



Benefit Guide

Washington's Paid Family & Medical Leave Program

Here for you.



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

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www.paidleave.wa.gov

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About this guide

What it is: This guide will help you prepare for and use the Paid Family and Medical Leave program. It will also help you understand your rights and responsibilities.

Definitions: There are some terms and phrases in here that might need more explanation. We included definitions or explanations to key terms at [the end of this guide](#).

Stay informed: The most recent version of this guide is at paidleave.wa.gov/benefit-guide. The bottom of each page shows the version number and publication date. We update this guide to reflect legislative and procedural changes. For program alerts and updates in between revisions to this guide, explore our website (paidleave.wa.gov).

Changes log

January 3, 2020

- Updated information about the continuation of healthcare benefits (p 7)

February 3, 2020

- Updated information for January 2020 applications (p 5, 8, 9, 11)
- Added link to paidleave.wa.gov/after-you-apply (p 5, 12)

March 26, 2020

- Added information about our hardship review process (p 9)
- Updated information around applying for both medical and family leave (p 4, 5, 8, 12, 13)

May 12, 2020

- Added information about Certification of Birth form (p 10, 11, 13)

July 16, 2020

- Updated definitions of job protection and health insurance (p 7)
- Added links and information about complaint forms (p 9, 10)

January 1, 2021

- Updated information about when to apply, backdating and when to file weekly claims (p 5)
- Updated maximum weekly benefit amount (p 6)
- Added information about using unemployment benefits (p 8)
- Removed information about Events in 2019 and Hardships (p 8, 9)
- Added information about requesting changes to claims (p 8)

- Added information about COVID-19 (p 10)

- Added information about taxes (p 16)

June 11, 2021

- Updated information about backdating (p 5)
- Updated links and contact information (p 12, 16)
- Editing and formatting for grammar and clarity

July 2, 2021

- Updated definition of qualifying period (p 14, 15)

November 1, 2021

- Updated maximum benefit amount (p 6)

April 7, 2022

- Clarified qualifying family member list (p 4)

June 9, 2022

- Added information about list of employers with approved voluntary plans (p 4, 7)
- Added information about the weekly claim questionnaire (p 5, 6)
- Added information about “postnatal period” (p 5, 9, 12, 13, 16)
- Added information about transportation network companies (p 16)

December 1, 2022

- Updated weekly benefit amount for 2023 (p 6)
- Updated name of Certification forms (p 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17)

December 20, 2023

- Editing and formatting
- Removed COVID-19 information
- Removed Collective Bargaining Agreement information
- Added information shared with employers while on leave

About the program

We know the most important things in life happen outside the workday. People we care about become ill. Families welcome new members. Big moments that need extra attention come along for all of us.

Support in these times means we can be stronger both at home and at work. Paid Family and Medical Leave is a benefit that offers paid time off to Washingtonians when they need it most.

How Paid Leave works

Paid Leave is available to almost everyone working in Washington.

Types of leave

- **Medical Leave:**
 - Recovery or treatment for your own serious health condition or injury. This includes prenatal care and recovery from childbirth.
- **Family Leave:**
 - Bonding with a new child through birth, adoption or foster placement.
 - Caring for a family member with a serious health condition or injury.
 - Certain events for military families.

Qualifying family members

- Spouse
- Domestic partner
- Children (including step and foster)
- Son-in-law and daughter-in-law
- Grandchildren
- Siblings
- Parents (including in-law and in loco parentis)
- Grandparents
- Someone who has an expectation to rely on you for care—whether you live together or not.

Eligibility

You can receive the benefit when you have:

1. Worked 820 hours (about 16 hours a week) in employment in Washington during the “[qualifying period](#).”
2. Experienced a “[qualifying event](#).”

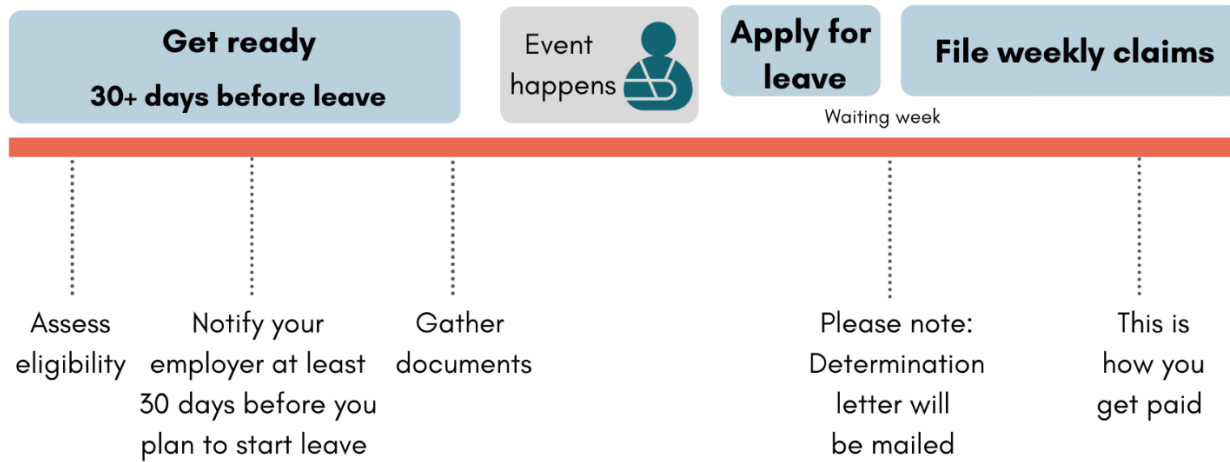
Full-time, part-time, temporary and seasonal work counts. If you work more than one job or switch employers, all the reportable hours you work in Washington count toward eligibility.

- Hours do not automatically count for Paid Leave if you work for:
 - the federal government,
 - a federally recognized tribe, or
 - yourself in self-employment, including as an independent contractor or a driver with a [transportation network company](#).
 - Tribes, self-employed individuals and drivers for transportation network companies may opt-in to the program ([paidleave.wa.gov/elective-coverage](#)).
- If you work for an [employer with an approved voluntary plan](#) you might not be eligible to use the state plan, but you would be able to use your employer’s benefits.

Submit your application within 30 days after your [qualifying event](#) takes place.

- If it’s been more than 30 days since your qualifying event, you may be able to backdate your claim for a “good cause reason” that prevented you from applying.
- If you know in advance that you’ll need paid leave, you can start your application without submitting it before the qualifying event.

What to expect when you apply for and use Paid Leave



Assess eligibility. You can take a short quiz on our website to check if you meet eligibility (paidleave.wa.gov/quiz).

Give written notice to your employer at least 30 days before you plan to start your leave. If your leave was not foreseeable, provide written notice as soon as you are able. You can give notice in various ways, including text or email. You can also download a template notification at paidleave.wa.gov/get-ready-to-apply. You may also want to keep a copy of the notification you give your employer for your records.

Get your documents ready. You will need to provide **proof of ID** and other documentation or forms, depending on the type of leave.

- **Proof of ID**, such as driver's license, passport or utility and phone bills. A complete list of documents is at paidleave.wa.gov/get-ready-to-apply.
- **Medical leave:** Medical certification* signed by a healthcare provider:
 - [Certification form \(medical leave\)](#),
 - FMLA paperwork, or
 - other documentation that meets the requirements.
- **Medical leave related to pregnancy, prenatal care or childbirth:** Medical certification* signed by a healthcare provider:
 - Certification form,
 - FMLA paperwork, or
 - Other documentation that meets the requirements.

Note: Leave that a parent who gives birth takes in the "[postnatal period](#)" will be designated as medical leave unless you specify otherwise. If you plan to also use family leave, you will need to submit a second application.

- **Military family leave:**
 - Documentation that shows eligibility, like active duty orders.
- **Family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition:** Medical certification* signed by a healthcare provider:
 - [Certification form \(family leave\)](#),
 - FMLA paperwork or
 - Other documentation that meets the requirements.
- **Family leave to bond with a child who was born into your family:**
 - Both parents can use our [Certification form \(pregnancy and birth\)*](#).
 - If you give birth to a child and apply for medical leave before bonding leave, you can use the [Certification form \(medical leave\)](#) or the [Certification form \(pregnancy and birth\)](#) for both applications if the form reflects your child's actual date of birth (not due date).
- **Family leave to bond with a child who was adopted or placed in your family:**
 - Court documents to show foster care, adoption or guardianship placement, or
 - Other documentation that establishes the child's initial placement date, like a letter from an assigned social worker or agency.

**It may take two weeks or more for your doctor's office to process this paperwork, so send it to them as soon as possible. Healthcare providers should sign the certification form when the qualifying event occurs.*

Once your qualifying event happens, **apply for leave.**

- You can apply online or with a paper benefit application.
 - *Need someone to help you apply?* Contact our Customer Care Team for a Designation of an Authorized Representative form.
 - *We have tutorial videos at* paidleave.wa.gov/technical-support

If you apply online:

Create your account(s)

- Go to paidleave.wa.gov/login.
- Select "Worker log in."
- Then read through the pop-up window and select "Click to log in." This will take you to the state's log-in service, SecureAccess Washington. Use an existing SAW login or create a new one.
 - *Not sure if you have a SAW login?* Click the "Get Help" button on the SAW homepage to find out.
- In SAW, add Paid Family and Medical Leave to your services:
 - Select "Add a New Service"
 - Select "I would like to browse a list of services by agency"
 - Find and select "Employment Security Department"
 - Then, find "Paid Family and Medical Leave"
 - Select "Apply"
- You will then create a Paid Family and Medical Leave account.

If you apply on paper:

- You'll receive payments on a prepaid debit card.
- You can call our Customer Care Team to file weekly claims.
- Paper benefit applications are available in 15 languages at paidleave.wa.gov.
- Use the paper application if you don't have an SSN.

Fill in and submit the application.

- You'll provide basic information and verify your employment history.
- Be sure to upload your proof of ID and other required documents to complete the application.
- Select your payment preference.
 - When you apply online, you can choose to be paid via direct deposit or a prepaid debit card.
 - Your application is incomplete if you have not selected a payment preference. It will show as "pending".
- Submit your application.

If you are pregnant and plan to take:

- **both medical and family leave**, you'll fill out two applications.
 - The first application is for medical leave during the "prenatal period" or "[postnatal period](#)." Upload a [Certification form](#) with your application.
 - Once you receive a determination, you can submit a family leave application for bonding in your same Paid Leave account. You will need to provide a [Certification form \(pregnancy and birth\)](#) or documentation from the hospital that shows your child's date of birth.
- **only family leave for bonding**, fill out your application for family leave.

What is in the application?

- Basic information about yourself (full name, date of birth, address, contact information, Social Security Number. If you do not have a Social Security Number, call our Customer Care Team for more information and to request a paper benefit application).
- Verification of your employment history.
- The date you notified your employer about your leave.
- What type of leave you're taking (family or medical).

Important tip!

- Double-check your name, date of birth and your SSN before you finish.

After you apply (online or on paper), we will review your application and mail you a decision letter.

- We will notify your employer when you apply. They will have 18 days to respond.
- We will review your application and may contact you if we have questions.
 - Make sure your phone number and mailing address are kept up to date. We may also send a secure message via your benefit account.
 - If we do not receive a response, we will use the information we have to make our decision.
- Once we make a decision, we will send your decision letter to your mailing address.
 - This letter will tell you your maximum weekly benefit amount, typical workweek hours and confirm the dates of your approved leave and claim year.
 - *If you disagree with your decision letter:* The decision letter will inform you of your next steps. You may submit a "Request for Review" in your Paid Leave account, or you may file an [appeal](#).

File weekly claims to receive payments.

- Once we approve your application, you can begin filing weekly claims in your Paid Leave account or by calling us.
- You can file claims for weeks you were on leave after your qualifying event occurred but before we approved your application.
- To claim paid leave for a week, you must miss at least eight consecutive hours of work. That's one day for full-time employees but might be more than one day if you work part-time.
- The status of your weekly claims and your weekly claim history is available in your Paid Leave account.
- A list of the questions and what they mean is available at paidleave.wa.gov/help-center

Waiting week

- The law requires a “waiting week” for some types of leave. There is **no** waiting week for parental bonding leave, medical leave taken during the “postnatal period” and military exigency. There is a waiting week for family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition or for medical leave taken for your own serious health condition, including prenatal care.
- Your “waiting week” is the first week you are approved to file a weekly claim and used leave. You won’t be paid for that week. To qualify as a waiting week, you must have missed a minimum of eight consecutive hours of work. If your qualifying event occurs after Sunday in the first week you use leave, the waiting week may be less than a week.

Payments

If you use paid time off at the same time as Paid Leave your benefit payment will be affected, unless:

- Your employer chooses to offer a “[supplemental benefit](#),” or
- It is your waiting week. You may use paid time off from your employer, including paid vacation or sick days, during that time without impact on your Paid Leave benefits. You can’t collect Unemployment Insurance or workers’ compensation benefits during the same week as Paid Leave.

Frequently Asked Questions

For even more FAQs, visit paidleave.wa.gov/help-center.

Our Customer Care Team can assist you with specific questions about your application, account, weekly claims, payments or usage of the program. Send a secure message in your benefit account or call 833-717-2273.

Applying for Paid Leave

When should I apply?

Submit your application within 30 days of your [qualifying event](#) taking place. If you know in advance of the qualifying event that you’ll need paid leave, because you are having a baby or planning for surgery, you can complete most of the application process ahead of time. This includes creating an online account, getting your documentation ready (for example, getting a medical certification signed if required for your type of leave), and filling in most of the application. You’ll also need to notify your employer at least 30 days in advance if you know about the need that far ahead of time.

Can I backdate my claim?

If something prevented you from applying for Paid Leave within 30 days after your [qualifying event](#), you may be able to backdate your claim. We can backdate a claim up to 30 days from the date when you file your application. If you want to backdate your claim further, you will need a “good cause” reason. For example, this could be the result of a serious health condition, a period of incapacity or a natural disaster.

A medical certification form may provide the information we need to determine if you are eligible to backdate your claim, but it is likely we will ask for additional information. We can’t backdate claims to before the law took effect on Jan. 1, 2020.

How do I apply?

You can apply online (paidleave.wa.gov/apply-now) or with a paper application. View the application process on [page 5](#).

Can someone help me apply?

Yes, you may designate an authorized representative to act on your behalf. The Designation of an Authorized Representative form is available by request from the Customer Care Team.

What do I tell my employer?

If you know you will be applying for Paid Leave, you must provide written notice to your employer(s) at least 30 days in advance of the date you expect your leave to begin. If the reason you need leave was unplanned, notify your employer(s) as soon as possible. You do not have to provide details about why you are taking Paid Leave, but your notice should include the dates you expect to be on leave and the date you gave your employer(s) notice of your leave.

Is there any information I need from my employer before I apply?

If you are receiving paid time off or other paid leave, you should check with your employer whether they consider it to be a “[supplemental benefit](#).” You do not need to report supplemental benefits on your weekly claim, but you do need to report employer-paid time off. That’s why it’s important to check with your employer whether they are treating any employer-paid time off you receive as a supplemental benefit. For more information, see the section on [supplemental benefits](#).

You’ll also want to know if your employer operates an approved voluntary plan for medical leave, family leave or both types of leave. We maintain a list of employers with approved voluntary plans at paidleave.wa.gov/voluntary-plan-employer-list. If you work for an employer with an approved voluntary plan you might not be eligible to use the state plan, but you would be able to use your employer’s benefits.

Using Paid Leave

How much time do I get?

Within your “[claim year](#)” (approximately one year after you submit an application), you can take:

- Up to 12 weeks of medical leave to recover from or get treatment for a “serious health condition,” or family leave to take care of a qualifying family member who is ill or injured with a “serious health condition” or to bond with a new child or for certain military events.
- Up to 16 weeks of combined medical and family leave if you have events covered by both in the same claim year. Any medical leave designated as the “[postnatal period](#)” is included in the total amount of leave available to you.
- Up to 18 weeks of combined medical and family leave if you experience a complication related to pregnancy or birth, like being put on bedrest or experiencing postpartum depression, and then take bonding leave. Any medical leave designated as the “[postnatal period](#)” is included in the total amount of leave available to you.

Do I have to take all the leave at once?

No. You can use leave intermittently throughout your approved leave dates, so long as you miss at least eight consecutive hours of work per week. For example, you could take two days off per week for chemotherapy treatment, or one day off each week to care for a parent with Alzheimer’s. Consecutive hours can cover two shifts. For example, if you need the last four hours of a shift to get a treatment and the first four hours the following shift to continue that treatment, that counts as eight consecutive hours. For more information on leave duration, see “[Typical Workweek Hours](#).”

What do I have to do while on leave?

You will file weekly claims with us while on leave.

- Each weekly claim covers a week that begins on a Sunday and ends on a Saturday.
- The weekly claim questionnaire is available by phone if you applied on paper, and also in your customer account if you applied online.
- You may answer different questions from one week to the next.
- It is your responsibility to accurately report this information.

If there is a week during my approved leave where I don't want to use Paid Leave, do I still file a weekly claim?

If you are taking leave intermittently, working or using paid time off instead of taking leave, you must still submit a weekly claim. The first question on the weekly claim is, "Do you want to receive Paid Leave benefits for this week?" If you didn't miss work or don't want to use your benefits for some other reason, select "no." You will not see this question if the weekly claim may be for your waiting week.

What if I need to take leave for more than one event in the same claim year?

If you have more than one [qualifying event](#) in your claim year, you will fill out an application for each event. You can do the second application online in your Paid Leave account. We may need you to provide additional information or forms for the new claim, such as:

- medical certification for the new [serious health condition](#), or
- proof of birth documents for family leave to bond with your baby after you have used medical leave.

For example, you had a baby on July 24, 2022. You apply for, and take, six weeks of medical leave for your recovery during the "postnatal period." You then want to use up to 12 weeks of family leave to bond with your baby. You will need to fill out a second application for family leave.

Whenever possible, you must notify your employer at least 30 days before you plan to use Paid Leave. Your employer may require you to report to them the status and intention of your return to work.

Payments

What benefit amount do I receive?

We will determine your weekly benefit amount based on wages reported by your employer(s).

- The maximum weekly benefit amount is \$1,456 in 2024 and the minimum is \$100 (unless you make less than an average of \$100 per week, then you will receive your full wage).
- You may receive up to 90 percent of your average weekly wage, depending on your income.
- Estimate your benefit payment at paidleave.wa.gov/estimate-your-weekly-pay.

How is my benefit amount determined?

Your employer files reports to let us know how many hours you've worked and the wages you were paid in a quarter. We use the hours reported to determine if you've met the minimum 820 hours for eligibility, and the wages reported to know how much your benefit payments will be. If you have more than one job, we add all the hours reported for you from all your employers that are required to report.

If you have elected coverage, we will use the wages you reported to determine eligibility and weekly benefit amount.

Taxes

The IRS has not given us an answer on whether Paid Leave benefits are taxable. We will update you if they do.

Since we don't know if your benefit payments will be taxed by the federal government, we have decided to issue a 1099-G form to all customers who received family leave benefits. However, how you as an individual report this income for tax purposes is up to you and your tax professional, and we cannot provide you with any tax advice or additional guidance.

We will mail the form in mid-January to the address we have on file for you.

We will also send information about the family leave benefits you received to the IRS.

Please note:

- The U.S. Postal Service will not forward your 1099-G unless they have a change of address on file.
- We will not be providing 1099-G forms for medical leave benefits.

For additional information or updates, please visit paidleave.wa.gov/help-center.

Will I always receive the same amount?

Your first and last weeks of leave may be prorated based on your leave dates. We can't pay for days in a claim week that happen before your leave starts or after it ends. However, for any weeks during your leave where nothing changes about your weekly claim, your weekly benefit will not change. Your benefit payment may vary from week to week if you are not claiming the full week. For example, if you have worked or reported employer-paid time off, we will reduce your benefit payment that week. You do not report any [supplemental benefits](#) offered by your employer. For more information, see the section on [supplemental benefits](#).

How do I get paid?

If you apply online, you can choose to be paid via direct deposit or a prepaid debit card. If you apply on paper, you can only receive a prepaid debit card at this time. It is your responsibility to keep your banking information current and update this information through your online account. If you have questions about your prepaid card, please review the bank disclosures you received when you applied or contact the bank's customer support team at 888-964-0359.

Employment, health insurance and interaction with other types of leave

What information is shared with my employer while I am on leave?

The employer you mark as "current employer" in your benefit application or during a weekly claim will be notified by mail when you apply for Paid Leave. They will have 18 calendar days to contest your application if they feel you are not eligible for the program. We'll also share the following information:

- Employee name
- Benefit Claim ID number
- Application date and requested leave dates
- Leave type (Medical or Family)
- Decision and approved leave dates

If you submit weekly claims, employers will only have access to our decisions:

- WW = Waiting week
- Yes = Approved and paid week
- No = Denied or unpaid

If any of the benefit details listed above change, the new information will be shown to your employer.

We will not be sharing:

- Your health information,
- The reason you have applied for leave,
- Your weekly benefit amount,
- Your payment amounts,
- Your hours used,
- If your application is currently being redetermined or appealed, or
- If there are any other employers associated with your account or leave.

You can share this information with your employer if you choose. Some employers may ask for this information if they want to top off your benefit or provide [supplemental benefits](#).

Can I take Paid Leave if I am unemployed?

Yes. If you have worked enough hours in the [qualifying period](#), you can use Paid Leave. You can't claim Unemployment Insurance or workers' compensation benefits at the same time as Paid Leave.

What if I'm receiving unemployment benefits — can I also get Paid Leave?

You may be eligible for both, but you will need to use the benefits one at a time. You can't receive unemployment benefits during the same week as Paid Leave.

What happens to my health insurance while I am on leave?

Employers are required to maintain existing health benefits for an employee receiving paid family or medical leave benefits if they have at least one day of overlap with leave taken under federal FMLA (WAC 192-700-020).

Health benefits must continue without a break in coverage until the employee's paid leave ends or the employee returns to work after taking their leave.

Nothing prevents your employer from maintaining any of your benefits while you take Paid Leave, so please ask your employer if they will continue your health coverage while on leave.

If you are responsible for paying part of your health insurance premium, your employer can require that you continue to pay your share.

Is my job protected while I am on leave?

You may be eligible for job protection. Your job is likely protected if:

- you work for a company that employs more than 50 people in Washington, and
- you have worked there for at least a year, and
- you have worked at least 1,250 hours in the year immediately preceding leave.

If you do not have job protection with Paid Family and Medical Leave there may be other local, state or federal laws that offer job protection or restoration for you. You also need to continue to follow the leave notification policies of your employer.

An employer can deny job restoration if:

- They can show that the employee's job would not have existed when the employee returned from leave, or
- The worker is salaried and among the highest-paid ten percent of employees within 75 miles of the facility where the employee works.

How does this work with FMLA?

The use of FMLA does not reduce your allowed Paid Leave benefit, so it is possible to use both types of leave. Also, Paid Leave and FMLA can usually run concurrently since many Paid Family and Medical Leave events also qualify for FMLA.

Paid Leave vs. FMLA

Examples of differences

Paid Leave

- Is a state program only for people working in Washington
- Offers paid leave
- Is available to workers in businesses of all sizes, including small businesses
- Has a broader definition of "family," including siblings and grandparents

FMLA

- A federal program throughout the U.S.
- Offers unpaid leave
- Is only available to workers in businesses of 50 or more employees

Similarities

Job protection is similar under FMLA and Paid Family and Medical Leave. Leave will usually run at the same time when people are eligible for both.

COVID-19

If you or a qualifying family member are sick with coronavirus, you can apply for Paid Leave. You will need to submit a signed medical certification from a healthcare provider.

- We accept electronic signatures from healthcare providers.
- COVID-19 results do not count as medical certification.

Quarantine, school closures or childcare closures are not qualifying events.

Can I receive private short-term disability insurance payments at the same time as Paid Leave?

Yes. This is considered a [supplemental benefit](#).

What's the difference between this program and Washington's paid sick leave law?

Paid Family and Medical Leave is not the same as paid sick leave. Paid sick leave is usually paid directly by the employer and is available for minor illnesses and preventative health care, as well as more serious health conditions. Washington law requires your employer to provide you with the ability to accrue at least one hour of paid sick leave for every forty hours you work. It is enforced by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. For more information on paid sick leave, visit lni.wa.gov/workers-rights/leave/paid-sick-leave.

Can I use paid time, like vacation leave or sick leave, at the same time as Paid Leave?

You may use paid time off at the same time as Paid Leave but it may affect your benefit payment.

Your employer may choose to offer additional pay to you while you are using Paid Leave – this is called a “[supplemental benefit](#).” Not all paid time off is a supplemental benefit, so you need to check with your employer if this is available to you. It is your employer's choice to offer a supplemental benefit, and your choice to take it if it is available.

If you worked or received other benefits, like employer-provided paid time off that is not designated as a supplemental benefit, your payment will be reduced that week.

Do I have to use other leave, like vacation or sick time, before I use Paid Leave?

No. Your employer can't make you use paid or unpaid time off before you use Paid Family and Medical Leave. Taking Paid Family and Medical Leave is your choice ([WAC 192-610-075](#)).

Appeals, redeterminations and complaints

What if I disagree with my decision letter?

The decision letter will inform you of your next steps.

If you disagree with your weekly benefit amount or the number of hours you worked:

- Submit a “Request for Review” in your account.
 - Log in to your account and find the ‘Take Action’ section on your homepage.
 - Then click ‘Request a Review,’ provide the requested information and hit ‘submit.’
- As part of the review process, we may ask you to provide us with documentation supporting your request.

If you still disagree with the review decision:

- You may file an [appeal](#).

If you disagree with any other decision:

- Submit a “Request for Review” in your Paid Leave account.

How do I file a complaint?

Download our complaint forms at paidleave.wa.gov/help-center if you suspect unlawful acts or fraudulent behavior.

Unlawful acts

You may file a complaint with the Department against your employer if you feel they:

- interfered with your ability to apply for or receive benefits, or
- fired you or discriminated against you for applying for or receiving benefits.

We will decide whether your employer acted unlawfully. Your employer may be liable for damages, and you may have other rights like job restoration.

Fraud

If you suspect fraudulent behavior, you can file a complaint with the Department. Please download our fraud form at paidleave.wa.gov/help-center.

You are disqualified from receiving benefits for any week that you have misrepresented or not disclosed information that affects your claim. This includes false statements, omitting information or failing to disclose facts to receive benefits from Paid Leave that you would not be entitled to under RCW 50A.15.060. If we find you to have committed fraud, you may be disqualified from receiving benefits for some time and have additional penalties on overpayments associated with the fraud.

Ombuds office

You may also contact the Office of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Ombuds. The Ombuds:

- is appointed by the governor,
- is a neutral and independent third-party that helps workers and employers,
- investigates, reports on and helps settle complaints and concerns about the program.

Learn more at paidleaveombuds.wa.gov or call the Ombuds' office at 844-395-6697.

Definitions

Claim year

The claim year begins on the Sunday of the week you submit your initial application. The claim year expires 52 weeks later. Your claim year will start even if your initial application is denied (note: the claim year does not start if your application was denied because you do not have enough worked hours).

- If you submit more than one application (such as medical leave and then family leave after giving birth) your claim year does not restart.
- We have [a quiz on our website](#) to help you figure out if you may be eligible.

Postnatal period

The postnatal period is the first six weeks after a Paid Leave customer gives birth to a child.

- Any leave taken by the birthing parent in the “postnatal period” will be designated as medical leave unless they specify otherwise.
- Leave taken in the postnatal period does not have a waiting week. Leave taken before the birth of a child does have a waiting week.
- You will need to submit proof of birth documentation with your application. This could be our medical certification or other paperwork that shows the child’s date of birth.
- We cannot approve leave for the postnatal period before the birth of a child. If you need to start leave before you give birth, such as for incapacity related to pregnancy, you will need to submit an application for medical leave along with a medical certification, and you will have a waiting week.

Qualifying event

A qualifying event is a thing that happens for which you need to take leave. Not all illnesses, injuries or situations will qualify you to take Paid Leave.

- The law says, “paid family leave [is] for the birth or placement of a child with the employee, for the care of a family member who has a serious health condition, and for a qualifying exigency under the federal family and medical leave act,” and “paid medical leave [is] for an employee's own serious health condition.”

Qualifying period

Normally, the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters or, if that does not get you to the required 820 hours, the last four completed calendar quarters immediately preceding the application for leave.

Serious health condition

RCW [50A.05.010](#) defines a “serious health condition” and the list of healthcare providers that can make an initial decision about whether your or your family member’s condition meets that definition.

- A serious health condition could include an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; continuing treatment by a health care provider; incapacity due to pregnancy or for prenatal care; incapacity for some chronic serious health conditions, and more.

- Things that would not be included are the common cold, routine dental work, headaches that are not migraines and earaches.
- More information and a list of qualifying healthcare providers can be found at paidleave.wa.gov/healthcare-providers.

Supplemental benefit

Because Paid Family and Medical Leave is partial wage replacement, your employer may choose to provide additional pay to you while on Paid Family and Medical Leave to supplement the benefit you receive. This is a supplemental benefit.

- This can be provided in any way your employer chooses, including designating certain paid time off as a supplemental benefit. Any supplemental benefit amount can be provided. It is your employer's choice to offer this and your choice to receive it if offered. Paid time off is not automatically a supplemental benefit, so it is important to check with your employer if this is available to you.
- You do not report supplemental benefits on your weekly claim but paid time off that is not considered a supplemental benefit must be reported.

Transportation Network Company (TNC)

A company or other entity that operates in Washington and uses a digital network to connect passengers with TNC drivers to provide prearranged rides. (RCW 46.04.652)

Typical workweek hours

Your duration of leave is determined based on your "typical workweek hours." This is your average number of hours worked per week since the beginning of the [qualifying period](#). Salaried, full-time employees are always calculated at 40 hours per week. Your typical workweek hours are multiplied by the maximum number of weeks allowable for the event, usually 12 weeks, creating a bank of hours you can draw from while on leave.