

Policy 20: Paid Family Medical Leave

COM Approval: September 21, 2023

PGA Approval: November 4, 2023

Eligibility

All ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in an installed relationship with a congregation (pastors and associate pastors) are required to have a minimum of twelve weeks paid family medical leave (G-2.0804). Congregations are encouraged but not required to provide these benefits to other ministers of Word and Sacrament. The provisions of this policy outline the minimum requirements for paid family medical leave for pastoral calls in the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

Types of Leave

Paid family medical leave may encompass any of the following:

- *Parental Leave:* Within one year of birth or adoption by a pastor or the pastor's spouse, a pastor may take up to twelve consecutive or intermittent weeks of paid family medical leave.
- *Caregiver Leave:* In times when an immediate family member requires care due to a major illness or disability, a pastor may take up to twelve weeks' paid family medical leave, either consecutively or intermittently.
- *Medical Leave:* In the event of a serious health condition that causes major illness or disability, a pastor may take up to twelve weeks paid family medical leave.

Leave Parameters

- A pastor may use up to twelve weeks (including Sundays) of paid family medical leave in any rolling twelve-month period. Should more than one precipitating event or circumstance permitting the use of paid family medical leave arise in a particular twelve-month period, the session and pastor are encouraged to be gracious and generous in granting paid family medical leave and caring for one another.
- A pastor provides as much advance notice as possible for potential paid family medical leave.
- Paid family medical leave may be used—in accordance with need—consecutively or intermittently. Paid family medical leave may also be used as a time offset that allows the pastor to move temporarily to part-time service. Whether used consecutively, intermittently, or as an offset, the total amount of leave time permitted is equal to the equivalent of twelve weeks of work hours as regularly scheduled prior to the beginning of the leave.
- Eligibility for paid family medical leave begins on the first day of installed service and concludes upon dissolution of the call.
- During paid family medical leave, the pastor will continue to receive all benefits in their terms of call, including dues paid to and benefits provided by the Board of Pensions.
- Use of vacation time or other forms of paid leave is not required but may be used to extend leave time at the discretion of the pastor.
- Any questions about eligibility for paid family medical leave are referred to the Committee on Ministry for interpretation.

Following the period of paid family medical leave, the pastor is expected to return to the same position with the same title, terms of call, hours worked, and job description, unless the pastor requests such a change due to circumstances that have arisen during the time on leave.

Church Support

- While the individual congregation is responsible for the funding and administration of paid family medical leave, state-provided disability and paid leave benefits and Board of Pensions financial protection programs may be considered in order to help offset income continuation costs.
- Communication of mutual needs and planning is vital to minimize disruption for the congregation. Pastors are encouraged to anticipate leave with sensitivity around the needs of the congregation, including but not limited to temporary replacement and fulfillment of duties.
- Paid family medical leave is not intended to be a burden but rather a source of joy as congregations encourage pastors to take time for the good of their families. In the spirit of the connectional church, councils of the PC(USA) are encouraged to work together to assist individual congregations in the development of funding paid family medical leave in order to best serve God. The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, through its congregational consultants and the COM, will work to support congregations as their pastors use paid family medical leave.