The Colorado Health Foundation™



Yes, You Need a Break: The Nonprofit Sabbatical Program

As we close in on the end of another busy year in Colorado, we all tend to look forward to a bit of rest and rejuvenation from the workplace that the holidays can sometimes promise. In many cases though, for our nonprofits leaders across the state, the idea of taking quality time off can be nothing more than a dream.

One of my dreams is to normalize the idea that nonprofit leaders deserve rest and rejuvenation as part of our well-being in the workplace – and taking a sabbatical, or an extended period of time away from work, is an option to consider.

Time and time again, we see nonprofit leaders' commitment to the missions they serve tend to be their first priority, meaning it can be a real struggle to step away for quality time off that really has an impact on both the nonprofit leader and their organization. The pressures of managing reduced resources and the increasing costs associated with meeting community needs is real. Tim Delaney, the president and chief executive of the National Council of Nonprofits recently told The Washington Post, "*Human service nonprofits nationwide are trying to help more people with less available funding, he said. "But inflation means that operating dollars don't cover the costs they once did.*"

The reality of burnout and fear of stepping away from work can also make one feel guilty about the idea of rest and leaving when the rest of their won't have the same opportunity. In fact, many nonprofit leaders tell me they couldn't even imagine taking a lengthy vacation, much less the months at a time of rejuvenation and reenergizing that a sabbatical offers.

At CHF, our Nonprofit Sabbatical Program – which is currently open for applications until Dec. 15 -- exists to provide the space and resources for leaders

to temporarily step away from their roles and return to the work refreshed, revitalized, and reenergized. We also offer funding that supports interim leaders who step up during the executive leader's time away, along with capacity building supports the organization identifies themselves. You can hear first-hand from nonprofit leaders in Colorado who have been part of our program by watching this short video.

Since 2019, we've provided grants to 16 nonprofit executives and the organizations they lead. Why do we do it? Because we know that investing in nonprofit leaders is essential for addressing chronic burnout, and we want to help flip the narrative to be that: *rest is good for nonprofit leaders and their teams.* Sabbatical opportunities cannot just provide individuals and organizations with meaningful time off and wonderful memories – they also strengthen organizations and the skills of staff who take on new, interim roles. Thus, the communities nonprofits serve become stronger.

Sabbaticals can also benefit the overall health and well-being of nonprofit leaders, something we see time and time again with our sabbatical recipients. Kenneth Crowley Sr., the CEO of The Crowley Foundation and a Nonprofit Sabbatical recipient, has pulled many late nights and all-nighters to do the work of taking care of others. "I found myself neglecting myself and my self-care," he said. "Everyone needs a break."

We're accepting Nonprofit Sabbatical Program applications until December 15. We encourage leaders who are interested in applying to learn more about the program features, eligibility criteria and much more.

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BY

Karen McNeil-Miller