



SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY

Nonprofit organizations should reward hard work and commitment
with opportunities to rest and recharge.

Check out a sample Nonprofit Sabbatical Leave Policy.



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Welcome aboard!

HI, I'M SEAN!

*The Nonprofit Fixer!*TM

I'm a coach, consultant, trainer, and strategic advisor. For the past 30+ years, I've helped causes, campaigns, and candidates raise millions of dollars and transformed nonprofit organizations and leaders.

I've served in a wide variety of roles in nonprofits, including policy, communications, development, grassroots organizing, direct service, board leadership, and five stints as an executive director. I've worked on a wide range of issues, including LGBTQ equality, reproductive justice, voting access, bullying prevention, climate change, and more.



WHY SABBATICALS ARE IMPORTANT

While leading the Climate Advocacy Lab in 2022, I reviewed multiple sabbatical policies from nonprofits across the United States. We then drafted one that made sense for us.

Every nonprofit is different and should consider each element of any policy. Policies are rules and rules should be followed and should be applied equally and treat everyone fairly.

Read the blog post about sabbaticals here bit.ly/SABBATICALS or scan the QR Code.



REMEMBER

- There are no hard and fast requirements for sabbaticals
- Talk to your attorney or in-state human resources expert before implementing.
- The policy below has a clear point of view. I think sabbaticals are about rest and recharging your metaphorical battery. My preference as an executive director is that employees not use a sabbatical to work another job or write a novel. The goal is to rest. For the organization to justify the expense of paid and unpaid leave and the disruption to the organization, it has to be worth it. Other organizations may be more hands-off in their policy.
- Be open to modifying it over time.
- Sometimes employees take extended leave and then decide to quit. Prepare for this. You'll find some language in the sample policy below that addresses it.
- For any additional questions, reach out to sean@nonprofitfixer.com

SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY

SAMPLE FROM CLIMATE ADVOCACY LAB 2022

Effective institutions are guided and sustained by creative, committed, and dependable people. Climate Advocacy Lab recognizes that employees need time to think, rest, reflect, and rejuvenate if we are to keep our organization and programs ahead of the curve. The enormous demands of working in social change organizations such as our own often interfere with taking sufficient time off to refresh and rejuvenate.

In an effort to create opportunities to replenish the stores of energy and inspiration for our employees, Climate Advocacy Lab offers the Sabbatical Leave Policy as a benefit. The policy offers paid leave for six (6) weeks after an employee has completed seven (7) consecutive years of service. Employees may supplement their sabbatical leave with up to an additional two (2) weeks of already accrued PTO leave taken consecutive to sabbatical leave for a total maximum amount of time off of eight (8) weeks. In the unlikely event that an employee cannot take the full amount of sabbatical leave in consecutive weeks, the leave may be taken intermittently in two three (3) week blocks or two four-week blocks if supplemented with accrued PTO. Years of service for the purpose of sabbatical calculation resets once a sabbatical has been taken.

The sabbatical time will be designed by the employee and can be used for travel, study, writing, staff development, artistic endeavors, reflection, family time or any other pursuits that will enable and encourage renewal. The employee may not work for Climate Advocacy Lab or take any other employment during this time. Sabbaticals must be approved by the Executive Director, or in the case of the Executive Director, the board co-chairs.

ELIGIBILITY

The employee must:

- Have worked for Climate Advocacy Lab as a full-time employee for a minimum of seven (7) years.
- Be an employee in good standing and have received positive and above-average performance evaluations.
- Have not requested and received a leave of any kind of more than one week's duration (with the exception of regular PTO) such as parental leave, family leave, medical leave, special leave without pay, etc., during the 12 months preceding in which they are planning to take their sabbatical leave.
- Not request a time for sabbatical leave that overlaps with another Lab employee's already scheduled approved sabbatical leave.
- Submit a request for sabbatical leave 6 months in advance of their requested dates. Climate Advocacy Lab is a small organization and we need to sufficiently plan for employee absences. The request should describe how the employee will utilize their sabbatical leave.

- Work with their supervisor to determine timing of their sabbatical that accommodates the employees' plans and reduces the impact on Lab operations.
- Accept the sabbatical as an opportunity to refresh and rejuvenate and as an opportunity to return to the organization refreshed with a renewed commitment of at least one (1) year.
- Work with their supervisor to design a work plan for how their work will be covered during the employee's absence and upon the employee's return to work.

TERMS OF SABBATICAL LEAVE

- Employees on Sabbatical Leave will continue to receive their full salary for their approved Sabbatical Leave dates.
- The Lab will continue to pay for employee's participation in The Lab's benefit plans during the approved Sabbatical Leave Dates.
- The employee will not accrue further Sabbatical, Holiday, or PTO hours during a Sabbatical leave except when using accrued PTO.
- There can only be two employees on Sabbatical in a calendar year, so these will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Sabbatical Leave may not be used in the 60 days surrounding national elections.
- An employee who does not return to work at the scheduled conclusion of their Sabbatical Leave will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned their employment.
- If an employee does not return to work at the conclusion of a Sabbatical Leave or otherwise voluntarily resigns their employment within 9 months following a Sabbatical Leave, Climate Advocacy Lab reserves the right to deduct the Sabbatical Leave from any unused PTO time and even seek repayment of the cost of the paid time off used.
- Unused Sabbatical Leave is not payable to an employee should they leave their position or be terminated after completing seven (7) years of employment or any subsequent seven years of employment at Climate Advocacy Lab but before taking a Sabbatical Leave.
- Employee does not need to return equipment while on sabbatical.
- Employees have the right to refuse this benefit without penalty. This is not a forced sabbatical.
- The employee has one year from the date on which they complete their 7 years of employment to redeem this benefit or it is forfeited. Employee will not be penalized if denied sabbatical because of another employee's sabbatical. Employees must wait 7 additional years for another sabbatical.
- The Lab does not discriminate in the allowance or execution of this benefit. See our employment manual for these protections. They are extended to sabbaticals as well.

Nothing in this policy modifies nor should be construed to modify the at-will employment relationship between employees and the Climate Advocacy Lab. Climate Advocacy Lab may modify or eliminate this policy at any time, in its sole discretion.

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