

Richland Lutheran Church

PERSONNEL POLICY & GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Richland Lutheran Church (RLC) is committed to equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons, without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex or age to the extent required by law. This applies to all employment practices, including recruitment, hiring, compensation, church benefits, transfers, promotions, demotions, training, disciplinary action, and termination.

RLC is committed to full compliance with state and federal laws on employment. We will not knowingly hire or continue to employ anyone who does not have a legal right to work in the United States. As an ongoing condition of employment, staff will be required to provide documentation verifying their identity and legal authority to work in the United States. Any contracting versus employee work must meet the Internal Revenue Service standards for contracting.

Details implementing this Personnel Policy and Guidelines will be provided to all employees as an Employee Handbook along with authorizations allowing background investigations. In the event of conflicts in requirements or employee benefits as given in this policy and the Employee Handbook, the content of this Personnel Policy and Guidelines shall take precedence.

PERSONNEL PRACTICES

RLC Rules of Conduct apply to all clergy, employees and volunteers and shall be included in the Employee Handbook. These include but are not limited to safety, use of church assets for personal gain, involvement in the use of alcohol and drugs, personal use of church equipment, harassment and sexual misconduct.

RLC is committed to maintaining an environment in which all individuals including clergy, employees and volunteers treat each other with dignity and respect and is free from all forms of intimidation, exploitation, and harassment. We fully intend to do our best to protect children and other vulnerable populations. To help further this aim, a minimum of three requirements are implemented.

- (1) Background checks using a qualified investigative company will be conducted for Richland Lutheran church staff and Congregation Council members, as well as volunteers working with children, youth, and/or other vulnerable populations.
- (2) No minor is to be alone with one adult on the church's premises or in any sponsored activity in a one-on-one, unobserved meeting unless in a counseling situation. Counseling includes providing advice, opinion, or instruction in directing the judgment or conduct of another. Additionally, screened individuals, as caretakers of children and vulnerable populations, are required to continuously evaluate potential risks to children

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and vulnerable populations they are overseeing, and take actions to assure their personal safety.

- (3) There is a minimum three month period before new church attendees are allowed to volunteer/interact with minors.

If a background check reveals a prior conviction for a sexual misconduct-related offense, that person will be permanently ineligible to be involved in any way in the care, supervision and/or teaching of minors including providing social services or counseling. This includes but is not limited to nursery, day care, school, athletic and/or overnight activities involving minors, or mentorship of minors.

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

Personnel employed by Richland Lutheran Church shall have one of the following designations:

Professional Staff: A church employee who has leadership responsibility for a part of the RLC ministry or who has significant supervisory responsibilities for managing the supporting resources of the church. A professional staff employee may, but need not be, an ordained minister of the Lutheran Congregations in Missions for Christ (LCMC) called to serve in that capacity at Richland Lutheran Church.

Support Staff: A church employee who provides support to the Professional Staff for Ministry or the use of church resources.

Persons in any of these designations could serve in one of the following statuses:

Full-Time: A person hired to perform a prescribed function for a schedule equal to or greater than 32 hours per week on a continuous basis (or as required by Federal regulations).

Part-Time: A person hired to perform a prescribed function for a partial schedule of less than 32 hours per week but on a continuous basis.

Interim: An individual called, contracted, or hired to fill a job position vacancy until a permanent individual is found.

Temporary: An employee hired for a short period of time to perform a prescribed task.

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POSITION DESCRIPTION

Each staff position shall have a position description that clearly defines the employee's work tasks, work hours, responsibilities and authorities. The position description shall name the position or positions to whom the employee is responsible and shall describe working relationships with other staff positions. The description shall identify whether the position is exempt or non-exempt and whether the position is full-time, part-time, interim, or temporary.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

The Ministry Assistant for Biblical Stewardship shall be responsible for maintaining a legal personnel file for each employee. As a minimum, these shall include the employee's position description, employment contract (if any), background check documentation, emergency contact information, annual performance reviews, and documentation of any disciplinary issues/actions. Documentation of disciplinary issues/actions shall be removed after 3 years; if there have been no recurrences during that time period. These personnel records shall be kept in a locked cabinet and accessible only to the Lead Pastor, the RLC President and the Ministry Assistant for Biblical Stewardship. Employee records shall be available to the employee's supervisor and others on a need-to-know basis.

The Ministry Assistant for Biblical Stewardship shall also:

- (1) Maintain records of the educational stipend and leave status for each staff person and provide a status report on an annual basis; and
- (2) Be responsible for assuring records are kept for vacation, sick and continuing education leave taken during each month.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Each supervisor is responsible to assure that each employee he/she supervises understands the structure of and authority within Richland Lutheran Church.

The overall administrative and supervisory authority and responsibility for all ordained and non-ordained staff is given to the Lead Pastor, including the shifting of daily assignments as necessary to meet the needs of the congregation. If questions arise in carrying out these responsibilities, the Lead Pastor is encouraged to seek advice and resources from within the Council. The Ministry Assistant for Biblical Stewardship is responsible for the maintenance of the building and grounds. To fulfill this responsibility, the Ministry Assistant for Biblical Stewardship supervises the property and grounds coordinator, contractors and volunteers.

The President of the RLC Congregation and the Lead Pastor are responsible for recommending budget levels for personnel salaries and other stipends to the RLC Council.

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Vacancies in the church's staff shall be filled within the guidelines of the Constitution of Richland Lutheran Church. The Lead Pastor is responsible for hiring, discipline and termination of salaried and hourly non-Called staff.

The Lead Pastor is responsible directly to the RLC Council. All staff members are directly responsible to the Lead Pastor. Designated RLC Council members will work with the Lead Pastor in managing specific areas, such as finances, buildings, and personnel. The Lead Pastor may delegate his supervisory duties for Support Staff to other Professional Staff, but is expected to retain these responsibilities with respect to Professional staff members.

In the event of conflicts between RLC staff members, the affected members should first seek to resolve their differences according to Mathew 18. If unsuccessful, the affected members should seek resolution with the assistance of the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor shall immediately notify the RLC Council President (or his designee) of the staff conflict. Should resolution not be attained then any staff member may bring the conflict to the attention of the Executive Committee. If the conflict cannot be resolved by the Executive Committee the conflict shall be forwarded to the RLC Council for final consideration. Unless the conflict is referred to the RLC Council, confidentiality will be maintained on the details of the conflict though the RLC Council may be informed of the existence of the conflict, the staff involved, and the general nature of the conflict.

WORK HOURS

All RLC full-time staff, ordained, professional and support are expected to work, a minimum of the hours established in their position descriptions. The normal basis for establishing salaries for staff is a forty-hour week. Part-time and temporary employees will generally be paid on the basis of an hourly rate and an agreed upon work schedule.

Overtime should not be a consideration except for those designated as non-exempt under the state and federal laws and then only if greater than 40 hours is worked in any one-week period. Compensating time off is not provided by RLC.

BENEFITS

Richland Lutheran Church intends to provide equality in benefits for full-time employees although there may be differences in program specifics and in individual circumstances. Full-time staff who work on a partial schedule will be compensated on a pro-rated basis.

There is no waiting period to become part of the benefits' program and there is immediate vesting in the retirement program for non-ordained staff unless a vesting period is established by the provider.

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HOLIDAYS

The church office will be closed on 10 holidays each year. The Lead Pastor will decide when holidays are observed. To the extent possible, full time employees will be given these days off or equal time off within a two week span of the holiday.

VACATION TIME

RLC provides generous vacation benefits to provide staff with time for relaxation and refreshment. The expectation is that staff will take this time away from their responsibilities both for their own well-being as well as the benefit to the congregation of a periodically refreshed staff.

All full-time Professional Staff will be granted four weeks of vacation time each year. All full time Support Staff will be granted two weeks of vacation after one year of service, an additional week of vacation after three years of service, and a fourth week of vacation starting with the seventh year of service.

Full-time staff scheduled to work between 32 and 40 hours per week will have their vacation benefit prorated.

Part time or temporary employees are not offered vacation time.

Vacation time accrues on a monthly basis beginning with the date of employment. All staff is expected to use accrued vacation time within a year of earning it. The rate of vacation accrual and maximum allowable hours to be accrued is based on employment status and length of service as shown in the following table. Once the maximum allowable hours are accrued, no additional vacation time will be accrued until vacation time is used and the balance falls below the maximum allowed.

Classification	Accrual Rate per Month	Maximum Allowable Hours to be Accrued
Professional	13.33 (160 hours/year)	160 hours
Supporting (Beginning 1 st year of employment)	6.67 (80 hours/year)	120 hours
Supporting (Beginning 4 th year of employment)	10.00 (120 hours/year)	140 hours
Supporting (Beginning 7 th year of employment)	13.33 (160 hours/year)	160 hours

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If a staff member leaves the employ of RLC after having earned vacation time, but without having been able to utilize it while in the employ of RLC, he/she will be compensated for it, to the extent the unused vacation is within the above limits of maximum accrued vacation, based on his/her remuneration level.

EXCEPTION TO THE VACATION ACCRUAL MAXIMUM

RLC recognizes that there may be an extraordinary circumstance or situation beyond an employee's control that prevents a staff member from taking accrued vacation leave or causes a staff member to request the ability to accrue up to 80 additional hours beyond the allowable maximum. In such circumstances, the staff member will submit the request to the Lead Pastor for approval. Vacation accrual earned over the allowable maximum amount must be used within six (6) months of the accrual period. There will be no payout of unused vacation that exceeds the maximum specified in the Table. Unused vacation accrual over the maximum will be forfeited if not taken within the allotted six (6) month period.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

RLC encourages its staff to engage in a program of continuing education to improve their skills and performance, and provides an allowance and time away from work to aid in achieving individual educational goals related to their assignments. Educational time away from work is not to be construed as vacation. Unused educational time away from work will be forfeited upon termination.

The allowance and time away from work shall be provided immediately in proportion to the remainder of the initial calendar year and on January 1 of subsequent years.

During each year of employment, RLC shall provide full-time called and ordained staff an allowance of \$1,000 annually and two weeks of time away from work. This allowance may accumulate to a total of \$3,000. Unused educational time away from work is permitted to accumulate to a total of six weeks. RLC shall also provide full-time non-called staff an allowance of \$500 annually and one week of time away from work. This allowance may accumulate to a total of \$1,500. Unused educational time away from work is permitted to accumulate to a total of three weeks.

SICK LEAVE

RLC recognizes that staff may be subject to illness and that recovery time away from work may result in a financial burden to the employee. It is not in the interests of the congregation for employees with contagious diseases to come to the work place where other staff or church members may become infected. Therefore, RLC provides a generous policy of paid sick leave.

Supervisors shall be observant of their staffs' health and encourage staff with suspected contagious conditions to leave the workplace.

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All employees, including part-time and temporary, qualify for sick leave benefits of one hour for every 40 hours worked. For full-time employee this amounts to a total of 52 hours per year. There is no limit on days accumulated. On termination, sick leave pay-out will be one day's pay for five days accumulated. No compensation will be provided for sick leave taken in excess of the established maximum or accumulated total (whichever is greater) during a given year of employment.

Sick leave is defined as an absence from work on a workday as a result of personal illness, injury, and doctor appointments. Sick leave will be recorded in hourly intervals. With supervisor approval full-time staff are permitted to modify weekly schedules to accommodate routine appointments.

WORK LEAVE

Other circumstances may result in full-time staff absences.

Family Illness: In the event of an illness in the immediate family (spouse, children, parents, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchildren, mother-in-law, father-in-law, or legal guardian) that requires the staff member's absence; accrued sick leave may be utilized. In the event accrued sick leave is not available, the staff member can request unpaid leave as described below.

Maternity/Paternity Leave: Up to six weeks of paid leave may be taken by a new mother due to the birth of her child (provided she has been employed in a regular status for at least six months). If the physician of the expectant mother feels it is necessary for her to stop working for a period that exceeds six weeks, she will be permitted to use accrued sick leave for this purpose. The RLC Council may approve Paid Paternal Leave for up to six weeks. Employees desiring additional leave, either prior to or following the birth or adoption of their child, may apply for unpaid leave (described later). Staff members who *wish* to be absent due to maternity/paternity, adoptive or family leave need to provide their supervisor and the Executive Council with as much advance notice as possible.

Family Leave: In accordance with Washington State law, up to 12 weeks per year of paid leave may be granted to allow for time away from work to deal with issues related to employee and/or his or her family (i.e., spouse, children, parents, sisters, brothers, and in-laws). Reasons for family leave include, but are not limited to serious illness of the employee or a family member or the birth or adoption of a child.

Compassionate Leave: In the event of a death in the immediate family (spouse, son, daughter, mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, sister, grandparent,

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grandchildren, or legal guardian) a staff member will be allowed leave with pay, not to exceed five working days (Exception: an average of 20 hours/week minimum prorated based on scheduled work hours.)

Jury Duty: A staff member who is required to serve on a jury shall be entitled to full pay reduced by the amount received for the jury service.

Military Leave: Staff members will receive time off to participate in active military service, not to exceed two weeks during a calendar year. They will receive compensation in an amount that will make their military pay equal to their regular pay, provided the staff member furnishes RLC with a certified copy of their orders to active duty and a pay statement from the military disbursing office. Time off in excess of the amount above will be without pay. In cases of military emergency situations, a staff member will be entitled to a minimum of ninety days leave without pay, in compliance with federal laws regarding leave and reinstatement.

OTHER BENEFITS

All full-time church staff shall be eligible for benefits as outlined in the following paragraphs. The Council shall be responsible for the establishment, administration, and implementation of all benefits provided to staff. The Council may delegate administrative responsibilities of fringe benefits to the appropriate individuals or committees, in whole or in part.

Retirement Plans: All full-time church staff shall be eligible to enroll in a 403(b) retirement plan established by RLC. For all full-time church staff, RLC will provide up to 10% of the staff member's salary; a 5% base and the next 5% requires a 1% employee contribution for every employer 1%.

Medical Coverage: All full-time staff will be provided with a group medical insurance plan established by RLC. The Congregation Council will determine annually the medical insurance budget and will determine at least every odd-numbered year the share of the associated premiums to be paid by RLC.

Dental Coverage: All full-time staff will be provided with a group dental insurance plan as established by RLC. The Congregation Council will determine annually the dental insurance budget and will determine at least every two years the share of the associated premiums to be paid by RLC.

Social Security: Payments are made by and for all non-ordained paid workers subject to provisions of applicable Federal Laws.

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Workman’s Compensation Insurance: The employer portion of the Washington State labor and industries worker’s compensation premiums will be paid by Richland Lutheran Church. The employee portion will be paid by the employee.

Automobile Use Reimbursement: Staff members required to use their automobile in the course of their work responsibility shall be reimbursed in an accountable mileage system on a per mile basis consistent with the Internal Revenue service allowance.

Moving Expenses: RLC will reimburse actual and reasonable moving expenses for ordained and professional church staff, when accepting a position with RLC requires relocation.

SALARY REVIEW

The Council shall annually review all church staff salaries using the approved Salary Plan as a guideline.

Salaries and benefits should be administered in a manner that will attract, retain, and motivate highly qualified and competent staff members as required to achieve the mission and purposes of RLC. Every reasonable effort is to be made to provide an equitable, consistent relationship with regard to level of performance, position, responsibility and value to RLC.

PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK PROCESS

Richland Lutheran Church (RLC) highly values and appreciates its Pastors and staff. We believe God has called each of them to their respective position to partner in ministry and mission together with God and our congregation. We feel equally called to partnership and desire to come alongside each of them in their call to serve God’s purpose here at RLC. To assist and/or mentor them by providing informal and ongoing feedback, the following categories are established and are further defined in the Employee Handbook.

Purpose – The purpose of ongoing feedback is to:

- Appreciate and motivate RLC’s pastors and staff to continue their call into ministry and mission in God’s Church
- Say “Well done good and faithful servant!”
- Provide a place and space for our pastors and staff to positively reflect on their growth – both strengths and weaknesses

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Criteria – RLC uses the following criteria to evaluate our pastors' and staff's contribution to ministry and mission:

- Primacy of RLC Vision and Mission
- “Doing” vs. “Equipping”
- Personal Calling and Giftedness
- Position Descriptions
- Faithfulness and Obedience to God

Primary Areas of Feedback:

- Relationship with God
- Relationship with Self and Family
- Relationship with God's Family
- Relationship with the World

Process - Periodic informal feedback through monthly staff meetings, Executive Committee/Council meetings, PEACE teams, one-on-one informal meetings/conversations, etc. Listen, observe, communicate!