**OVERVIEW FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSSITANCE OPPORTUNITIES AND SABBATICAL GUIDELINES FOR BRENTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH STAFF**

Brentwood Baptist Church holds high the value of self-development and is committed to providing opportunities and resources for church staff to develop the Knowledge, Attitude, Skills and Habits (KASH) necessary to succeed in their calling and provide optimum value to the church and God’s Kingdom.

There are three avenues of funding for Staff Education Assistance: (1) Self-Development line items in specific ministry budgets administered by ministers and supervisors, (2) Sabbaticals funded through the Staff Leadership budget and administered by the Executive Pastors in consultation with department heads, (3) Seminary Subsidies funded through the Staff Leadership budget and administered by the Executive Pastors in consultation with department heads.

Below are prerequisites and purpose for each of these three self-development areas as well as the procedure and policies related to a ministry sabbatical.

**SELF-DEVELOPMENT FUNDS**

**Prerequisites:** Self-development funds are available to BBC employees who:

* are current full or part-time employees
* are performing their duties in a satisfactory manner as indicated by their immediate supervisor and annual Performance Review

**Purpose:** Self-development funds are designed to assist employees in pursuing their annual Self-Development Plans and may be used for a variety of initiatives, such as, but not limited to Conferences, Conventions, Workshops, Seminars, Consultants, Certifications, Site-Visits, Books and DVD’s.

**Procedure:** Staff desiring Self-Development funds for themselves and/or those they supervise must establish a Self-Development line item in their budget. In keeping with the budget planning process they will annually submit a proposed Self-Development budget accompanied by an explanation for how they anticipate using the funds. Such requests will be vetted by the department head and Executive Pastors who along with the Finance Ministry Team and Trustees will determine the final Self-Development budgets.

**SEMINARY SUBSIDIES**

**Prerequisites:** Seminary Subsidies are available to BBC employees who:

* are current full or part-time Ministerial or Professional Level employees.
* have been employed by BBC for a minimum of six months.
* are performing their duties in a satisfactory manner as indicated by their immediate supervisor and annual Performance Review.
* have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college and who meet Seminary entrance requirements.

**Purpose:** Seminary Subsidies are designed to assist employees in pursuing advanced and post college degrees from an accredited like-minded Seminary.

Accounting for Seminary Subsidy expenditures and timely payment to the Registrar’s Office is the sole responsibility of the Minister and must be coordinated with the Business Office. It is the responsibility of the Minister to understand and follow the required accounting procedures.

Employees utilizing Seminary Subsidies will be expected to achieve successful completion of course work. A *Seminary Report* form is to be completed within 45 days of completion of each semester of classes and copies submitted to the immediate supervisor, department head and appropriate Executive Pastor.

Continuing assistance is dependent upon continued satisfactory job performance as determined through the annual review process as well as proof the employee remains in academic good standing and is on-track for graduation in a timely manner. A grade transcript provided each semester to the immediate supervisor will offer sufficient substantiation of academic good standing.

**SABBATICALS**

**Prerequisites:**  Sabbatical funds are available to BBC employees who:

* are current full time Ministerial Level employees.
* are performing their duties in a satisfactory manner as indicated by their immediate supervisor and annual Performance Review.
* have been continuously employed by BBC, either part or full time, for a minimum of 5 years.

**Purpose:** The word Sabbatical is derived from the word Sabbath, or the Hebrew word Shabbat, which among its many biblical definitions is a time of retreat, rest, reflection, ceasing and worship. The word Sabbatical for an institution of higher learning typically denotes a period of paid leave from work for research, study, or travel.

The BBC interpretation of Sabbatical is a synergistic blend of the above definitions. It is a time for intentional vocational enrichment and also a time for personal spiritual, physical, emotional, family and relational renewal. It may even include a time of active missional engagement. Working with their Direct Supervisor and Executive Pastors, Ministers will determine the appropriate blend of these priorities for each Sabbatical.

**Procedure:** In the budget planning process for the year of the desired Sabbatical, eligible Ministers must submit to the appropriate Executive Pastor the *Sabbatical Request* form signed by their immediate supervisor and department head.

If the Sabbatical is approved and is funded in the coming year budget, no less than 60 days prior to the Sabbatical start date Ministers must submit a *Sabbatical Proposal* form to the appropriate Executive Pastor signed by their immediate supervisor and department head. The proposal will include the following:

1. A detailed time line and description of the various elements proposed for the Sabbatical.
2. An explanation of the perceived benefit to the Minister and to the church.
3. An estimated cost.
4. A plan for covering the Minister’s responsibilities during the Sabbatical.

Within 60 days of completion of the Sabbatical the Minister must submit a *Sabbatical Report* form to their supervisor, department head and appropriate Executive Pastor.

**Policy:** Eligibility will be determined from the date of hire as a Minister or from the time of position change to Ministerial Level. A Minister will be eligible for an initial four week sabbatical after completing five years of continuous service and the second and subsequent four week sabbaticals every five years of continuous service thereafter.

Up to two weeks may be added to the Sabbatical time away if approved as a part of the *Sabbatical* *Request* form. Additional weeks will be credited against eligible weeks of Vacation.

In the calendar year the Sabbatical is taken the minister is limited to one week of additional self-development that requires time away from the office, and the appropriate Self Development line item in the budget will be reduced accordingly.

It is the intent of the church that a minister remain in service for at least one year following each Sabbatical to allow the church to experience the benefits and value of its investment.

All salary and benefits will continue uninterrupted during the Sabbatical.

**Funding:** The funding levels of Sabbaticals is determined in the annual budget process and as such in any given year the number of staff eligible for Sabbaticals, financial conditions and other priorities may impact the following funding guidelines. The Executive Pastors and Business Office will oversee the Sabbatical line item in the annual church budget.

For the five year Sabbatical a Minister is eligible to expend up to $XXXX.

For the ten year and subsequent Sabbaticals a Minister is eligible to expend up to $XXXX.

Upon supervisor approval Ministers may augment these allocations with available funds from their Ministry budgets.

From the above amounts the church will allow up to $XXXX\* for family expenses. The Minister may use this money for travel, lodging and meals for the family when they are present on the same trip with the Minister and may not be applied for additional expenses such as special events, sight-seeing or souvenirs.

Accounting for Sabbatical expenditures must be coordinated with the Business Office and it is the responsibility of the Minister to understand and follow the required accounting procedures.

*\*All funds used for family expenditures are considered by the IRS to be 100% taxable income and will therefore appear on the Minister’s W2 form.*