

Parental Leave Policy Template



Policy Type | In place of requiring staff to utilize sick time, vacation time, or short-term disability, organizations provide paid time off specifically for employees welcoming a new child so they may have time to bond with their child and adjust to such a major life transition.

Purpose | To ensure all parents--regardless of gender or biological relationship-- have equitable access to paid time away from work to bond with and care for a new child, whether through birth, adoption, or foster care placement.

Implementation | Providing paid parental leave can be intimidating for small organizations, but it is possible with proper planning. Agencies may form a committee--including leadership, team members, and HR (if available)--to research and draft a plan for their policy. This helps to ensure equity and transparency in the policy's application. Start with determining the following:

- **What can the agency afford?** This is often the largest and most daunting question for organizations to answer when trying to implement paid parental leave. At first glance it may seem that providing pay for parental leave is too expensive for a small agency to manage. However, [the cost of losing an employee can range from 50% to 200% of their annual salary.](#)

Use this [free tool from Paid Leave for the U.S. \(PL+US\)](#) to calculate what your agency can afford, and remember that offering some form of paid leave is better than offering none. Organizations may also be creative in the duration and pay rate of leave time. For example:

- 100% benefit coverage with 12 weeks of 100% pay
- 100% benefit coverage with 16 weeks of 70% full pay
- 100% benefit coverage with 8 weeks of 100% pay + 4 weeks of 50% pay
- 100% benefit coverage with 10 weeks of 100% pay + by 6 weeks unpaid

Other key elements for crafting your policy include:

- What will the eligibility requirements, such as completing a minimum number of service hours, be?
- How will employees apply for parental leave?
- How much notice should they provide to their supervisor?
- What will be the maximum number of weeks an employee can take?
- How will the employee's workload be managed in their absence?
- How will the organization support employees when they return to work?

Key Components:

- [Duration of leave should be bare minimum 8 weeks](#) and must be distinct; that is, separate from sick leave, vacation time, or other forms of paid time off (PTO) offered by the organization
 - Policy should include all types of parenthood--including adoption and fostering--and apply for any/all parents, both birthing parents and partners to birthing parents
 - Policy should plan for flexibility. For instance, account for medical complications and the possibility of extended leave, or leave beginning sooner than anticipated
 - Provide a work coverage template--[here is an example](#)--for employees to complete prior to their leave, detailing their projects, deadlines, etc. and the plan for managing their tasks during their time away
 - Depending on the size of your organization--if you have 50 or more employees within a 75 mile radius at any time--you are required to bring your policy into alignment with [state](#) and [national](#) law.
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Policy Language Template & Example:

Text that is italicized and underlined denotes where an agency should insert language with their own processes

Parental Leave: Family leave is essential to fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace. By offering parental leave, we promote work-life balance, reduce stress, and ensure employees can prioritize their families during critical moments while remaining valued members of our team.

Any *Organization name* employee who works a minimum of 20 hours is entitled to up to *x* *number* of weeks of paid leave following the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. This leave must be taken continuously and is available to all new parents, including

but not limited to: birthing parents, partners to birthing parents, adoptive and foster parents, surrogate parents, etc. Organization name requires timely notification of parental leave. Employees should submit the Parental Leave Form to the chosen leadership, i.e. Executive Director, Team Supervisor, etc. at least x number of days before their leave begins. See Parental Leave Form for more details.

During the duration of their leave, Organization name will provide 100% of the employee's salary, plus all current benefits, including health and dental insurance. PTO will not accumulate during the leave time. Following their leave, the position that is held by the employee at the beginning of the leave is guaranteed to the employee at the same rate of pay and conditions as when their leave began. Employment remains "at-will" during and after the leave. Parental leave does not protect against unforeseen employment changes such as layoffs or organizational restructuring.

We are committed to helping parents transition back to work after their leave ends. Employees are encouraged to utilize their team, supervisor, flexible scheduling, remote work, and PTO to help with this transition. Please contact your chosen leadership, i.e. Executive Director, Team Supervisor, etc. to determine the support and resources available to you as you prepare for and plan your return to work.

If an employee elects not to return to Organization name following the completion of their Parental leave – or within a year of returning – they may be asked to reimburse Organization name for the insurance premiums and/or associated benefits from the duration of their leave.