

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES, Fiscal Year 2025

Department of Human Resources

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This report was prepared for the Delaware General Assembly and Governor Matt Meyer, as required in House Bill 3 with House Amendment 4, passed during the 149th General Assembly session. The State Parental Leave Law requires the Department of Human Resources to submit a report to the Delaware General Assembly and the Governor on the parental leave program annually.

The report includes projected program participation, actual program participation, demographic information of participants (including gender, race, and ethnicity), duration of leave taken by participants, outreach efforts, and impacts of the program on recruitment and retention. School districts, charter schools and vocational school districts are asked to submit their program participation, demographic information of participants (including gender, race and ethnicity), duration of leave taken by participants, outreach efforts, and impacts of the program on recruitment and retention to the Department of Human Resources annually to be included in the report. To provide the required data for the report, DHR extracted the statistics for all agencies and schools from the state's human resource information system; however, it is important to note that DHR was able to verify the information for Executive Branch agencies only.

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Overview

Delaware's paid parental leave policy grants eligible employees up to 12 weeks of parental leave upon the birth, adoption, or lawful adoption placement of a six-year-old or younger child. Parental leave runs concurrently (simultaneously) with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the state's Short-Term Disability (STD), as applicable, in accordance with the State's Disability Program Rules and Regulations. An employee is eligible for parental leave even if the employee has exhausted their FMLA time consistent with the law covering FMLA. If an employee becomes eligible for FMLA while on parental leave, the employee must apply for and use FMLA. Parental leave is also intended to supplement the State's STD benefit, if eligible, not to exceed 100% of an employee's creditable compensation following the birth of a child. The entitlement to parental leave expires at the end of a 12-month period starting from the date of birth or adoption. Employees who leave their position with the State of Delaware before the 12-month period ends may not receive payment for any unused parental leave. Upon the conclusion of the parental leave period, the State of Delaware guarantees the reinstatement of eligible employees to the same or a comparable position unless unforeseen circumstances unrelated to the employee's leave arise.

In fiscal year 2025 (FY25), a total of 826 state employees, including those from the executive branch, non-executive branch, school districts, and charter schools, took advantage of the paid parental leave benefit. This report presents key aspects of the leave benefit, including the development and distribution of the policy to agencies, data on actual participation, the duration of leave, internal and external communication of the policy, its integration into recruitment and retention efforts, and employee satisfaction with the benefit.

The FY2025 parental leave participants responding (22%) to the satisfaction survey indicated that the paid parental leave benefit remains a highly valued and well-received asset. Overall, the participants agreed the State of Delaware continues to earn its reputation as a family-friendly workplace. Recruitment and retention efforts included highlighting the paid parental leave benefit on the Delaware Employment Link, posters explaining the benefit in common spaces, and integrating benefit information into recruitment flyers and job fairs. Based on previous usage of this benefit and prior year birth counts, DHR projects 913 employees will utilize the benefit over the next fiscal year.

Establishing The Policy

To implement the paid parental leave legislation components, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) created a workgroup that developed an executive branch policy (DHR-STW-Policy # 409.3) governing the application and granting of leave, including required notice and documentation which was distributed to all state agencies and can be found [here](#). DHR worked with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Payroll Human Resource Statewide Technology (PHRST) to create new parameters so that agency and school staff could record and report on the appropriate data. Formal training on DHR-STW-Policy # 409.3 and PHRST codes were provided to agencies and schools.

Actual Program Participation

The Department of Human Resources requested a report for Fiscal Year 2025 from PHRST to report on the utilization of paid parental leave. In FY25, 518 women and 308 men utilized the paid parental leave benefit. Of the 826 employees who took advantage of this benefit in FY25, 268 were executive branch employees, 38 were non-executive branch employees, and 520 were school district employees.

The following tables provide data on paid parental leave usage, broken down by gender and race/ethnicity for state agencies (including both executive branch and non-executive branch agencies), as well as school districts and charter schools. It should be noted that employees have twelve (12) months from the date of birth, lawful adoption, or qualified placement to utilize the paid parental leave benefit. The reporting timeframe is per fiscal year; however, those who have a birth/adoption/placement before the beginning of the new fiscal year are still eligible to use paid parental leave if they are within twelve (12) months from the date of birth or adoption of a child six (6) years of age or younger.

Count of Agency Employees Utilizing Paid Parental Leave FY25 07/01/2024 through 06/30/2025							
Male Count Taking PPL							
White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian	Pacific Islander	Multi	Total
117	37	14	*	*	*	*	175
Female Count Taking PPL							
White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian	Pacific Islander	Multi	Total
72	34	18	*	*	*	*	131

*Any count smaller than 10 has been suppressed to protect personal health information as individuals may be identifiable.

Count of School District Employees Utilizing Paid Parental Leave FY25 07/01/2024 through 06/30/2025							
Male Count Taking PPL							
White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian	Pacific Islander	Multi	Total
89	34	*	*	*	*	*	133
Female Count Taking PPL							
White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian	Pacific Islander	Multi	Total
299	51	26	*	*	*	*	387

*Any count smaller than 10 has been suppressed to protect personal health information as individuals may be identifiable.

Count of Total State Employees Utilizing Paid Parental Leave FY25 07/01/2024 through 06/30/2025							
Male Count Taking PPL							
White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian	Pacific Islander	Multi	Total
206	71	21	*	*	*	*	308
Female Count Taking PPL							
White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian	Pacific Islander	Multi	Total
371	85	44	*	*	*	10	518

*Any count smaller than 10 has been suppressed to protect personal health information as individuals may be identifiable.

Duration Of Leave Taken by Participants

The law allows state employees to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave annually from date of birth of a child, lawful adoption or qualified placement. The law applies to all state employees in the executive branch, the non-executive branch, as well as school districts and charter schools. DHR can only validate the duration of leave data for executive branch agencies. Excluding school districts and charter schools, state employees took an average of 12 weeks of paid parental leave. The duration of leave for employees in school districts and charter schools could not be determined given the limits of the data reporting system.

Outreach Efforts

There are several ways in which information about paid parental leave is continuously communicated both internally and externally. They include:

- Posters highlighting this benefit as one of the many benefits available to state employees continue to be distributed and displayed to inform external audiences
- Posters for internal audiences to create awareness and inform employees about the policy continue to be distributed and displayed
- Frequently Asked Questions section is posted and remains available on the DHR website
- A video about the benefit is prominently featured on the Statewide Benefits website
- Updates were made to materials used for onboarding new state employees including paid parental leave information
- Delaware Employment Link highlights the paid parental leave benefit
- Recruitment flyers include information on this benefit
- Information on the benefit was distributed at job fairs and community-based events
- DHR employment promotion and hard-to-fill position campaigns included paid parental leave.

To gather feedback from state employees regarding paid parental leave and its impact on recruitment and retention, the Department of Human Resources surveyed state employees that had utilized the paid parental leave benefit. From July 2024 through June 2025, 185 employees/22% of all leave participants from school districts and the executive and non-executive branches completed the survey. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the employee perspective on the process of taking paid parental leave, its impact on recruitment and retention, and the effect of the leave policy on families. Respondents were also asked to rate the responsiveness of agencies, supervisors, and human resources (HR) offices to requests for paid parental leave and questions regarding the program; the ease and clarity of the paid parental leave application and approval; whether the paid parental leave program had a positive effect on

willingness to return to work with the State of Delaware; and if the state's benefits, including paid parental leave, were attractive to individuals seeking employment. The 94% of employees who completed the survey said that they *agreed and/or strongly agreed* that their requests and questions about paid parental leave were met with responsiveness. Additionally, 91% of employees said the paid parental leave application and approval process were easy and clear. Regarding retention and recruitment, 92% of employees agreed and/or strongly agreed that this benefit had a positive effect on willingness to return to work with the State of Delaware.

The testimonials of state employees as well as comments gathered through the survey speak directly to the positive impact paid parental leave has had on employees and their families.

- *My wife and children are extremely grateful for the extra time I could spend supporting my wife, bonding with our newborn, caring for our other children, and maintaining the household this past year.*
- *This has provided me with time to bond with my child, provide essential care, and recover from childbirth.*
- *Parental leave allowed me to adapt to the newborn lifestyle and ensure our family adjusted smoothly to the new addition. It provided me the opportunity to bond with my baby and recover from delivery at home, all while knowing my job was secure.*
- *I may have left the Department if not for the paid parental leave, so yes it had a very positive effect on my willingness to stay at the State.*
- *I was able to have more bonding time with my daughter. Our relationship is stronger because of it. It also allowed more time for my wife to recover.*
- *The benefit allowed us to fully settle into our new family structure and get off to a solid start.*
- *I was able to properly care for my newborn and it's allowed me to focus on my mental health post-delivery.*
- *I am grateful that the benefit is an option. It allowed me to still be able to provide for my family while also bonding with my newborn.*
- *I was able to spend the first three months of my baby's life which is priceless.*

Projected Program Participation

Projected program participation for fiscal year 2026 (FY26) is estimated to be approximately 913 employees, based on FY25 utilization, and demographic information for the school districts and agencies. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimated at least 1% enrollment growth in FY26.

Epilogue Language Section 360

Per the epilogue requirement of House Bill 225 of the 153rd General Assembly, the Delaware Department of Education is required to report the number of persons who used paid family leave and whose vacancy was funded with substitute reimbursement funds in FY2025.

Epilogue Section 360 reads in part

Section 360. Section 1 of this Act includes an appropriation for Substitute Reimbursement in the Department of Education, District and Charter Operations (95-02-02). Included in said appropriation is funding for paid family leave. For local education agencies, funding available for this program shall be limited to a maximum value of the daily rate of a Class A substitute as specified in 14 Del. C. § 1326 and current year other employment costs. Local education agencies shall submit the request for contractual substitute reimbursement to the Department of Education and funding shall be transferred to the local education agencies for eligible costs. The Department of Education shall submit a report to the Department of Human Resources detailing the number of persons using paid family leave no later than August 15 following each school year.

The chart below was provided to DHR by the Delaware Department of Education.

Epilogue Section 360 Report		
#	LEA	Number of Persons on Paid Family Leave and whose vacancy is substituted using Substitute Reimbursement Funds
1	Caesar Rodney School District	28
2	Capital School District	19
3	Lake Forest School District	12
4	Laurel School District	11
5	Cape Henlopen School District	15
6	Milford School District	22
7	Seaford School District	13
8	Smyrna School District	22
9	Appoquinimink School District	36
10	Brandywine School District	23
11	Red Clay Consolidated School District	18
12	Christina School District	10
13	Colonial School District	3
14	Woodbridge School District	7
15	Indian River School District	35
16	Delmar School District	6
17	New Castle County Vo-Tech School District	14
18	Polytech School District	4
19	Sussex Technical School District	0
20	Academia Antonia Alonso	0
21	Academy of Dover	2
22	Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence	0
23	Campus Community School	0
24	Charter School of New Castle (formerly FFA)	0
25	Charter School of Wilmington	No Information Provided.
26	Delaware Military Academy	2
27	Early College School at DSU	0
28	East Side Charter School	1
29	First State Military Academy	0
30	First State Montessori Academy	1
31	Freire Charter School	0
32	Gateway Charter School	0
33	Great Oaks Charter School	0
34	Kuumba Academy	0
35	ASPIRA Delaware	0
36	MOT Charter	1
37	Newark Charter School	4
38	Odyssey Charter School	3
39	Positive Outcomes	0
40	Providence Creek Academy	2
41	Sussex Academy	4
42	Sussex Montessori School	2
43	Thomas Edison	0
	Total	320

Conclusion

The paid parental leave benefit remains a highly valued and well-received asset across the state workforce. With multiple agencies managing parental leave, it is essential to routinely monitor data entry into PHRST to ensure consistency in the policy and reporting process, data entry. Although all agencies have been trained by PHRST on the policy, data entry, and report generation, DHR is tasked with extracting all PHRST data for the report, including from agencies outside the executive branch. For executive branch agencies, DHR will continue to provide regular training on proper parental leave data entry throughout the year. Accurate and consistent information is crucial for supervisors and employees eligible for this benefit. To provide a consistent experience across all agencies, DHR has developed [toolkits](#) for employees, supervisors, and human resources teams, detailing responsibilities and expectations related to the paid parental leave policy. Overall, this benefit plays a significant role in upholding the State of Delaware's reputation as a family-friendly workplace.