

Frequently Asked Questions

Paid Family Leave

Q. What is Paid Family Leave?

- A. Syracuse University is preparing to implement the New York Paid Family Leave requirements that were signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo and take effect January 1, 2018. Under this new law, **all staff, graduate assistant and student employees** will be eligible to take paid, job-protected leave of absence to bond with a new child, care for a family member with a serious health condition, or handle an exigency created when a family member is called to active military service.

Q. Why is Syracuse University implementing Paid Family Leave benefits?

- A. The University is proud to offer family-friendly, comprehensive benefits to our employees to support a healthy work-life balance, including generous paid time off benefits. When events occur that require a short leave of absence, Paid Family Leave can provide partial income replacement and continued access to health benefits. These Paid Family Leave benefits ensure Syracuse University's compliance with New York State requirements that become effective January 1, 2018 and which apply to most employees.

Q. Who is eligible to take Paid Family Leave?

- A. University staff employees, student employees, and graduate assistants working in New York are eligible if they meet the following requirements:
- After 26 consecutive weeks of employment, when their regular work schedule is 20 or more hours per week;
 - After working 175 days, when their regular work schedule is less than 20 hours per week.

The use of scheduled vacation time or other approved time away from work including personal days, sick time, and semester breaks when you are not working do not prevent you from meeting these requirements as long as your employment status remained active during that time.

Employees working in California, New Jersey, or Rhode Island will receive benefits according to their state's paid leave laws. Employees in all other states or who work internationally are not eligible for these benefits.

Q. Are faculty able to receive Paid Family Leave benefits?

- A. New York's legislation establishing Paid Family Leave does not apply to those working in a teaching capacity. Tenured and tenure-track faculty currently are eligible for research and [administrative leaves of absence](#) and will continue to have the University's current paid [parental leave benefits](#). Full-time, non-tenure-track faculty may request unpaid research and/or administrative leave through their departments, as appropriate. Part-time faculty (union and non-union) may also request an unpaid leave of absence through their departments.

Q. I thought the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) already provided this type of benefit?

- A. [FMLA](#) provides *unpaid*, job-protected leave for up to 12 weeks to employees who have completed 1,250 hours of service in a rolling 52-week period. When an event qualifies for both Paid Family Leave and FMLA, the employee will receive Paid Family Leave benefits and their FMLA leave will run concurrently.

Q. What benefits does Paid Family Leave provide?

- A. Beginning January 1, 2018, an employee on approved Paid Family Leave will receive 50 percent of their average weekly pay, capped at 50 percent of the New York statewide average weekly pay, for up to eight

weeks. The benefit amount and maximum period of leave are scheduled to increase each year through 2021, as follows:

Year	Benefit Amount	Maximum Leave
2018	50% of employee's weekly wage capped at 50% of NYS average weekly wage	8 weeks
2019	55% of employee's weekly wage capped at 55% of NYS average weekly wage	10 weeks
2020	60% of employee's weekly wage capped at 60% of NYS average weekly wage	10 weeks
2021	67% of employee's weekly wage capped at 67% of NYS average weekly wage	12 weeks

New York updates the statewide average weekly wage annually. The current statewide average weekly wage is \$1,305.92, making the maximum Paid Family Leave benefit available in 2018 \$652.96 per week.

Q. Do I have to pay for this benefit?

A. Yes, the law states that the benefit is employee-funded. Staff employees will have a payroll deduction beginning January 1, 2018 in the amount determined by New York State. This amount is subject to change each year. In 2018, the deduction will be 0.126% of the employee's weekly pay. For example, an employee who earns \$750 per week would have a deduction of $750 \times 0.00126 = \$0.95$ per week. The maximum weekly deduction will be \$1.65 in 2018, based on the statewide average weekly wage. Student employees and Graduate Assistants will not be required to make this payroll contribution.

Q. I do not anticipate that I would ever need to use Paid Family Leave. Can I waive this benefit and avoid the payroll deduction?

A. No. All covered employees must make the required contributions. Some employees are able to waive participation in Paid Family Leave, but waiver is only allowed if the employee elects and: (a) The employee regularly works 20 hours or more per week, but will not work 26 consecutive weeks (6 months) for the University; or (b) The employee regularly works less than 20 hours per week, but will not work 175 days in 52 consecutive weeks (a year) for the University.

Q. What happens to my health insurance during a Paid Family Leave?

A. You may continue coverage for yourself and your enrolled family members in medical, dental and vision coverage during a Paid Family Leave by making the required payments through payroll deduction or by paying a monthly bill.

Q. I gave birth, adopted, or fostered a new child in 2017. Can I apply for a Paid Family Leave in 2018?

A. Yes, you may be eligible to take a Paid Family Leave in 2018, if you complete the leave within 12 months of the date of birth, adoption or foster care placement of your child.

Q. What is a "serious health condition" and for which family members can a Paid Family Leave be taken?

A. Paid Family Leave can be taken to care for a spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild who has a serious health condition. A serious health condition is an illness, injury, or other physical or mental impairment or condition that involves:

- inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential health care facility; or
- continuing treatment or continuing supervision by a health care provider

Your family member's treating physician must certify that your relative requires a level of care that would require you to take a leave of absence from work, including the expected dates that such care will be necessary.

Q. When may Paid Family Leave be taken for a family member's call to active military duty?

- A. When a spouse, domestic partner, child or parent is on active military duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, you may request Paid Family Leave under the same provisions as FMLA to arrange financial, legal or other personal matters arising from the family member's active duty service.

Q. How do I file a claim for Paid Family Leave benefits?

- A. Complete the claim forms found on hr.syr.edu/forms, and submit the required documentation to support the need for your leave. If the need for a leave is foreseeable, you must provide 30 days advance notice. If the need for a leave is not foreseeable, you must notify your supervisor or the Leave Administrator of your need for leave as soon as practical.

Q. How can I learn more?

- A. You can review fact sheets and additional FAQs at ny.gov/paidfamilyleave. You will find claim forms and instructions at hr.syr.edu/forms. If you have questions, contact the Leave Administrator in the HR Service Center at 315.443.4042 or leaveadmin@syr.edu or contact your [Senior HR Business Partner](#).