

ICG Benefits Policy

Full-Time and Part-Time Employees of Ithaca Children's Garden (excluding seasonal workers)

Board Revised May 2025, Approved June 2025, Effective July 7, 2025

Ithaca Children's Garden (ICG) envisions a world where every child has a deep personal relationship with the natural world.

ICG's work is implemented by a passionate, committed team that ensures free access to a magical public garden from dawn to dusk, 365 days a year, and develops innovative, multidisciplinary programming for children, teens, and the visiting public.

ICG's mission cannot be achieved without our team. We care about our team.

To foster and maintain a strong team, ICG provides an array of benefits to permanent staff, over and above the mandated state and federal benefits. These additional ICG benefits are described in the policies herein. Aligned with the New York State Human Rights Law, ICG does not discriminate against an employee or job seeker because of his or her age, creed, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, disability, military status, domestic violence victim status, criminal or arrest record, or predisposing genetic characteristics.

Eligibility: Unless stated otherwise, these policies apply to permanent Full Time Employees (those working 35 hours or more per week, for at least nine months per year) and permanent Part Time Employees (those working between 20 and 34 hours per week, for at least nine months per year).

Policy Summary:

1. **Paid Time Off:** ICG helps employees accrue paid days off from work, and supports employees to use the earned days to support wellness.
2. **Family Leave Policy:** Family is what ICG is, and ICG supports employees' families in time of need and change.
3. **Flexible Work Schedule:** ICG may consider a non-traditional work schedule to support employee wellness and professional success.
4. **Remote Work:** ICG is open to employees working from a remote/off-site location, on occasion and with approval, to support employee wellness, and professional success.
5. **ICG Perks:** ICG employees are eligible for a number of perks that seek to support staff happiness.
6. **Professional Development:** ICG employees excel in their work when they continue to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities in their field. ICG supports this.
7. **Sabbatical:** Full-time ICG employees may be eligible for a four week paid sabbatical every five years of work, to build and expand their knowledge base.

Input and feedback on ICG's benefits policy are welcome and should be shared with your supervisor, ICG's executive director, or ICG's board president. ICG maintains the right to change this benefits policy at its discretion at any time.

1. Paid Time Off (PTO) Policy

Eligibility: This policy is applicable to all permanent full time employees and all permanent part time employees who work at least nine months per year, regardless of how many hours are normally worked per week.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to document how employees receive and use paid time off (PTO) to support wellness and work-life balance.

Definitions: Starting on your first day of employment, you begin to earn Paid Time Off (PTO), which lets you take paid time off for personal or sick days. You're also eligible for paid holidays. PTO is divided into three types: personal, sick, and holiday.

1. **Personal:** Accrued personal PTO can be used for any reason, including vacation.
2. **Sick:** According to [NYS guidelines](#), accrued sick leave can be used for:
 - The employee's or a family member's illness, injury, or health condition (regardless of whether it has been diagnosed or requires medical care when the employee requests leave).
 - The diagnosis, care, or treatment of an illness, injury, or health condition of, or need for medical diagnosis of, or preventive care for, the employee or their family member.
 - Certain purposes related to an employee or their family member being a victim of domestic violence, a family offense, a sexual offense, stalking, or human trafficking.
3. **Holiday:** Employees receive PTO for the following twelve (12) holidays, if that holiday falls on a Monday through Friday:
 - a. New Year's Day
 - b. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 - c. Presidents' Day
 - d. Memorial Day
 - e. Juneteenth Day
 - f. Independence Day
 - g. Labor Day
 - h. Indigenous People's Day
 - i. Veterans Day
 - j. Thanksgiving Day
 - k. Native American Heritage Day
 - l. Christmas Day

Additionally, employees receive one (1) floating holiday per year, which they can take any day they choose throughout the year, with prior approval from their direct supervisor. Unused floating holidays do not accrue and do not carry over from year to year. Employees will forfeit their unused floating holiday if not used by the last day of the calendar year.

Calculations: The calculation for PTO is different based on PTO type, which falls into three separate categories: personal, sick, or holiday. The calculations are also different based on salaried employees vs. permanent full time and permanent part time employees (hourly).

The calculations are as follows:

1. **Personal:** The calculation for personal PTO is based on years of service.
 - a. **Salaried employees** should refer to their employment offer letters for their calculations, and they will receive their personal PTO in one lump block at the beginning of each calendar year. Unused personal PTO carries over to the following year, with a cap of 40 hours of personal PTO eligible to be carried over. Employees will forfeit unused personal PTO above 40 hours if not used by the last day of the calendar year. Employees will continue to accrue personal PTO when they are taking personal PTO.
 - b. **Permanent full time and part time employees (hourly)** should refer to the below table for their accrual rates. Unused personal PTO carries over to the following year, with a cap of 40 hours of personal PTO eligible to be carried over. Employees will forfeit unused personal PTO above 40 hours if not used by the last day of the calendar year. Employees will continue to accrue personal PTO when they are taking personal PTO.

Permanent full time and part time employees (hourly)	
Years of Service	Accrual Rate
0-1 year	1.85 hours of personal PTO for every 40 hours worked
2-4 years	2.31 hours of personal PTO for every 40 hours worked
5+ years	3.1 hours of personal PTO for every 40 hours worked

2. **Sick:** Employees accrue one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked. Annual sick leave accrual is capped at 60 hours per year. Unused sick leave carries over to the following year, with a cap of 40 hours of sick leave eligible to be carried over. Employees will forfeit unused sick leave above 40 hours if not used by the last day of the calendar year. Employees will not accrue sick leave when they are taking sick leave.
3. **Holiday:** Employees receive PTO for the twelve (12) holidays stated in the Definitions section above, if that holiday falls on a Monday through Friday. Employees receive holiday PTO equivalent to the below chart, as specified in their offer letter or other communications.

Budgeted Work Week	Holiday PTO
35-40 hours per week	8 hours per holiday
30-34 hours per week	7 hours per holiday
25-29 hours per week	6 hours per holiday
20-24 hours per week	5 hours per holiday
15-19 hours per week	4 hours per holiday

10-14 hours per week	3 hours per holiday
5-9 hours per week	2 hours per holiday
1-4 hours per week	1 hour per holiday

Additionally, employees receive one (1) floating holiday per year, which they can take any day they choose throughout the year, with prior approval from their direct supervisor. Unused floating holidays do not accrue and do not carry over from year to year. Employees will forfeit their unused floating holiday if not used by the last day of the calendar year. Employees will receive 8 hours per floating holiday, regardless of their budgeted work week hours.

Process: Here is how an employee can use their personal PTO, sick leave, and floating holiday:

- Employees must submit requests to use personal PTO, sick leave, and floating holidays through the payroll portal with as much advance notice as possible. For personal PTO and floating holidays, ideally with at least two weeks' advance notice submitted through the payroll portal and to their direct manager.
- Permanent full time and part time hourly employees cannot use personal PTO and sick leave unless it has been accrued. If an employee needs to take time off for personal or sick reasons, and they do not have enough accrued time, they can request to take unpaid time off with their supervisor's approval. The employee must communicate this to the Operations Manager after receiving their supervisor's approval.
- When personal PTO and sick leave is used that has been accrued, each hour used will be subtracted from the employee's personal PTO or sick leave balance.
- Personal PTO and sick leave can be used in 1-hour blocks of time. When an employee requests to take one "full day" of personal PTO and sick leave, they can request one "full day" equivalent using the below chart, as specified in their offer letter or other communications.

Budgeted Work Week	"Full Day" of Personal PTO and Sick Leave
35-40 hours per week	8 hours per "full day"
30-34 hours per week	7 hours per "full day"
25-29 hours per week	6 hours per "full day"
20-24 hours per week	5 hours per "full day"
15-19 hours per week	4 hours per "full day"
10-14 hours per week	3 hours per "full day"
5-9 hours per week	2 hours per "full day"
1-4 hours per week	1 hour per "full day"

Termination of Employment: Employees will be paid at 100% for any unused personal PTO balance at employment end. Employees will not be paid for any unused sick leave balance at employment end. There is no payout for holiday PTO that falls on a date after termination of employment.

2. Family Leave

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to describe the additional flexibility individuals can have to bond with new children, support family needs, and adjust to their new family situation.

Definition: Family Leave provides job-protected, unpaid time off, as a supplement to any paid leave provided through the NYS Paid Family Leave act.

Eligibility: This policy is applicable to employees who:

- A. work at least nine months per year and are employed at least 20-hours per week;
- B. have been employed by ICG for at least 26 weeks; and
- C. *within the last year:* have given birth to a child or have a partner or spouse who have given birth to a child or have adopted or fostered a child who is 17 years old or younger.

Provisions:

- Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of leave related to family care-giving, running concurrently with any leave pursuant to the NYS Paid Family Leave act. This leave is not paid, however, employees may use any accrued PTO during any unpaid time taken pursuant to the Family Leave Policy.
- All family leave described in this Policy shall be available for a 12-month period following the eligibility event described in subsection c above.
- All leave must be used in one chunk.
- The number of weeks of Family Leave does not increase with multiple births or adoptions.
- All other benefits that the employee is eligible for will remain the same while on Family Leave.

Process:

- Where at all possible, an Eligible Employee shall initially notify the Director of their need for Family Leave at least 60 calendar days (2 months) before the leave is anticipated/requested.
- The employee should propose a timeframe and schedule for the use of the 12-weeks of leave.

3. Flexible Work Schedule Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to give eligible employees flexibility in their work schedule while retaining the same overall number of work hours in order to support personal wellness and professional success.

Definitions: Flexible work schedule means working non-traditional hours. This might include:

- **Alternate Hours:** When an employee chooses to shift their everyday schedule by starting earlier or later. The total daily working hours do not change.
- **Compressed Workweek:** When an employee works longer hours on a number of days per week so they can take time off on the remaining days. The weekly total of working hours does not change.
- **Flexible Year:** When an employee works a specific number of hours per year, with little limitation as to when.
- **Job Sharing:** When two people divide their schedule to do the same job.

Eligibility: This policy is applicable to employees who:

- A. work at least nine months per year,
- B. have been employed by ICG for at least six months; and

- C. and are employed at least 20 hours per week.

Not all jobs can be performed in a flexible nature. Thus, considerations for eligibility also include:

- The nature of the employee's job: do they need to be at a certain place at a certain time?
- The needs of the organization: what are the expectations of the role?
- The impact on colleagues: how will an alternate work schedule affect the work of colleagues?
- The duration of the arrangement: is this a short-term or long-term shift in work schedule?

Provisions:

- A flexible work schedule will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- If a flexible work schedule is granted, employee productivity, as compared to job expectations, will be reviewed on a monthly basis for the first three months, and quarterly thereafter.

Process:

- An employee must submit a written request to the Director.
- The request should include the detailed flextime proposal and address potential positive and negative impacts of the request.
- Employees on flex arrangements may also need to be available (either physically or remotely) for certain required activities as determined and communicated by the Director or their supervisor.
- The Director will consider the proposal and make a determination based on a balance between the needs of ICG and the needs of the employee; Director may request a meeting with the employee.
- A final decision on the flexible work schedule will be noted, in writing, and delivered to the employee (and supervisor, where applicable).
- Director has discretion to end the flexible schedule if productivity cannot be maintained and/or job expectations cannot be met.

4. Remote Work Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to give eligible employees the possibility of working in a remote location (e.g., from home, from the library) with approval, and ensuring that working remotely is beneficial to the employee and ICG.

Definitions: Remote Work means completing expected work duties and tasks in a remote setting for a Short-term Period.

Remote Settings could include locations like home, the library, etc.

Short-term Period means a day or two. This can accommodate needs related to bad weather, parenting, medical needs, work-life balance, etc. This can also accommodate opportunities such as quiet time to write grant applications, thank you cards, etc.

Eligibility: This policy is applicable to employees who work at least nine months per year, and are employed at least 20 hours per week.

Not all jobs can be performed remotely. Thus, considerations for eligibility also include:

- The nature of the employee's job: Do they need to be at a certain place at a certain time, engaging with people in person? Can job tasks be completed remotely?
- The feasibility of remote work: Can expected job duties be completed remotely? Does the employee have access to necessary space and equipment? Are there any data privacy risks or concerns?

Provisions:

- Remote work will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as employee needs or opportunities arise.
- It is up to the employee to work with their supervisor to manage expectations relative to the employee's job requirements, to communicate frequently and proactively, to be available, and to get their work done. Failure to do so may limit future approvals.
- Any concerns with employee productivity while working remotely will be noted in writing by the supervisor. An employee may receive one written warning. A second warning may end the possibility of remote work.

Process:

- An employee must submit a written request to the Director with approval of their direct supervisor, as applicable.
- The request should include a description of what tasks the employee intends to accomplish during the scheduled work at home.
- Requests should be submitted one week before the proposed day of remote work.
- Once approved, the employee must note their scheduled days of working remotely on the staff Google calendar.

5. ICG Perks

Purpose: To define the perks that are available to each employee who is a part of the ICG team.

Definitions: Perks refer to small benefits that employees have access to when they join and are a part of the ICG team.

Eligibility: This policy is applicable to employees who work at least nine months per year, and are employed at least 20 hours per week.

Provisions and Process: Employees are eligible for the following perks:

- **ICG Programs:** Employees receive free entry for self and dependents into ICG programs (events, camps), up to a value of \$500 per year and 20% off programs after \$500 is expended. To access this perk, employees must register their child as usual and communicate to their supervisor that they will be accessing their staff credit.
- **ICG Branded Goods:** Employees receive 2 ICG t-shirts (choice of sizes and colors), and 1 reusable water bottle for free. Any additional ICG merchandise may be purchased with a 50% staff discount. This perk will be provided upon hiring. When purchasing additional ICG merchandise, please note that you are an eligible employee to receive the discount.
- **Food and Snacks:** Employees receive a 50% staff discount for all goods for sale at the TUF Farm Stand. In addition, rotating office delights (coffee, chocolate, tea, flowers, occasional lunch, and more) are available to share. When purchasing goods at the TUF Farm Stand, please note that you are an eligible employee to receive the discount.
- **Seasonal U-Pick opportunities:** In season, staff receive seasonal invitations to pick surplus vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers.
- **Public Gardens:** ICG will reimburse admission for the entrance fee to any public garden, world-wide, at any time for self and one companion. To use this perk, submit a receipt for reimbursement.

6. Professional Development Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to help eligible employees remain current and up-to-date with the knowledge, skills, and abilities they believe necessary to excel in their work by accessing professional development opportunities.

Definitions: Professional Development means engaging in an activity to help build your knowledge, skills, and abilities in areas that are linked and important to your work. Examples of professional development include: participating in webinars (accessing learning on-line), purchasing and reading books, attending conferences, taking mini-courses, and/or going on a site visit to another garden or facility to observe and learn.

Eligibility: This policy is applicable to permanent employees who work at least nine months per year, and are employed at least 20 hours per week for the duration of their nine month term.

Provisions:

- Professional development is a priority for ICG, and is strongly encouraged.
- ICG-sponsored/paid professional development will be considered as part of each employee's annual performance review process, and in relation to professional goals. Costs, and the potential impact to the ICG budget, will factor into the approval process.

Process:

- When an employee identifies an applicable and relevant professional development opportunity, the employee should submit a written request to the Director.
- The request should include a description of the employee's learning goals, a description of the professional development opportunity, the dates and times of the opportunity (if applicable), and the anticipated cost of the opportunity.
- The Director will consider the proposal and make a determination based on a balance between the needs of ICG including available budget and the needs of the employee.
- A final decision will be communicated to the employee, in writing. A decision may be approval with full cost coverage, approval with partial cost coverage, approval for paid time away (but not for the costs of the opportunity), and/or suggestions of other professional development opportunities that may also meet the suggested learning goals.
- If relevant, when the employee has completed their professional development, they will be encouraged and invited to 'teach back' their learnings to the rest of the ICG team.

7. Sabbatical

Purpose Sabbatical: The purpose of the sabbatical is to provide long-term Full Time employees with the opportunity to take a retreat from their regular work in which they can study, travel, and / or pursue professional development in a focused way, related to work but apart from their day-to-day activities for the long term benefit of the employee and ICG. Employees are expected to become fully immersed in their sabbatical experience.

Definition: Sabbatical is a break or rest from their regular work, for the purposes of study, travel, and personal and professional development. Sabbaticals will include associated goals defined with considerable input from direct supervisor and executive director.

Examples of appropriate sabbatical may include interning at another public garden, traveling to and observing other garden operations, engaging in research, reading, writing or developing a special project that is relevant to ICG.

Eligibility: After each five years of continuous full-time employment, permanent employees (employees who have worked at least nine months per year, for an average of at least 35 hours per week during that term) are eligible for up to four weeks of consecutive, paid sabbatical. If performance has been in question, sabbatical leave may be postponed until performance meets satisfactory criteria. The five year clock starts over upon completion of a prior sabbatical. Repeat sabbatical eligibility depends in part on success of meeting defined, agreed upon sabbatical goals during prior sabbatical.

Provisions & Process: Sabbaticals are not mandatory but they are encouraged. At the 4th year annual performance review, eligible employees should address with their supervisor their interest in sabbatical, and begin the conversation to discuss and define the sabbatical terms and timing. Goals will be established with input from supervisor and executive director.

- Sabbaticals must be discussed with and approved by supervisor and executive director at least 6 months prior to taking sabbatical leave.
- When the employee has completed their professional development, they will be expected to 'teach back' their learnings to the rest of the ICG team.
- Final terms and goals will be in writing as agreed upon by the employee, supervisor, and executive director.