

Sabbatical Leave Policy

[Linked from Our Personnel Operating Principles and Practices - Section 6.10](#)

SEND values dependency on God in all mission endeavors. SEND believes that only by closely abiding in Christ will SEND members be sustained in fruitful and effective mission service to the glory of God. Sabbath rest is God's order for His people to enjoy His fullest blessing in this life, and is His reward to His own as Sabbath rest is fulfilled in the life to come. SEND recognizes that extended times of Sabbath rest and reflection better enable SEND workers to thrive in their service to Christ over the course of their career. For this reason, SEND provides for Sabbatical Leave for the purposes and according to the guidelines that follow.

Purpose

Sabbatical leave is an extension of the biblical concepts of the Sabbath day and Sabbath year. The purpose of Sabbatical Leave is for SEND members who are engaged in long term service in SEND and where there is recognized need to "draw apart" for an extended time of renewal, reflection, and refocusing to deepen personal rootedness in Christ, to restore passion for Him and clarify His calling, and to revitalize a walk with Christ that is fruitful in personal growth and strengthened in kingdom impact on others. Sabbatical should not be considered vacation time.

Rationale

- SEND International recognizes that its members are its primary resource.
- Mission leadership is responsible as it is entrusted by God with the members of SEND.
- SEND is committed to the value of life-long learning and in-service development. Sabbatical Leave provides a dedicated period of time to invest in a member's spiritual and personal development. Though a Sabbatical plan may include taking a class if this contributes toward the overall purpose, a Sabbatical is distinctly different from an educational or study leave whose primary purpose is professional development or continuing education to acquire specific knowledge or skills necessary for the present or future ministry assignment.
- Sabbatical Leave provides for planned disengagement from the cumulative stress of ministry. Intentional, extended breaks for personal renewal and development help to avoid premature attrition due to overextension, and increase the potential for longer and more fruitful service.
- SEND recognizes that career transitions are natural in God's progressive call of His workers, and the Sabbatical Leave provides the focused time needed to observe and discern God's leading in one's ministry focus to determine whether such transition may be His direction.
- For field assigned members, home service periods typically do not provide opportunity for focused reflection to respond to cumulative stresses of the ministry assignment, stresses that require times of extended renewal. In most cases, sabbatical leave may be considered a distinct phase of a home service assignment.
- For members assigned to offices or positions without regular home service provision, SEND recognizes that full time office staff can be in stressful ministry situations, and therefore may need times of extended intentional renewal.

Process

We believe that a sabbatical should take place over an extended period of time, with a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 6 months as ideal. However, some cultural and practical circumstances may necessitate the consideration of different timeframes. A Sabbatical leave is

available for members of SEND International after a minimum of six years of service since a previous sabbatical or since first deployment, whenever there is recognized need.

A Sabbatical may be initiated by the member, member's supervisor, member's sending/receiving area leadership, or member's partner organization. The process begins when a Sabbatical Proposal is submitted for review. Submissions should be made at least six months prior to the desired Sabbatical.

The Sabbatical Proposal must include the following items:

- a) overview of the **purpose** (What outcomes do you have in mind?)
- b) **timeline** (When will you begin and for how long?),
- c) **location** (Where is the best setting to accomplish the objectives? There is no mandated location.)
- d) **work-flow reassignment** (How will your core duties be covered?)
- e) **plan** (How will you achieve the outcomes you have identified?)
- f) **funding** (How will you fund sabbatical expenses?)
- g) **oversight** (Who will you work with to monitor your progress?)

Sabbatical proposals will be reviewed/approved by the one responsible for member care in the member's Sending Office in consultation with appropriate Receiving Area leadership and sending church leader. For SEND members from global partner agencies, the IO Globalization Office serves as the liaison with appropriate person in the Sending partner agency. At the completion of the sabbatical leave, the member will provide an evaluation to those who approved the proposal. A SEND International [Sabbatical Guide](#) is provided to assist in developing this plan.

Practically speaking, a Sabbatical leave includes the following five components:

1. **Release and Relinquish:** The first phase involves disengaging from the direct ministry and leadership responsibilities.
2. **Rest and Recovery:** "Rest" in this context does not mean ceasing from all activity. It does mean moving from ministry engagement to the activities which will restore you emotionally, feed you spiritually and contribute developmentally. A Sabbatical does include disengagement from regularly scheduled ministry; it does not include disengagement from body life.
3. **Reflect and Refocus:** This phase emphasizes hearing from God and often includes extended times of solitude. It may also involve a spiritual director, retreats, and the active pursuit of God.
4. **Realignment and/or Reassignment:** Sabbaticals do not presume a change of roles but often include a review and reaffirmation of one's calling with a focus on seeking the maximum contribution to the kingdom in the next phase of life.
5. **Re-Entry/ Re-Engagement:** The final phase is the transition back to active ministry, which often combines the joy of refreshment with issues of pace, emotional stress and possibly spiritual warfare.

Note: This Sabbatical Leave policy is developed with the kind contribution of several organizations, and with special thanks to Pioneers USA and Missio Nexus.