TREC TOGETHER RISING AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY

TREC HUMAN RESOURCES & SUPERVISION RESOURCE

# Paid Sabbatical Overview and Sample Policy

To recognize employee's long-term contribution and dedication to an organization and improve staff's overall resiliency, more organizations are including sabbaticals as a benefit. Sabbaticals can be a welcome addition for employees, and they can also serve the organizations in several ways. They can improve the organization's staff health, help when recruiting job candidates, decrease staff turnover and allow development opportunities for staff as they cover their colleagues' work during their sabbatical.

## What is a sabbatical?

- A sabbatical leave is a clearly defined, extended period in which an employee steps away from their professional duties with the employer's approval.
- A sabbatical leave policy clearly outlines eligibility, procedures for requesting leave, and requirements for extended leave.

## Considerations

There are some important things to consider when developing your sabbatical leave policy.

- Will the leave be paid, unpaid, or a combination?
- Is this sabbatical designed by the employee, or are there employer requirements for how the time will be used?
- How many years does a person need to work to qualify for a sabbatical?
- How often will your organization offer an employee extended time off?
- What is the process for eligible employees to request sabbatical leave?
- Will your organization ask employees to commit to staying at the organization for a specified time after taking the sabbatical? What are the expectations?
- Are there other obligations or expectations of employees during their sabbatical?

There is no standard sabbatical policy. The following sabbatical policy is offered as a starting point for you to design your sabbatical leave program. As you explore and answer the questions above, and you may find that your policy looks different.



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# Sample Paid Sabbatical Leave Policy

[Organization Name] understands the significance of having employees who are leaders in their field and endeavors to encourage innovation and creativity in our employees. It is important that organization employees are given time to focus their creative endeavors both personally and professionally to feel refreshed, renewed, and recharged.

## Purpose

The [Organization Name] policy allows eligible employees to take paid sabbatical leave [enter purpose, *e.g., given*] to focus on self-development for a specified period.

## Eligibility

Exempt-level employees may apply for a sabbatical leave after [enter number] years of continuous full-time service. These employees may apply to take sabbatical leave for [enter number of weeks or months] at full pay or [enter greater number of weeks or months] at 50% of pay.

After an employee has completed sabbatical leave, they are not permitted to reapply for sabbatical leave for a period of [*enter number*] years following completion of an employee's last sabbatical.
Employees on approved sabbatical leave will receive pay and continued benefits during the period of leave. Employees on sabbatical leave are not eligible for tuition reimbursement or any sabbatical activity reimbursement.

## Procedures

Eligible employees who wish to apply for sabbatical leave are required to submit a letter to their immediate supervisor describing the reason for the sabbatical (if applicable) and their first and second options for dates. Requests must be submitted at least [enter number] months before the first day of leave. The submitted proposal will be reviewed by the employee's immediate supervisor and the Executive Director. Sabbatical timing may be adjusted based on staffing needs of the organization during the time requested.
Time off taken for approved Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave will not be counted against the employee when determining eligibility or "continuous service."

Employees on sabbatical leave will not be required to use any accrued leave during this period and are permitted to carry over all vacation and sick leave in the instance that the sabbatical leave crosses from one calendar year into the next. Employees will not accrue any additional leave during their sabbatical.

[Organization Name] expects employees on sabbatical to still adhere to the organization's rules even if they are not actively working. E.g., rules about confidentiality, data protection, not representing the organization in any partisan activities, etc.

[Organization Name]'s group benefits plan document states that employees who are on approved sabbaticals are eligible for coverage. Employees on sabbatical who are enrolled in our group benefits plan will continue to have pre-tax deductions made from their pay during the sabbatical period.



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