period. Employees' pursuing additional study may choose to take their sabbaticals incrementally with advanced written permission of the GMP.*

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## **1. Recommendation for Week of Compassion and Sabbatical Leave Benefit**

### **Recommendation:**

**The Week of Compassion Board of Stewards approves a Sabbatical Leave benefit for full-time exempt staff. Staff are eligible after the first 6 years of full-time employment and each 6 years thereafter. This benefit will be paid leave of 10 weeks.**

**The sabbatical leave program does not provide a cash stipend for sabbatical related expenses.**

### **Basic Description of Sabbatical Leave Benefit:**

In an effort to create opportunities to replenish the stores of energy and inspiration for staff, Week of Compassion offers the Sabbatical Leave benefit for full-time exempt employees. Staff are eligible after the first 6 years of full-time employment and each 6 years thereafter.

A sabbatical leave benefit offers the possibility for re-energized leaders, increased organizational capacity, strengthened overall leadership and as a substantial tool in employee retention.

Week of Compassion's sabbatical leave benefit will offer paid leave of 10 weeks.

As part of a sabbatical leave, Week of Compassion Board of Stewards will ensure that the work of the employee who is on sabbatical continues by putting a sabbatical plan in place in consultation with the staff and personnel committee so that there will be a minimal disruption to the overall mission and function of the ministry.

Only one sabbatical leave may be granted annually (within a fiscal year). The Executive Director will have final approval over all sabbatical leaves, keeping the overall needs and the resources of Week of Compassion at the forefront of the decision-making process.

The Week of Compassion Board of Stewards reserves the right to change or suspend the sabbatical leave program in consultation with the personnel committee of Week of Compassion.

## **2. Rationale for Sabbatical Leave for WoC Exempt Staff**

Effective organizations are led and sustained by creative and committed people. This is certainly the case with Week of Compassion. The staff of Week of Compassion exhibit a high level of creativity and productivity under often complex conditions with demanding organizational expectations for both excellence and productivity.

The combined dynamics of working in a rapidly changing denominational context, imagining and implementing forward-leaning programs and initiatives for Week of Compassion, the work of supporting systemic social change, and guiding social service organizations as they navigate challenging on-the-ground realities can often interfere with taking sufficient time away to rejuvenate and reset.

Sabbatical leave rejuvenates leaders, increases organizational capacity, strengthens overall leadership and is proven to be a significant tool in employee retention. There is abundant research that non-profit organizations offering sabbatical leave provides significant benefits to both the organization and the individuals making use of the leave.

Sabbatical leave can serve as rich ground for whole systems change when non-profit leaders use sabbatical time as an opportunity to shift perspective from the daily management of organizational activities to generative thinking. Employees who experience time away are able to find new avenues of creative thinking and visioning for the organization. This kind of work often results in new insights, new directions for the organization or just simply helps someone both be better at their job and experience an increased level of satisfaction and productivity.

Opportunities for rest, renewal, study and reflection are often not the norm in non-profit institutions and non-profits are notorious for expecting a high degree of creativity and commitment without providing the institutional supports for that work. A sabbatical can be a moment in which a shift can be made for the institution and the individual for creating new patterns of work/life balance.

One significant benefit of sabbatical leave is the way in which a sabbatical contributes to employee retention. Staff transition is costly for an organization. This includes lost productivity, expense of a search process, stress on remaining team members during the vacancy, disruption of services to partners and the real time it takes for a new employee to be fully orientated and working at capacity. Because Week of Compassion staff work is highly dependent on trusting relationships which take time to form, every staff change on a staff this size creates a learning curve by a large percentage of senior staff. Staff retention in and off itself is a worthy goal to strive towards, both for the employees themselves and the cohesion and continuity of the ministry.

A benefit of offering sabbatical leave is that it provides a “stretch opportunity” for peers of the person taking the leave, allowing other staff to take on new responsibilities and explore other aspects of leadership within the organization. This can deepen the leadership bench within Week of Compassion while helping staff expand their own areas of expertise and professional capacity.

### 3. Sabbatical Policy – Implementation Procedures

The following implementation procedures will be adjusted and redesigned by the Executive Director as necessary to allow the smooth and efficient implementation of the sabbatical leave policy.

#### Eligibility and Requirements

##### Employee Eligibility and Requirements:

1. Full-time exempt employees are eligible for 10 weeks of sabbatical leave upon completion of six years of continuous service.
2. Sabbatical leave should be a full 10 weeks and should not be split.
3. The employee must be in good standing, have received positive and above average employee assessments and deemed to be an outstanding staff member who has demonstrated a track record of consistent contribution across the organization. An employee with a formal employee improvement plan in place will not have sabbatical leave approved on the schedule stated above.
4. The employee must have not requested and received a leave of any kind of more than 1-week duration (regular sick leave and vacation time exempted) such as parenting leave, maternity leave, worker's comp leave, special leave without pay etc. during the fiscal year in which they are applying for sabbatical leave.
5. After their first sabbatical, employees must wait at least six years from the start of their previous sabbatical to begin their next one.
6. Sabbatical will be forfeited if not used within 24 months of eligibility. If said employee does not take sabbatical within the 24-month period of eligibility, their eligibility for the next sabbatical occurs from their original 6-year employment anniversary which made that employee eligible.
7. Vacations may not be taken within the 2 months prior to leave or the two months following sabbatical leave. Exceptions may be negotiated with employee's supervisor who may approve limited vacation days during those 2-month periods as long as it is not deemed detrimental to the ongoing work of the ministry.
8. Employees will receive full salary during sabbatical. There is no cash value associated with the sabbatical. If an employee does not use sabbatical during the time they are employed with Week of Compassion, the time and the compensation will be forfeited.
9. Employees on sabbatical leave may not work for Week of Compassion or take any other employment during this time. Employment for this purpose means paid work beyond the regular pay the employee will receive from Week of Compassion. Exceptions to this for limited scope work may be considered and granted by the Executive Director with a written request from the employee with a strong rationale for how this enhances the goals of the sabbatical leave and benefits the ministry. However, being otherwise employed while on sabbatical in essence violates the purpose of the sabbatical leave and exceptions will be rare if granted at all.
10. Employees receiving sabbatical leave are expected to remain in their current positions for at least one (1) year after their return from leave. Should the employee

leave Week of Compassion's employment prior to that one-year mark they will repay one month worth of salary. This condition is understood and agreed to by any employee accepting the sabbatical leave.

11. After a sabbatical is taken, employees are required to submit a brief written report about the sabbatical to their supervisor who will share that report with the Executive Director within two months of sabbatical completion.
12. Sabbatical awardees will share their reflections at a staff gathering (video conference is acceptable) within 2 months of their return.

#### **4. Timeline and Process**

##### **Sabbatical Application Process:**

1. The eligible employee must submit an application requesting to be considered for the sabbatical leave program describing how they will utilize their sabbatical time.
2. Applications for sabbatical leave will be accepted by August 15<sup>th</sup> for the following year leave.
3. The employee understands and accepts the sabbatical as an opportunity to refresh and rejuvenate and as an opportunity to come back refreshed with renewed commitment and fresh insights.
4. Sabbatical time will be designed by the employee and could be used for travel, study, writing, professional development, artistic endeavors, reflection, family time or any other pursuits that will enable and encourage renewal. The leave can combine more than one element or more than one location, but candidates should take care not to over schedule their sabbatical time.
5. Only one sabbatical leave may be granted within the ministry annually (Fiscal Year).
6. The Executive Director will consider all sabbatical leaves, keeping the overall needs and the resources of the ministry at the forefront of the decision-making process. The Executive Director has final approval over all sabbatical leaves.
7. The Week of Compassion Board of Stewards reserves the right to change or suspend the sabbatical leave program.

##### **Approval Process:**

1. Application for sabbatical leave must be made with the employee's supervisor by the August 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.
2. Supervisor offers an endorsement of the request for leave and forwards the request to the leadership team, establishing that the employee is in good standing with above average employee assessments and authorizes the sabbatical leave dates. Supervisors will take into account the needs of the team and the organization when approving sabbaticals.
3. Keeping the realities of the overall organization in mind, the Executive Director grants the final approval for all sabbatical leaves.
4. The Executive Director may approve up to 1 sabbatical per year.

5. Final approval for sabbatical leave will be made by October 15<sup>th</sup>.
6. Supervisor and employee will develop a written operational work plan for the candidate's absence and the immediate weeks upon the candidate's return with intentional planning for both the lead-in to sabbatical and the return from the leave.
7. Employee's supervisor will ensure that the employee's sabbatical report and presentation to staff occurs within two (2) months of the employees return to work.
8. The Executive Director will inform the OGMP of staff sabbatical leave.

**5. Application and Post Sabbatical Report (TEMPLATE):**

**Sabbatical Leave Request Form  
August 15**

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed dates for sabbatical leave (sabbatical leave is 10 weeks):

Begin Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a description of how you will be utilizing your time during your personal leave and how the leave will benefit you? Also describe the benefit you see to Week of Compassion of your leave.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*After carefully reading the terms and conditions of this sabbatical leave benefit, I hereby submit an application for the sabbatical leave benefit. I agree that if the leave is granted, I will complete all necessary documents and tasks prior to the start of the leave. Additionally, I will utilize my time during my leave as described above. I agree to return to my position at Week of Compassion at the expiration of the leave, unless prevented by verified illness or disability. If I leave employment with Week of Compassion before 1 year after my return, I agree to repay one month worth of salary.*

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date reviewed by Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date evaluated by Leadership Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Executive Director Decision:  Approved  Not approved

Executive Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Post Sabbatical Report Template

Within two months of an employee's return to work employees are required to submit to their direct supervisor a brief written report about the sabbatical. The supervisor will share that report with the Executive Director.

This report will then be shared at a staff gathering (video conference is acceptable) within 2 months of their return. This should be scheduled in conversation with employee's direct supervisor.

### **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) General Ministry Sabbatical Policy Comparison**

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Sabbatical Policy</b>
<b>National Benevolent Association</b>	Currently 12 weeks every 5 years
<b>Christian Church Foundation</b>	Personal leave for officers every 3 years, can add 2 weeks of vacation leave for that year
<b>Office of General Minister &amp; President</b>	GMP – 3 months after 4th and 8th year; Senior Staff members are eligible
<b>Disciples Home Mission</b>	Exempt employees: 3 months after 5 years; Rest & Renewal Policy for non-exempt/hourly employees. This is a paid 2-week period of rest and renewal after every 5 years of service.
<b>Church Extension Resources (DCEF &amp; HOPE)</b>	After 5 full years of service, exempt & non-exempt employees that do not qualify for study leave, may take 10 consecutive days off within the 6th year of employment & every 5 years following. Exempt staff that qualify for board approved study leave, may request 8-12 weeks after 6 full years of service and every 7th year thereafter
<b>Global Ministries (DOM)</b>	Exempt employees three months after five years
<b>Central Pastoral Office of Hispanic Ministries</b>	After 3 years
<b>National Convocation</b>	?
<b>Higher Education and Leadership Ministries</b>	Yes; President's determined by Board; other staff three months after five years
<b>North American Pacific-Asian Disciples</b>	Staff: 3 study days – 1st 2 years; 7 study days after 2 years
<b>Disciples of Christ Historical Society</b>	Yes
<b>Pension Fund</b>	7 study days after 2 years
<b>Council on Christian Unity</b>	Three months after five years
<b>Christian Board of Publication (Chalice Press)</b>	None



