



Paid Family and Medical Leave Fast Facts

To provide you with the best science and reduce review time, please find the following science-approved facts for you to use in your campaigns and materials. After each fact, you will find fast facts based on the science, which can be cut and pasted word-for-word without the need for additional science review. Please note that any change in wording will result in the need to run your documents through the American Heart Association science review process before release.

Definitions of Paid Leave

- ▶ **Medical leave:** time away from work to take care of personal medical conditions.
- ▶ **Caregiving leave:** time away from work to care for a sick family member.
- ▶ **Parental leave:** time away from work for a mother or father to bond with a new child.
- ▶ **Family leave:** encompasses caregiving and parental leave.

Equity of Paid Family and Medical Leave

FACT 1

In 2022, only 24% of private sector and 27% of state and local government workers in the U.S. had access to paid family leave through their employers to bond with a new child or care for a seriously ill or injured family member.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Only a quarter of people who work for private companies and a third of people who work for state and local governments have access to paid family leave.
- ▶ Less than a quarter of people employed by private companies have access to paid family leave.
- ▶ Less than a third of state and local government workers have access to paid family leave.
- ▶ Most workers in the U.S. do not have access to paid family leave to bond with a new child or care for a sick or injured family member.

Source:

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2022. Washington; DC. September 2022. Available at: <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2022/home.htm#glossary>.

FACT 2

Access to paid family and medical leave is lowest among workers with the greatest needs. According to a 2021 study from the Urban Institute, access to paid leave remains highly skewed towards adults with higher incomes (81%), with college degrees (79%), and who work full time (79%). Black and Latino/Hispanic families report less access to paid leave than white families, which may be a result of longstanding discriminatory policies and structural racism.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Access to paid family and medical leave is lowest among workers who may need it most.
- ▶ People with higher incomes, college degrees, and full-time jobs are more likely to have access to paid leave.
- ▶ Paid leave may not be equitable. White families are more likely to report having access to paid leave than Black and Latino/Hispanic families.
- ▶ Black and Latino/Hispanic families report less access to paid leave than white families, which may be a result of longstanding discriminatory policies and structural racism.

Source:

Boyens C, Karpman M, Smalligan J. Access to paid leave is lowest among workers with the greatest needs. The Urban Institute. July 2022. Available at: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/access-paid-leave-lowest-among-workers-greatest-needs#:~:text=Access%20to%20paid%20leave%20is%20highly%20skewed%20toward,%2858%20percent%2C%2067%20percent%2C%20and%2072%20percent%2C%20respectively%29>.

Churchwell K, Elkind MSV, Benjamin RM, Carson AP, Chang EK, Lawrence W, Mills A, Odom TM, Rodriguez CJ, Rodriguez F, Sanchez E, Sharrief AZ, Sims M and Williams O. Call to Action: Structural Racism as a Fundamental Driver of Health Disparities: A Presidential Advisory From the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2020;142:e454-e468.

FACT 3

In 2021, 34% of workers in management, professional, and related occupations had access to paid family leave, more than any other major occupation. In contrast, employees in the production, transportation, and services sectors have among the lowest rates of access to paid leave.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ People who work in managerial or professional jobs are more likely to have access to paid leave than those who work in production or service jobs.
- ▶ People working in management and professional roles have more access to paid leave than any other occupation, but only a third of that group has access.
- ▶ Employees in production, transportation, and service sectors have some of the lowest rates of access to paid leave.

Source:

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. What data does the BLS publish on family leave? Updated September 2021. Available at: <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/factsheet/family-leave-benefits-fact-sheet.htm>.

Impact on Cardiovascular Health

FACT 4

Research has shown a positive correlation between access to paid leave and breastfeeding, which can improve cardiovascular health for both the mother and baby. A 2022 systematic review and meta-analysis published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* found that those who breastfed their babies had about a 10 percent lower risk of developing heart disease or stroke later in life. A 2021 study published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* found that toddlers who were breastfed as infants, even for a few days, had lower blood pressure than toddlers who were never breastfed.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Nursing parents who have access to paid leave are more likely to breastfeed, which has been shown to improve the heart health of the parent and baby.
- ▶ Mothers who have access to paid leave are more likely to breastfeed, which has been shown to reduce their risk of heart disease or stroke by about 10%.
- ▶ Mothers who have access to paid leave are more likely to breastfeed, which can lower their children's blood pressure.
- ▶ Breastfeeding can reduce a nursing parent's risk of developing heart disease or stroke by about 10%.
- ▶ An infant who is breastfed, even for a few days, may be more likely to have low blood pressure as a toddler.

Source:

Huang R, Yang M. Paid maternity leave and breastfeeding practice before and after California's implementation of the nation's first paid leave program. *Econ Hum Bio.* 2015; 16:45-59. doi: 10.1016/j.ehb.2013.12.009.

Tschiderer L, Seekircher L, Kunutsor SK, Peters SAE, O'Keeffe LM, Willeit P. Breastfeeding is associated with a reduced maternal cardiovascular risk: systematic review and meta-analysis involving data from 8 studies and 1,192 700 parous women. *J Am Heart Assoc.* 2022; 11(2):e022746. doi: 10.1161/JAHA.121.022746.

Miliku K, Moraes TJ, Becker AB, Mandhane PJ, Sears MR, Turvey SE, et al. Breastfeeding in the first days of life is associated with lower blood pressure at 3 years of age. *J Am Heart Assoc.* 2021; 10(15):e019067. doi: 10.1161/JAHA.120.019067.

FACT 5

Chronic stress, especially work-related stress or "job strain," is associated with a significant increase in risk for cardiovascular disease. However, research has shown that time off from work can reportedly reduce stress.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Constantly being stressed about work has been linked to an increased risk of developing heart disease.
- ▶ Reducing work-related stress has been shown to lower the risk of developing heart disease.
- ▶ Time off from work can reduce stress and, as a result, may reduce the risk of developing heart disease.

Source:

Step toe A and Kivimaki M. Stress and cardiovascular disease: an update on current knowledge. *Annu Rev Public Health.* 2013;34:337-54.

de Bloom J, Geurts SA and Kompier MA. Effects of short vacations, vacation activities and experiences on employee health and well-being. *Stress Health.* 2012;28:305-18.

FACT 6

Research shows approximately 50% of heart attack survivors return to work after four weeks and approximately 75% return after four months. It is important for paid leave policies to offer enough leave to cover a wide range of medical conditions.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Paid leave is important for heart attack survivors in recovery.
- ▶ Almost half of all heart attack survivors have been shown to return to work after four weeks.
- ▶ Paid leave policies must cover a wide range of medical conditions to ensure that heart attack survivors do not have to return to work before they have fully recovered.

Source:

Dreyer RP, Xu X, Zhang W, Du X, Strait KM, Bierlein M, et al. Return to Work After Acute Myocardial Infarction: Comparison Between Young Women and Men. *Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes*. 2016;9:S45-52.

Health Impact of Paid Family and Medical Leave

FACT 7

One study found that the introduction of paid leave policies led to a reduction in the share of low birthweight and preterm births, especially for Black mothers.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Paid leave policies have been shown to lead to healthier babies and mothers.
- ▶ When mothers have access to paid leave, they have been shown to have healthier babies.
- ▶ Paid leave policies may lead to fewer preterm and low-birthweight babies, especially for Black mothers.
- ▶ When Black mothers have access to paid leave, they have been to have significantly fewer preterm births and babies with low birth weight.

Source:

Stearns J. The effects of paid maternity leave: evidence from temporary disability insurance. *Health Econ.* 2015; 43:85-102. doi: 10.1016/j.jhealeco.2015.04.005.

Health Impact of California's Paid Leave Policies

FACT 8

One study found that the enactment of California's paid family leave policy significantly improved food security for households with infants under age 1, compared to states without a policy. Specifically, a 2.3 percentage point decrease in food insecurity was attributed to the paid leave law, and food security further decreased for households below 185% of the poverty level and households with multiple children.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ California's paid leave policy improved food security for households that recently welcomed a child.
- ▶ Infants experienced significantly less food insecurity after California enacted a paid leave policy.
- ▶ A California paid leave law decreased food insecurity among families with the greatest need.
- ▶ California's paid leave law significantly decreased food insecurity for households with multiple children and low income.
- ▶ California's paid leave significantly decreased food insecurity for households with multiple children.
- ▶ California's paid leave significantly decreased food insecurity for households with low income.

Source:

Lenhart O. The effects of paid family leave on food insecurity – evidence from California. *Rev Econ Household.* 2021; 19: 615-639. doi: 10.1007/s11150-020-09537-4.

FACT 9

Studies have shown that the introduction of California's paid family leave policy was associated with increased breastfeeding rates reported among new mothers and reduced infant hospitalizations.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ When California implemented a paid leave policy, more mothers reported breastfeeding, and fewer babies were hospitalized.
- ▶ Paid leave in California is linked to increased breastfeeding reported by new mothers.
- ▶ Fewer infants were hospitalized when California introduced a paid family leave policy.

Source:

Huang R, Yang M. Paid maternity leave and breastfeeding practice before and after California's implementation of the nation's first paid leave program. *Econ Hum Bio.* 2015; 16:45-59. doi: 10.1016/j.ehb.2013.12.009.

Pihl AM, Basso G. Did California paid family leave impact infant health? *J Policy Anal Manage.* 2019; 38(1):155-80.

FACT 10

Paid leave policies may have long-term health benefits, due in part to prompt medical check-ups during infancy. One study found that the implementation of California's paid family leave policy was associated with reduced rates of overweight, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and hearing-related problems among elementary school-age children.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Paid leave policies may have long-term health benefits for children, partly due to prompt medical check-ups during infancy.
- ▶ When parents have paid leave, children may grow up healthier.
- ▶ Being able to bond with and care for a new child may have long-term health benefits as the child grows up.
- ▶ After California enacted paid family leave, children were less likely to be overweight, have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and experience hearing-related problems.

Source:

Rossin-Slater M, Uniat L. Paid family leave policies and population health. *Health Aff.* 2019. doi: 10.1377/hpb20190301.484936.

Lichtman-Sadot S, Bell NP. Child health in elementary school following California's paid family leave policy. *J Policy Anal Manage.* 2017; 36(4):790-827. doi: 10.1002/pam.22012.

Business Impact of Paid Family and Medical Leave

FACT 11

One study found that employees who reported taking paid leave were more likely to be working nine to 12 months after a child's birth, compared to women who reported taking no leave.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Women who take paid leave after the birth of a child are more likely to reenter the workforce within a year of the child's birth.
- ▶ Women who do not have paid leave after the birth of a child are less likely to reenter the workforce within a year of the child's birth.

Source:

Houser L and Vartanian TP. Pay matters: The positive economic impacts of paid family leave for families, businesses and the public: Rutgers Center for Women and Work; 2012.

FACT 12

In one study, employees reported that paid leave either had no effect on their establishment or had a positive effect on productivity, profits, retention, employee morale, and turnover.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ When employers offer paid leave, it may benefit the employees and the business.
- ▶ Businesses that offer paid leave may see increased productivity, profits, retention, and morale and decreased turnover.
- ▶ Offering employees paid leave may be good business: it may increase productivity, profits, retention, and morale and decreases turnover.
- ▶ Workers who can take paid time off work to care for themselves or a family member may be more productive.

Source:

Appelbaum E and Milkman R. Leaves that pay: Employer and worker experiences with paid family leave in California. 2011. Available at: <https://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

The Council of Economic Advisors; Executive Office of the President of the United States. The economics of paid and unpaid leave. June 2014. Available at: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/leave_report_final.pdf.

Business Impact of California's Paid Leave Policies

FACT 13

Providing paid leave may level the playing field for small businesses. Small businesses that cannot afford to offer the same generous leave benefits as larger companies may have a competitive disadvantage in hiring.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Offering paid leave may make small businesses more competitive with larger companies.
- ▶ Small businesses that do not offer paid leave may be at a disadvantage when hiring compared to large companies that do offer paid leave.

Source:

Appelbaum E and Milkman R. Leaves that pay: Employer and worker experiences with paid family leave in California. 2011. Available at: <https://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

FACT 14

In California, 92% of employers reported that paid family leave had a positive or neutral effect on employee turnover, saving employers the costly step of replacing an existing employee.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ In California, where paid leave is universal, most employers say that offering paid leave saves them money by having either a positive or neutral effect on employee turnover.
- ▶ Ninety-two percent of California employers say that paid family leave reduces or has no effect on employee turnover, saving the company time and money.

Source:

Appelbaum E and Milkman R. Leaves that pay: Employer and worker experiences with paid family leave in California. 2011. Available at: <https://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

Economic Impact of Paid Family and Medical Leave

FACT 15

A study published in 2020 found that access to paid leave may reduce reliance on public assistance programs, depending on each individual family's overall resources. In particular, the study found that living in a state with paid maternity leave was associated with a 4.3% decreased use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and reduced the benefits received per year by \$104 per family, compared to living in a state without paid maternity leave.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Paid leave policies may reduce families' need to rely on public assistance programs.
- ▶ In states with paid maternity leave, fewer families have to rely on public assistance programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
- ▶ When families have access to paid leave, they can be more financially independent and less dependent on public assistance programs.
- ▶ When states enact paid family leave, it can save them money by reducing reliance on public assistance programs.

Source:

Kang, J. (2020). The effect of paid maternity leave on low-income families' welfare use in the US. Social Policy Administration, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12618>.

FACT 16

One study found that women who take paid leave were 39% less likely to participate in other government-sponsored assistance programs in the year following childbirth, compared to women who take no leave.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Women who take paid family leave are 39% less likely to rely on federal assistance programs during the first year of their child's life.
- ▶ Women who do not have access to paid leave may be more reliant on government assistance programs during the first year of their child's life.

Source:

Houser L and Vartanian TP. Pay matters: The positive economic impacts of paid family leave for families, businesses and the public: Rutgers Center for Women and Work; 2012.

A Note on Financing Paid Family and Medical Leave

Most paid leave proposals are financed with a payroll tax, instead of a requirement on employers. A payroll tax approach spreads the cost across all employers and employees. In most states that implemented paid family leave as of 2017, an approximately 1 percentage point payroll tax had been sufficient to fund the amount of leave taken by employees. When compared to the 15.3 percent federal Social Security taxes already levied on payroll plus other taxes (e.g., for unemployment insurance).

Source:

Holzer HJ. Paid Family Leave: Balancing Benefits and Costs. 2017. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2017/01/30/paid-family-leave-balancing-benefits-and-costs/>.