



FACT SHEET

Washington
Paid Family & Medical Leave

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a statewide insurance program that was passed by the Legislature with wide bipartisan support in 2017 and with help from business, labor and family advocates.

We all need to give or receive care at some time in our lives — whether recovering from a serious illness or injury, caring for a new child or supporting an aging parent. Paid Family and Medical Leave is an essential benefit that gives every Washingtonian support when they need it most. The program is funded by premiums paid by both employees and many employers.

Washington is the fifth state in the nation to offer a Paid Family and Medical Leave program. When fully implemented in 2020, Washington state’s program will be the strongest in the nation, with the highest rate of wage replacement for workers on leave. A strong benefit gives Washington businesses an edge to attract and retain workers.

Everyone in Washington will be affected

Nearly all Washingtonians will benefit from this program, whether they work here, own a business, or need care from a loved one. Temporary, part-time and seasonal workers, and workers at all wage levels are included. The

program applies to small, medium and large businesses, charities, faith organizations and nonprofits. The only major exceptions are the federal government, self-employed individuals and federally recognized tribes. The latter two may opt-in to the program.

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How the program works

Eligible workers may take up to 12 weeks of leave when they are struck by a serious illness or injury, need to care for an ill or ailing relative, when they welcome a new child into their family through birth, adoption or foster placement, and for certain military-connected events. Workers can take up to 16 weeks if they experience multiple events in one qualifying period, and 18 weeks in extreme circumstances.

Paying and reporting premiums

The premium is 0.4 percent of a worker’s gross wages, which is shared between employee and employer. A worker who makes \$50,000 a year will pay about \$2.44 per week and the employer will pay \$1.41 per week. Employers with fewer than 50 employees are exempt





from the employer share, but their employees still pay the premium and are fully covered by the program.

Employers may also opt to cover part or all of the employee's premium.

Premium collection starts:

- Jan. 1, 2019, for non-represented state employees and most other workers.
- July 2019 for represented state employees.

Employers must report premiums to the Employment Security Department starting April 2019.

Claims for benefits will be accepted starting Jan. 1, 2020.

Workers and employers can find out more information about the program at paidleave.wa.gov.

