



Parental Leaves

In this week's newsletter, we are focusing on the different parental leaves that may be available for leave reasons due to pregnancy, baby bonding, and connecting with a child through surrogacy, foster care, or adoption.

My family is growing! What kind of parental leaves am I eligible for?



Once you know that you are expecting a child, and when you are prepared to share the news, inform your supervisor and your Department's Leave Management Unit (LMU). We suggest that you notify them at least 30 days before your expected leave start date unless you need to take protected time off to care for your health and the baby's health during your pregnancy. If this is the case, contact your supervisor and/or your LMU right away. By letting your LMU know you will need this leave, they can help you with the leave application process; and by letting your supervisor know, this will help them plan for coverage during your absence.

Click [HERE](#) to find the email address for your Department's Protected Leave Coordinator (PLC).

I just found out that I am pregnant. What leaves do I qualify for?

Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL) covers any absence that you might have to take to care of your health during pregnancy; you can take PDL for things like morning sickness, medical appointments, or medical treatments related to your pregnancy. Under the law, you qualify for PDL coverage from your very first day of employment with the County of Los Angeles (County). Full-time employees can take a maximum of 693 hours (equivalent to 17 1/3 work weeks) of leave; the leave time is pro-rated for part-time employees. If you are a part-time employee, your PLC can help you determine how much PDL time is available for you to use. Leave under PDL is available for each pregnancy and is not counted by calendar year. With PDL, you also have the



flexibility to take time off as full days or in increments of time as short as 15 minutes. Although PDL is also an unpaid leave, your supervisor and your PLC can help you figure out how to use any available and accrued benefit time if you wish to receive pay to cover these absences. When applying for PDL you will need to submit a certification form that is signed by your healthcare provider (HCP); this form will be in the leave packet you will receive from your LMU.

You may also be eligible for the **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**. To qualify for protected leave under FMLA, you must have worked for the County for at least 12 months over the last seven (7) years, **AND** you must have worked 1,250 hours in the 12 months immediately before the start of your FMLA leave. If you qualify for FMLA, you can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave within a 12-month period. Similar to PDL, you can take FMLA in full days or in increments of time as short as 15 minutes.



Important

Important note: if you qualify for FMLA, the time you take for your pregnancy care will be counted against both FMLA and PDL benefits at the same time. Like with PDL, you will need to submit a signed certification form from your HCP.

Protection under the **California Family Rights Act (CFRA)** may also be available to you. CFRA has the same eligibility requirements as FMLA, (you must have worked for 12 months in County service over the last seven (7) years **AND** worked 1,250 hours before the start of your CFRA leave). CFRA is the California State version of the Federal FMLA benefit. It also provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period, and like PDL and FMLA, if you are eligible, you can take this protected time in full day periods or in increments of time as small as 15 minutes. Typically, people use their CFRA-protected leave benefit to bond with their new baby, adopted child, or with a child placed in their foster care. If you are taking leave to bond with your child, a HCP's certification is not required.



Is your partner pregnant? If your partner requires care during pregnancy, you may be eligible to take protected leave under FMLA and CFRA. Reach out to your LMU to request a leave and your PLC will provide you with a packet. Your partner's HCP will complete the form including the duration of time needed to care for your partner.

I am not pregnant, but my family is expanding. Do I qualify for a leave?

There are protected leaves to support you when welcoming a child through foster care placement, adoption, and surrogacy.

Baby Bonding

If you are welcoming a new addition to your family, you may be thinking about taking some time off to connect with your new child and establish strong parental bonds; this leave is commonly referred to as baby bonding leave.



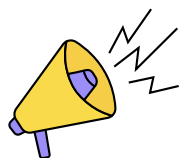
The bonding experience is very personal, and it varies from person to person. You have the flexibility to take bonding leave in the way that best fits your needs and those of your family. Bonding leave is designed to accommodate your personal needs. You can choose to take the 12 weeks together or to divide the 12 weeks of protected leave time into blocks of (2) two weeks or greater. Bonding leave can be taken any time between the baby's birth and their first birthday, or for those who are adopting or welcoming a foster placement, before the first anniversary date of the adoption or placement. For instance, if your adoption process was finalized on February 15, 2024, you have the option to take bonding leave any time between that date and February 15, 2025.



What if I am not eligible for FMLA or CFRA? Can I still take time off to bond with my child?



The County understands the importance of family, and how special it is to welcome a child. Even if you are not eligible yet for FMLA or CFRA leave, you can request personal time off, and you can use any accrued and available benefit time; you also have the option of taking this time without pay. To learn more about your options, reach out to your supervisor or PLC. When you do become eligible for FMLA or CFRA, you may still have the opportunity to take some protected bonding time. For instance, if your hire date was September 6, 2023, and your baby was born, adopted, or joined your family on November 10, 2023, you could potentially qualify for bonding time between September 6, 2024, and November 10, 2024. Your PLC can help you determine what may be available to you.



NEW IN 2024 – REPRODUCTIVE LOSS LEAVE



Sometimes the unthinkable happens. There is a new California law that went into effect on January 1, 2024, that is available for employees who experience a "reproductive loss." Under the law, time off to grieve a "reproductive loss" includes a miscarriage, stillbirth, a failed adoption, a failed surrogacy, or an unsuccessful assisted reproduction (artificial insemination or in-vitro fertilization). If you suffer a covered loss, you are eligible to take up to five (5) days of unpaid Reproductive Loss Leave; in order to be eligible for this leave, you must have been employed with the County for at least 30 days before taking leave.

Are you returning to work from maternity/pregnancy leave and want to continue nursing your child?

The County has a policy that supports you in taking time during the workday to express milk and offers dedicated space so that you can express milk in a private and quiet setting. Click [HERE](#) to learn about the County's Lactation Program.



In the final newsletter, we will provide a summary of the key points discussed in the newsletter series to wrap up Protected Leave Programs Awareness Month. Stay tuned!