

TAKING PAID PREGNANCY DISABILITY OR PARENTAL LEAVE

WFSE and PSE Employees

Effective: July 1, 2025

A. APPLICATION

These provisions apply to:

1. All eligible employees who are covered by the WFSE or PSE collective bargaining agreements (see Section E – Eligibility), and
2. Experience, or have a spouse/partner who experiences, a qualifying event related to the birth, adoption or placement of a foster child on or after July 1, 2025.

B. LEGAL AUTHORITY

1. [WFSE Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) – Parental and Pregnancy Disability Leave
2. [PSE Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) – Parental and Pregnancy Disability Leave

C. OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY

1. Human Resources - [Leaves and Medical/Disability Accommodations Administrator](#)
2. Human Resources - [Employee/Labor Relations](#)

D. DEFINITIONS

1. Pregnancy Disability Leave
The period of leave necessary due to the employee *being disabled* prior to, during, and after childbirth as determined by the employee’s attending health care professional.
2. Parental Leave
The period of leave for an employee to care for and bond with their newborn child, newly adopted child, or a child placed with them through a foster care program.

E. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for either pregnancy disability leave and/or parental leave, an employee must meet all of the following five (5) criteria:

1. Be a permanent, regular, benefit-eligible employee who works six consecutive months averaging 80 hours or more each month and continues to work 8 hours per month after that period; and

2. Has been employed with the University for at least twelve (12) months; and
3. Has worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) consecutive months immediately preceding the date of the birth, adoption, or foster care placement.
4. In addition, an employee must meet one (1) of the following qualifying events:
 - a) Be a new parent by childbirth; or
 - b) Be the new adoptive parent of a child under the age of eighteen (18); or
 - c) Be a parent of a child born by a surrogate mother; or
 - d) Be an individual seeking to adopt a child after the birth of that child, but the adoption has not yet been finalized; or
 - e) Be an individual actively approved to provide foster care placement and have an active and ongoing role in parenting the child in their care.
5. The qualifying event is the date of birth or the date of final placement of a child for adoption or foster care and must occur after the employee has met the eligibility requirements.

Surrogate mothers, the adoption of a new spouse's child and sperm donors do not meet the eligibility criteria for Maternity Leave or Parental Leave.

F. USE OF PAID PREGNANCY DISABILITY LEAVE

1. An eligible employee who is the birth parent may use paid Pregnancy Disability Leave for up to twelve (12) consecutive weeks (480 hours). The paid leave will cover the period of disability prior to, during and after childbirth as determined by the employee's attending health professional.
2. See Section K for information about coordinating the use of paid parent leave with other state and federal leave benefits.
3. Additional disability related leave that is unpaid may be granted as an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act if qualified and needed for medical reasons.

G. USE OF PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

1. Parental leave will be granted to the employee for the purpose of bonding with their natural newborn, adoptive or foster child.
2. Parental Leave will run concurrently with available paid pregnancy disability leave.

3. Employees will be entitled to up to twelve (12) weeks of paid leave to care for a newborn child, a newly adopted child, or a child placed into foster care within the one (1) year following the birth or placement of the child.
4. The twelve (12) weeks of leave must be used within one (1) year following the birth, adoption, or placement of a foster child.
5. An employee may use Paid Parental Leave continuously for twelve (12) weeks or if mutually agreeable with the supervisor, for predefined intermittent leave or for a predefined reduced work schedule as long as it is used within the one (1) year following the birth, adoption or placement of a foster child.
6. Parental leave beyond twelve (12) weeks may be a combination of the employee's accrued vacation leave, personal holiday, compensatory time, or leave without pay.
7. See Section K for information about coordinating the use of paid parent leave with other state and federal leave benefits.

H. REDUCED WORK SCHEDULES

1. An eligible employee working less than full-time will receive a prorated portion of Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Parental Leave. The prorated portion of paid leave is calculated based on appointment percentage.
2. An employee may not use Paid Parental Leave in excess of the employee's normally scheduled work week. For example, if a full-time employee plans to work a reduced work schedule, but then works in excess of what was planned, the employee is required to reduce the number of Paid Parental Leave hours coded during that work week.

I. OTHER LIMITATIONS

1. An employee may not receive more than twelve (12) weeks of Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave in a rolling twelve (12) month period beginning with the first day of leave granted under these provisions based on supporting documentation received by Human Resources.
2. Eligible spouses who both work for the University will each receive a maximum of twelve (12) weeks of paid leave benefits within the rolling twelve-month period.
3. Multiple births, adoptions or foster care placements within twelve (12) months do not increase the amount of paid leave benefits.
4. Paid Maternity Leave or Paid Parental Leave may not be donated to another University or State of Washington employee.

5. An employee who is an adoptive parent may not use more than twelve (12) weeks of Paid Parental Leave in a rolling twelve (12) month period.

J. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

1. Each week of Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave and Paid Parental Leave is compensated at one hundred percent (100%) of the employee's base salary at the time of leave. Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave and Paid Parental Leave is paid on normally scheduled pay dates.
2. The University will maintain all benefits for an employee while on Paid Maternity Leave and Paid Parental Leave.
3. An employee will accrue applicable service credit based on State pension eligibility while on Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave and Paid Parental Leave.
4. An eligible employee who separates from the University will not be paid for any unused portion of Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave and Paid Parental Leave.

K. COORDINATION WITH OTHER STATE AND FEDERAL LEAVE BENEFITS

1. Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave must run concurrently with any approved state and federal leave.
 - a) State pregnancy disability leave (WAC 162-30-020) will run concurrently with the six to eight (6-8) weeks of available leave.
 - b) Federal FMLA leave will be counted toward the twelve (12) weeks of available FMLA leave in a rolling twelve (12) month period. An eligible employee who has exhausted their FMLA leave may still utilize available Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave.
2. Paid Parental Leave must run concurrently with any approved FMLA leave and will be counted toward the twelve (12) weeks of available FMLA leave in a rolling twelve (12) month period. An eligible employee who has exhausted their FMLA leave may still utilize Paid Parental Leave.
3. An employee who becomes eligible for FMLA while on Paid Maternity Leave or Paid Parental Leave after the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child must apply for and use FMLA. HR will contact the employee once their eligibility for FMLA has been determined to facilitate the application process.
4. Additional unpaid maternity leave may be granted as an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act if needed for medical reasons.

5. Unpaid parental leave may be extended up to six (6) months, including time covered by the FMLA and WAPFML, during the first year following the child's birth or placement.
6. Employees are not eligible to receive Shared Leave donations while utilizing Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave. An employee may be eligible to receive Shared Leave donations after Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave and all other accrued leave is exhausted, or if the employee is not eligible for Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave.
7. An eligible, cyclic employee (less than twelve (12) month, and greater than or equal to nine (9) month) who experiences a qualifying event during a break in their appointment is eligible for Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave once the employee resumes their active appointment status. The employee is eligible to receive the balance of Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave that remains since the qualifying event.
8. Holidays occurring while the employee is on Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave will be coded to holiday pay and will not count toward the employee's Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave entitlement or FMLA hours.
9. An employee who is on Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave when the President or designee authorizes paid administrative leave due to inclement weather and/or an office closure must record that time to Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave. Paid administrative leave will not extend the Paid Pregnancy Disability or Paid Parental Leave entitlement.
10. A Classified Employee who is on entrance or promotional probation while taking Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave may have their probationary period extended equivalent to the amount of Paid Pregnancy Disability Leave or Paid Parental Leave taken.

L. PROCEDURES

1. Employees Must Provide Minimum 30 Days Advance Notice to Supervisor and HR

Employees shall provide at least 30 days advance verbal or written notice to their supervisor and HR Leave Administrator when the need for Pregnancy Disability Leave or parental leave is foreseeable or as soon as practicable.

Notice should include the anticipated start date and expected duration of the leave. In situations where advance notice is not practicable, the employee must notify HR as soon as feasible. "As soon as feasible" would ordinarily mean the employee provides verbal notification to HR within ten (10) University business days of the employee knowing of the need for leave.

2. **Supervisors to Contact Human Resources After Receiving Notice from Employee**

Supervisors must contact HR as soon as possible after an employee has:

- a) Provided notice about a foreseeable need for leave applicable under this policy,
- b) Had an unforeseeable absence that is expected to continue for more than three consecutive days due to pregnancy related illness or the delivery of a child, or
- c) Has taken intermittent leave on a frequent basis due to a pregnancy related medical condition.

Supervisors are advised not to inquire about diagnosis and to direct the employee to provide required medical documentation only to HR (see section #5 below regarding confidentiality).

3. **Human Resources to Determine Eligibility**

The Disability/Medical Leave Administrator in HR will make all eligibility and provision determinations, provide required notification to employees and supervisors, and monitor and enforce compliance. The first day of leave paid under these provisions will begin based on the date in the supporting documentation.

4. **Employees Must Provide Documentation to HR to Support Leave Request**

Employees must provide sufficient documentation at their own cost **within 15 days upon request from HR** or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide sufficient documentation may result in a denial of paid leave and absences may be subject to discipline including termination.

Documentation may also be required for:

- a) Any leave taken related to pregnancy disability or parental leave taken prior to HR review, and
- b) Extensions to leave already approved.

An employee is required to provide legal documentation of the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child within thirty (30) days of the birth, adoption, or foster care placement or as soon as it becomes available. The employee's name must be included as a legal parent on the birth certificate, a legal document establishing paternity, or a legal document establishing adoption, or a legal document establishing foster care placement. Situations where a legal document cannot be provided at the time of birth or adoption, or within the required timeframe, or a reasonable time thereafter will be considered on a case-by-case basis by HR.

HR will send a Notice of Eligibility and Rights and Responsibilities to the employee within five (5) University business days of receiving the completed FMLA paperwork.

5. **HR Will Notify Employee and Supervisor of Approval Status**

The Disability/Medical Leave Administrator will notify both the employee and their supervisor in writing of approval or denial of the employee's paid leave request.

6. **All Involved Personnel Shall Maintain Confidentiality**

Supervisors are to:

- a) Treat all communications regarding an employee's leave under these provisions confidentially, and
- b) Forward all original documentation related to an employee's leave under these provisions to HR.

Human Resources will maintain the documentation separate from an employee's HR personnel files and release limited information only to others on a need-to-know basis for business or legal purposes or at the request of the employee.

7. **Human Resources Oversees Pay Status During Leave**

Human Resources will ensure the appropriate type of paid leave and in what order it may be used by an employee based on the applicable bargaining unit contract, laws, and University policy.