

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF RHODE ISLAND

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SABBATICAL

A sabbatical is understood to be a time utilized by clergy in order to be released from regular ministries for the purpose of study, theological reflection, spiritual renewal and strengthening of skills and ministries according to a well-defined plan developed by the person taking leave in coordination with their vestry or bishop's committee and approved by the Bishop.

Purpose:

A clergy sabbatical is not simple a leave intended for rest, relaxation, or change in routine. Such time is already provided for clergy as annual vacation. For clergy, sabbatical is a time for renewal of one's sense of vocation and extended study not possible during the typical work year. A sabbatical is intended to allow time for reflection, research, writing, internship or intensive training.

Guidelines:

- Clergy who have completed five years of service in a parish or mission are eligible to apply for a sabbatical, or as agreed upon in the cleric's letter of agreement.
- The normal duration of a sabbatical is three months. Exceptions must be approved by the Bishop's Office.
- There needs to be a lead time of at least six months prior to the start of the sabbatical for preparation and conversation with the lay leadership and congregation and the Bishop.
- An applicant must develop specific goals, determine the means for reaching those goals in academic, spiritual and personal areas, and present them to the Vestry or Bishop's Committee to develop mutual expectations which will be i part of the application. The application must be submitted to the Bishop for approval no later than six months prior to the start the sabbatical. The application should clearly identify how the sabbatical will benefit the congregation.
- Following the sabbatical the clergy will prepare an evaluation of the sabbatical based on the Application and share it with the Bishop and their Vestry or clergy supervisor
Required Components: Sabbatical need to include these three components. These components are designed to increase the clergy's ability to lead church institutions in a changing world and to enhance the life of a congregation in which the clergy serves.

1. Academic

- Extended period of residence in an academic institution
- Independent study which can be measured and has an impact on the life and work of the applicant in their current ministry
- Internship with non-profit in order to enhance skills transferable to current church context.
- Completion of work required for an advanced degree program

2. Spiritual

- Time to develop perspective about applicant's spiritual growth and future development working with a spiritual director or coach.
- Extended retreat time for reflection and prayer

3. Personal

- Opportunity for personal refreshment and renewal
- Time for strengthening of personal and family relationships

Funding:

Typically, a priest or deacon on sabbatical continues to receive salary and other benefits, including their normal Continuing Education allowance. It is the responsibility of the congregation to provide for clergy presence as needed, whether that be as little as Sunday supply or full time. Prudent congregations should set monies aside each year so that they have a fund to pay for Clergy presence when their priest is on sabbatical

The Bishop has limited funds available to support sabbatical work. A maximum grant of \$2,000 may be requested at the time that the sabbatical application is sent to the Bishop's Office.

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF RHODE ISLAND
Professional Development Leave/Sabbatical Application

The Policy regarding Professional Development Leave/Sabbatical requires that all clergy desiring to take a sabbatical complete this application to include sabbatical plan six months prior to the time the sabbatical is intended to begin.

A sabbatical is understood to be a time utilized by clergy in order to be excused from regular ministries for the purpose of study, theological reflection, spiritual renewal and strengthening of skills and ministries according to a well-defined plan developed by the person taking leave in coordination with their vestry or the bishop's committee. The plan must be submitted with this request.

The Bishop has a modest amount of money with which to assist clergy who wish to take a sabbatical . Clergy may apply for such assistance only after committing the full amount of the church-provided continuing education reimbursement for the year and an amount equal to the request from their own personal funds. The maximum award is \$2,000. These grants will be awarded as money is available.

Name of Applicant: _____ Date of Application: _____

Church: _____

Years of service in current position: _____

Dates of previous sabbaticals: _____

Diocesan service (committees, etc.): _____

Dates of proposed Sabbatical Leave: _____

Support:

Date of Vestry/Bishop's Committee approval of attached plan: _____

Signature of Warden: _____

What is the cost of your sabbatical plan?

Tuition _____ Church Contribution _____

Travel _____ Personal Contribution _____

Other expenses _____ Request for Assistance _____

TOTAL _____ TOTAL _____

I agree to the following grant conditions:

- I will submit a written evaluation of my sabbatical within 30 days of its completion including post-sabbatical plan to share what I have learned with Vestry/Bishop's Committee and church. Copy to be sent to the Bishop.
- If I do not complete any portion of my sabbatical plan, I will inform the Bishop and return any funding provided for that part of the plan to the Bishop's Office.
- I understand that upon return from a sabbatical I will be expected to continue to serve in my current position for at least one year.

Signature _____ **Date:** _____

Return form to:

The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, RI 02903