

East Ohio AC - Policy, Procedures, and Q&A

East Ohio had the most recent AC legislation, and it therefore built on the other legislation (e.g., Illinois Great Rivers and Western Pennsylvania).

East Ohio Parental Leave Policy

Read the full policy at this link: [EOC Parental Leave Policy](#)

East Ohio Parental Leave Procedures

Read the full procedures at this link: [EOC Parental Leave Procedures](#)

Together, the policy and procedures are located in the East Ohio Pre-conference workbook, pp. 21-24: https://www.eocumc.com/eoac23/_pdf/PreConfWorkBook.pdf

Q&A with Lorrin Radzik & Abby Auman

Lorrin Radzik (Conference COSROW chair) is the primary author, with a lot of help from Hannah Weisbrod (BOM registrar), and verbal input and advocacy from Abby Auman (former dean of Cabinet). Comments below are abridged from a fall 2023 Facebook conversation.

Is the \$10,000 in grant money coming from ministry shares? How is it budgeted?

Right now, these funds are coming out of Cabinet funds earmarked for emergency salary support. Historically East Ohio has budgeted money for equitable compensation, minimum salary support, and other salary support. The amounts, line items, and approval process have shifted over the years.

Abby Auman could see that we had at least \$40k unspent every year among these funds. (The Cabinet, CCFA, and Equitable Comp all had access to these same numbers. People not in these groups might not have even known where to look.)

The amount we were asking for was based on what we would support ad hoc when a pastor was out for a medical crisis. It fit within budgeted amounts that were typically not used. We included a provision that if we weren't scheduled to spend it as of September of that year,

Cabinet could use it for other salary support. So my argument was that it was budget-neutral. It is not bottom-line neutral as we are more likely to spend these funds.

Ideally conferences should invest in short term disability policies that can cover part/all of these costs. That's not (currently) the case in East Ohio (and part of the fight for another day, since currently the Cabinet has to address short term disability situations individually each time they occur).

How many leaves per year? How much per leave?

We estimated we may have 3-4 leaves per year.

Lorin Radzik is the first one they know of to be utilizing this new policy, and for reference, the grant request for my congregation was \$2750 covering the entirety of pastoral care for 14 weeks (since I'm using a vacation week to not come back on Christmas!) and 5 weeks of preaching/worship leadership supply. The remaining preaching weeks are being covered by those on conference staff serving in extension ministry, and in East Ohio, that is a part of their roles/they are not compensated supply rates.

Look at what average supply rates are for your conference and then multiply by 13 and add in for pastoral care/admin costs. We shot high (and the conference passed what we asked) in order to cover a breadth of costs. But really, it should be a fairly reasonable number, since the church/charge/appointment is expected to maintain the salary and benefits that they already agreed to pay. The additional monies (from outside the local church) should really only be covering the added costs of worship leadership/interim ministry/pastoral care/admin while the appointed person is away.

Does this \$ cover enough?

Before this policy, East Ohio conference usually did not provide any funds for parental leave. Most clergy couldn't afford to sacrifice 5 weeks of pay. Many churches balked at paying the pastor and interim coverage. So \$10k per pregnancy/ adoption is a huge leap forward in support, trying to address those two sticking points.

That said, \$10k may not cover 5 more weeks of salary plus 13 weeks of interim coverage, depending on the size of the church. Retired clergy doing short term medical supply would typically be paid a range of \$1000-\$2500/ month, depending on duties expected. So that was part of the calculation.

We swung for the fences on funding and actually got it. We passed the legislation by 90+%. We did so by being very strategic in our context, using the evolution rather than revolution principle. We aren't done, but we made significant progress that I believe positions us for next steps. By demonstrating we could put together a good policy and forcing the

conversation, my hope is that it serves to multiply the same for all the other situations. Lay employees. Short term disability. End of life caregiving crisis.

How is the money disbursed?

This policy requires the church/ pastor requesting funds to write a plan for coverage. (This provides accountability for use of funds). The Church then receives a check from the Conference to cover the total cost. The church disseminates it as appropriate (e.g., to each preacher who covers worship or the person who does pastoral care).