

PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

Voluntary Plans

For general information about the Paid Family and Medical Leave program, please see our [Employer FAQ](#)

Key information

Voluntary plans are paid family and medical leave benefits offered by employers directly to their employees. These operate outside the state plan, which will be administered by the Employment Security Department (ESD). Voluntary plans must, at a minimum, offer the same benefits and duration of leave as the state plan.

Approval process

Voluntary plan applications can be submitted through the online portal, which is currently under development and expected to become available in late summer of 2018. For the first three years of a voluntary plan's existence, re-approval is required every year. After three years, re-approval is only required if the employer makes changes to the plan that is not required by statute. All voluntary plan applications will be subject to a \$250 fee. If a voluntary plan is denied, employees are covered under the state plan.



Employee eligibility

Employees are eligible for benefit payments under an approved voluntary plan once they have worked 820 hours in the qualifying period and 340 hours for that employer. Employees who are not yet eligible for coverage under an approved voluntary plan are eligible for benefits under the state plan as long as they have worked 820 hours in the qualifying period.

Employer requirements

In order to be approved, voluntary plans must:

- Allow the employee to take the same duration of leave as would be allowed under the state plan;
- Pay the same total amount of benefits as the state plan;
- Withhold an amount from an employee's paycheck that is the same or less than what the state plan would withhold; and
- Meet all reporting requirements.



**Employment
Security
Department**
WASHINGTON STATE

Starting in 2020, Washington will be the fifth state in the nation to offer paid family and medical leave benefits to workers. The program will be funded by premiums paid by both employees and many employers. This insurance program will allow workers to take necessary time off when they welcome a new child into their family, are struck by extended illness or injury, or need to take care of an ill or ailing relative. As directed by the Legislature, **premium assessment begins on Jan. 1, 2019 and benefits will be available on Jan. 1, 2020.**

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