

PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

Employee Impact FAQ

Q. What is Paid Family and Medical Leave?

A. Paid Family and Medical Leave is a Washington State program that was passed by the Legislature in 2017. It offers Washington workers the opportunity to receive partial wage replacement while on leave to recover from an illness or injury, bond with a new child, for certain military connected events, or to take care of a sick or injured family member.

Q. When does Paid Family and Medical Leave go into effect?

A. Most employees will see deductions in their paychecks starting on January 1, 2019. Eligible employees will be able to apply for benefits beginning January 1, 2020.

Q. How much will be taken out of my paycheck?

A. A total premium of 0.4 percent up to social security cap is assessed to each employee. Generally speaking, the employee is responsible for approximately 63 percent of that premium. So if you make \$50,000 annually, the total annual assessment would be \$200, of which \$126.67 would be deducted from your paycheck per year, or about \$2.60 per week.

Q. When do I become eligible for benefits?

A. You become eligible for Paid Family and Medical Leave benefits once you have worked 820 hours for covered employers in the qualifying period. Benefits may begin to be drawn January 1, 2020.

Q. What is the qualifying period?

A. The qualifying period is the first four of the last five full calendar quarters, or the last four full calendar quarters. Either period may be used to establish eligibility. The chart below illustrates how this works.

Qualifying Period					
4th Q/2020 (Oct.-Dec.)	1st Q/2021 (Jan.-Mar.)	2nd Q/2021 (Apr.-Jun.)	3rd Q/2021 (Jul.-Sept.)	4th Q/2021 (Oct.-Dec.)	1st Q/2022 (Jan.-Mar.)
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Q. What if I work for a small business? Am I still eligible?

A. Employees of businesses with fewer than 50 employees are fully covered by Paid Family and Medical Leave paid benefits once they meet eligibility requirements. They are still responsible for their share of the premium.

Q. What benefits am I entitled to once I am eligible?

A. Eligible employees are entitled to wage replacement with a weekly minimum of \$100 and a weekly maximum of \$1,000, adjusted annually. Your exact benefit is determined by your earned wages, the state median income, and other factors. Eligible employees are also entitled to up to 12 weeks of paid family leave or medical leave, or a combination of the two up to 16 weeks annually. In extreme circumstances, an additional two weeks of leave is permitted.

Q. What is the difference between family leave and medical leave?

A. Family leave covers bonding time for the birth or placement of a child, time taken to care for an injured or ill family member, or certain military connected events, like time to prepare for the short-notice military deployment of a family member. Medical leave covers time taken to care for an employee's own injury or illness.

Q. Is the leave I take job protected?

A. If you work for an employer with 50 or more employees, the leave you take is job protected. If you work for an employer with fewer than 50 employees, the leave you take is not job protected. This is similar to how the federal Family and Medical Leave Act works.



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