

Sabbatical Policy

A sabbatical is defined as a purposeful time away from ministry work, in which personal and professional growth are cultivated. The sabbatical policy is intended to benefit both the Avant member and the organization. A well-implemented sabbatical policy will maximize member well-being and productivity while encouraging leadership development and organizational growth by allowing others to take on more responsibilities for interim periods.

Objective

- To provide approximately 4-6 months away from full-time ministry work every fifth year in which the following takes place:
 - o Reflection
 - o Physical and Emotional Renewal
 - o Spiritual Enrichment
 - o Ministry Development

Length of Time

- The typical sabbatical will last for approximately 4-6 months, depending upon the goals and circumstances of the sabbatical proposal. Avant members are eligible to receive standard salary and benefits during this period.

Eligibility

- Must be full-time members in good standing with Avant
- Must have faithfully served a minimum of five years on the mission field
 - o Date of service begins when a missionary is deployed to the field
 - o Home Ministry Assignment is included within service term
 - o If a missionary has completed a sabbatical in the past, the missionary can apply for sabbatical again after five more years of service on the mission field
- Financial support must be at an adequate level

Content of Sabbatical Application (see attached application)

- Purpose
- Specific Objectives
- Proposed Schedule
- Contact information during sabbatical
- Status of financial support, and explanation if any external funding is needed

- If applicable: agreement with partner organization or location where sabbatical activities will be carried out
- Name and contact information of Sabbatical Coach

Steps for Application and Approval

1. An Avant member consults with their field supervisor regarding their sense of need and desire for a Sabbatical.

2. The Avant member completes a Sabbatical Application Form and sends this to the VP of Member Care and Ministry Director(s).

3. Once approved, the Avant Member will complete a more detailed **Sabbatical Proposal** that more fully describes the activities that will take place on sabbatical. It is important to note that sabbaticals are approved on basis of the strength of the proposal. Therefore, the Avant member will have the best chance at sabbatical approval if clear objectives, procedures, and methodology are indicated in this proposal. The **Sabbatical Proposal** should also include information on who and how the member's ministry responsibilities will be covered during the leave.

4. The completed **Sabbatical Proposal** is submitted to the Ministry Director(s) for the member's region, Vice President of Member Care, and selected Sabbatical Coach. The Ministry Director(s) and Vice President of Member Care will review the proposal and approve based on the merits and practical feasibility of the proposal. Specifically, Sabbatical Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- 1) Value of the time spent for personal and professional growth
- 2) Contribution towards kingdom outcomes
- 3) Specificity of goals, methodology, and procedures
- 4) Likelihood of success in the proposal
- 5) Agreement with an appropriate Sabbatical Coach
- 6) Timing regarding comings and goings of Avant members in ministry area
- 7) Avant member's field responsibilities are accounted for adequately during leave

Timeline

- Submittal of Sabbatical Application at least three to six months before planned sabbatical

- Review of Application by Ministry Director(s) and Vice President of Member Care within one month of submittal.
- Upon approval of Sabbatical Application, Submittal of Sabbatical Proposal at least 3 months before planned sabbatical.
- Review and decision of Sabbatical Proposal by Ministry Directors and Vice President of Member Care within one month of submittal.
- Notification of applicants within one month of Sabbatical Proposal submission

Modification of Approved Proposals

In the event that a modification to an approved project must be made, the Avant member will promptly inform the Ministry Director(s) and the Vice President of Member Care with such changed information. These changes will require review and may result in withdrawal of approval if found to be unacceptable.

Sabbatical Coach

A sabbatical coach is required during a member's sabbatical leave, and is to serve as an accountability partner on a bimonthly basis. The sabbatical coach will ask about personal and professional well-being and growth in addition to checking on the progress made on the member's sabbatical proposal. The sabbatical coach will likely be a Regional Member Care Facilitator, though if not available or applicable, a sabbatical coach can be chosen from Avant leadership.

Responsibilities

- The Avant member agrees to serve a minimum of two years with the organization upon completion of the sabbatical. Resignation from the mission prior to the two-year commitment will result in the sabbatical time being deducted from any potential severance time normally provided.
- In order to be eligible for subsequent sabbatical leaves, there must be evidence of having achieved the purpose of the previous sabbatical.

Conclusion & Report

If an Avant member's sabbatical proposal is approved, the member accepts the obligation to provide a summary report to the Vice President of Member Care and Ministry Director(s) indicating how goals were or were not met with explanation. This report should also include summary of how the sabbatical will positively impact their ministry. Report will be due within 90 days of the

conclusion of the sabbatical period. There is no word count specification, but no more than 1000 words would be appreciated.