



**TO:** Interested Parties

**FROM:** Patinkin Research Strategies, LLC  
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**RE:** Access to Family and Medical Leave in the City of Seattle

**DATE:** February 28, 2017

*This analysis is based off of a two telephone polls*

- *One poll of 400 City of Seattle residents who are currently employed and work the majority of their hours within the City of Seattle. Interviews were conducted January 26-31, 2017.*
- *One poll of 400 City of Seattle businesses. Interviews were conducted February 2-16, 2017.*

*The margin of error for both surveys is +/- 4.9 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.*

## **Access to Paid Family and Medical Leave**

### Short Term Disability Insurance

Half of residents (53%) indicate that their employer offers access to Short Term Disability insurance that can be used in the event of a pregnancy. Around four-in-10 (37%) do not have access to Short Term Disability insurance while one-in-10 (10%) are unsure as to whether or not their employer offers them access to Short Term Disability.

Around four-in-10 businesses (37%) report offering Short Term Disability to their employees. Six-in-10 (60%) do not while a small percentage (4%) are unable to weigh in either way.

### Paid Family and Medical Leave

A slim majority (53%) of residents report that they have access to a dedicated paid parental leave policy. Four-in-10 (41%) do not while fewer than one-in-10 (6%) are unsure of their benefits. It's worth noting that union households (74%), employees at companies with more than 50 employees (67%), and college-educated residents (60%) are more likely to have access to paid parental leave than their demographic counterparts.

Of those who indicate they have access to paid leave, a quarter (24%) indicate they have access to a policy defined as "dedicated non-vacation or sick leave that gives you the ability to care for a newborn or newly adopted and foster children." Over a third (36%) have access to paid medical leave – with one-in-five (20%) reporting they have access to "dedicated non-vacation or sick leave that gives you the ability to care for a seriously ill family member in the event of an emergency" and fewer than one-in-five (16%) reporting they have access to "dedicated non-vacation or sick leave that gives you the ability to care for yourself in the event of a serious illness." Nearly four-in-10 (37%) indicate they have access to a policy that covers all three potential qualifying events.

A very small percentage of those who report having access to paid leave have access to either less than two weeks (3%) or more than 12 weeks (0%). Nearly nine-in-10 of those who report having access to paid leave (87%) have access to between two and 12 weeks. Of those, a quarter (24%) have access to two to four weeks, nearly half (46%) have access to four to eight weeks, and fewer than one-in-five (17%) have access to eight to 12 weeks.

Half of businesses (50%) report offering no form of paid medical or family leave. A quarter (25%) report offering dedicated non-vacation or sick leave that gives employees the ability to care for a newborn or newly adopted and foster children. A quarter (24%) offer dedicated non-vacation or sick leave that gives employees the ability to care for a seriously ill family member in the event of an emergency. Four-in-10 (42%) report offering dedicated non-vacation or sick leave that gives employees the ability to care for themselves in the event of a serious illness. Only one-in-five businesses (18%) report offering all three kinds of leave.

***How many weeks of paid leave – excluding sick leave and vacation time – do employees at your company or organization have access to for the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_?***

	<b><i>Caring for a newborn or newly adopted and foster children</i></b>	<b><i>Caring for a seriously ill family member in the event of an emergency</i></b>	<b><i>Caring for themselves in the event of a serious illness</i></b>
<b>Less than two weeks</b>	3%	6%	7%
<b>Two to four weeks</b>	26%	40%	33%
<b>Four to eight weeks</b>	35%	27%	35%
<b>Eight to 12 weeks</b>	25%	13%	11%
<b>More than 12 weeks</b>	0%	0%	3%
<b>DK/NA</b>	11%	14%	11%

Just under seven-in-10 businesses who offer either form of paid medical leave offer between two and eight weeks. Nearly nine-in-10 (86%) of those who offer paid parental leave offer between two and 12 weeks.

Nearly half of businesses (48%) who offer paid parental leave report having a policy that applies equally to mothers and fathers. A quarter (25%) report having a policy that treats mothers and fathers differently, while nearly three-in-10 (27%) are unsure of the gender disparities in their policies.

### **Access to Unpaid Family and Medical Leave**

Two-thirds of residents (67%) report having access to unpaid family or medical leave. A quarter (24%) do not, while under one-in-10 (8%) are unsure of their unpaid leave policy.

Just under half of employers (48%) report offering unpaid leave to their employees. Over four-in-10 (44%) report not offering leave, and fewer than one-in-10 (8%) are unable to weigh in on their unpaid benefits either way.

### **Family and Medical Leave Usage**

Only around four-in-10 residents (38%) report having ever personally used family or medical leave as part of their employment. Of those, one-in-five (20%) report that their leave was paid, and around one-in-10 report personally taking either unpaid leave (8%) or using a combination of paid and unpaid leave (10%). Nearly six-in-10 residents (59%) report never having personally used family or medical leave.

Four-in-10 (41%) of residents who have personally taken leave report their most recent qualifying event as “needing to care for yourself in the event of a serious illness.” Around three-in-10 (36%) report their most recent qualifying event as “needing to care for a seriously ill family member due to an emergency.” Just over one-in-five (22%) classify their most recent qualifying event as “needing to care for a newborn or newly adopted and foster children.”

Three-quarters (75%) of those who have personally taken leave took fewer than four weeks. Of those, three-in-10 (28%) took fewer than two weeks and nearly half (47%) took two to four weeks of leave. Only around one-in-five (22%) report taking more than four weeks of leave.

Of residents who have personally taken paid leave, four-in-10 (42%) used sick leave, vacation or accrued time/PTO. Only one-in-five (22%) used a specific paid leave policy that was set aside by their employer specifically for the purpose for which they used it and nearly four-in-10 (37%) used a combination of sick leave, vacation or accrued time/PTO in combination with a specific paid leave policy.

Over four-in-10 (42%) businesses report not having any employees use family leave within the past year. Fewer than one-in-five (18%) report having fewer than 10% of their employees take family leave within the past year and only 7% of businesses reported more than 10% of their employees taking family leave. Over a quarter of businesses (27%) report no usage of medical leave within the past year. Just under one-in-five (18%) report fewer than 10% of their employees using medical leave within the past year and another one-in-five (20%) report more than 10% of their employees taking medical leave.

### **Support for a Universal Paid Family Leave Program**

A majority of employers (56%) support the implementation of a universal paid family leave program. A third (33%) offer strong support for the proposed program while only three-in-10 (30%) oppose the proposal. Just over one-in-10 (14%) of employers are unable to weigh in either way.

A shared payroll tax is the most popular funding mechanism for a universal paid family leave program (45% favor; 33% oppose). A plurality of employers oppose an employee only (34% favor; 42% oppose) or employer only (32% favor; 43% oppose) payroll tax. Employers are divided (29% favor; 33% oppose) over using a B&O tax to fund the universal paid family leave program in Seattle.