

What is PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE?

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a statewide insurance program that will be funded by premiums paid by both employees and many employers. Premium assessment begins on Jan. 1, 2019, and benefit claims will begin to be accepted Jan. 1, 2020.

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.

What is covered?



Caring for family members (children, spouse, parents, grandparents, and siblings)



Birth or placement of a child



Certain military-related events



Your own medical condition

How much will this cost?

A total premium of 0.4 percent, split between employer and employee, up to the Social Security cap is assessed to each employee through payroll deduction.

For a \$100,000 payroll, the employer portion of the premium paid to the state would be about \$147.

Are there exceptions?

Nearly all employers in the state, and employers who have employees in Washington, must participate. Self-employed people can opt-in.

What are my responsibilities as an employer?

Generally, all Washington employers must:

- Report wages, hours, and more on a quarterly basis; and
- Collect and remit insurance premiums from employee paychecks; and
- Provide notice of this program to employees.

Employers with fewer than 50 employees do not have to pay the employer portion of the premium, but are still required to collect and remit premiums, report, and provide notice.

Self employed individuals and federally recognized tribes are not required to participate in Paid Family & Medical Leave but may opt-in to the program to receive access to benefits. Employers who have workers in the state on a temporary basis may be eligible for a waiver from premiums under specific conditions.

Is help available?

Small Business Assistance grants are available to employers with 150 or fewer employees. These grants provide up to \$3,000 to help cover costs associated with employees on leave. An employer may apply for up to 10 of these grants each year, with 1 per employee on leave. Employers with fewer than 50 employees must pay the employer portion of the premium to be eligible.

Can I opt out?

Voluntary Plans are available to employers who want to operate their own Paid Family & Medical Leave insurance program. The plans can apply to family leave, medical leave, or both. The benefits of a Voluntary Plan must meet or exceed the state plan benefits. Applications will be available in Fall 2018 and the application fee is \$250. Employers who offer a voluntary plan are still required to report wages, hours and more.

What about Paid Sick Leave and FMLA?

Paid Family and Medical Leave benefits are separate from Paid Sick Leave, and they can not be used at the same time.

When a qualifying event is covered by both Paid Family and Medical Leave and FMLA, the leave available in both programs must be taken concurrently.

More rules about the interaction of Paid Family and Medical Leave and other leave programs will follow through rulemaking in 2019.

Where can I learn more?

This document does not cover every rule of Paid Family and Medical Leave. For more information, please see esd.wa.gov/paid-family-medical-leave.

