



Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

Long-term Renewal Overview

(Formally known in the Book of Discipline 2016 Par 350.3, as the Formational and Spiritual Growth Leave)

"A clergy member may request a formational and spiritual growth leave of up to six months while continuing to hold an appointment in the local church. Such leaves are available to clergy members who have held full-time appointments for at least six years. Such a leave shall be with the approval of the committee on pastor-parish relations, the church council, and the district superintendent. Annual conferences are encouraged to assist with pulpit supply and other temporary support for such leaves."

Guidelines:

- Clergy may request Long-term Renewal (Formational and Spiritual Growth Leave, BOD 350.3) up to 6 months for those who have held full-time appointments in the MN Annual Conference for at least six years (may be pro-rated for part-time clergy).
- Long-term Renewal is available to Elders, Deacons, Associate Members and Licensed Local Pastors.
- Clergy continue to hold an appointment during Long-term Renewal and commit to a minimum of one year in same appointment upon return in coordination with the Cabinet's appointment process.
- Long-term Renewal is in addition to vacation time, and the local church continues to provide compensation and benefits during this period.
- Clergy need to request Long-term Renewal at least six months in advance with a 12 month inquiry desirable to provide sufficient time for consideration and planning.

Long-term Renewal is considered for the following reasons:

- A significant time of rest, relaxation and renewal
- A time to nourish one's relationship with God and with others
- A time to reflect and recommit to one's call to ministry discovering a renewed vision and focus for ministry
- A time of study for spiritual (individual focus) and formational (ministry focus) growth

Items of note:

- Grants to support the formational plan are available to the clergy (up to \$1000 per month).
- Grants to support partial funding of pastoral coverage are available to the church. (up to \$1000 per week, dependent upon paid coverage needed).
- Applications will not be approved for Long-term Renewal when a clergy is within three years of anticipated retirement.
- Remunerative employment during a renewal time away is not permitted unless directly related to the Formational Plan.
- According to the IRS, a 1099 must be issued for grants that provide services not required by your employer. A grant supporting the Formational Plan is considered part of income for purposes of determining tax liability.

Process:

1. The clergy person contacts the district superintendent at least six months in advance to request Long-term Renewal.
2. Following the district superintendent's approval, the clergy person shares the request with the Staff Parish Relations Committee and/or the church leadership council.
3. Following the approval of both the district superintendent and SPRC/church leadership, the clergy person completes a [Long-term Renewal Application](#) including the [Formational Plan](#).
4. Should financial support be needed for pastoral coverage during the Long-term Renewal, the clergy person or church leadership complete the [Pastoral Coverage Grant Request](#) by the deadline date required for the [Long-term Renewal Application](#).
5. The Grant Review Team reviews grant applications submitted for Long-term Renewal for pastoral coverage and the Formational Plan funding twice a year in December and June. The team is comprised of a representative from the Cabinet, MCBPI, Board of Ordained Ministry, and the Area Director of Clergy Well-being.