

PAID LEAVE FOLLOWING CHILDBIRTH IN THE UNITED STATES

DURATION OF PAID LEAVE

Leave periods available	Months
Paid Maternity Leave	00
Paid Paternity Leave	00
Paid Parental Leave	00

ELIGIBILITY

Group	Maternity Leave	Paternity Leave	Parental Leave
Employed	N/A	N/A	N/A
Self-employed	N/A	N/A	N/A
Student	N/A	N/A	N/A
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A
Adoptive parent	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grandparent	N/A	N/A	N/A
Migrant	N/A	N/A	N/A

TAKE-UP RATES

Leave type	%
Maternity Leave (% of pregnant/young mothers)	N/A
Paternity Leave (% of fathers)	N/A
Parental Leave (% of mothers)	N/A
Parental Leave (% of fathers)	N/A

RESPONSIBILITIES

Maternity Leave

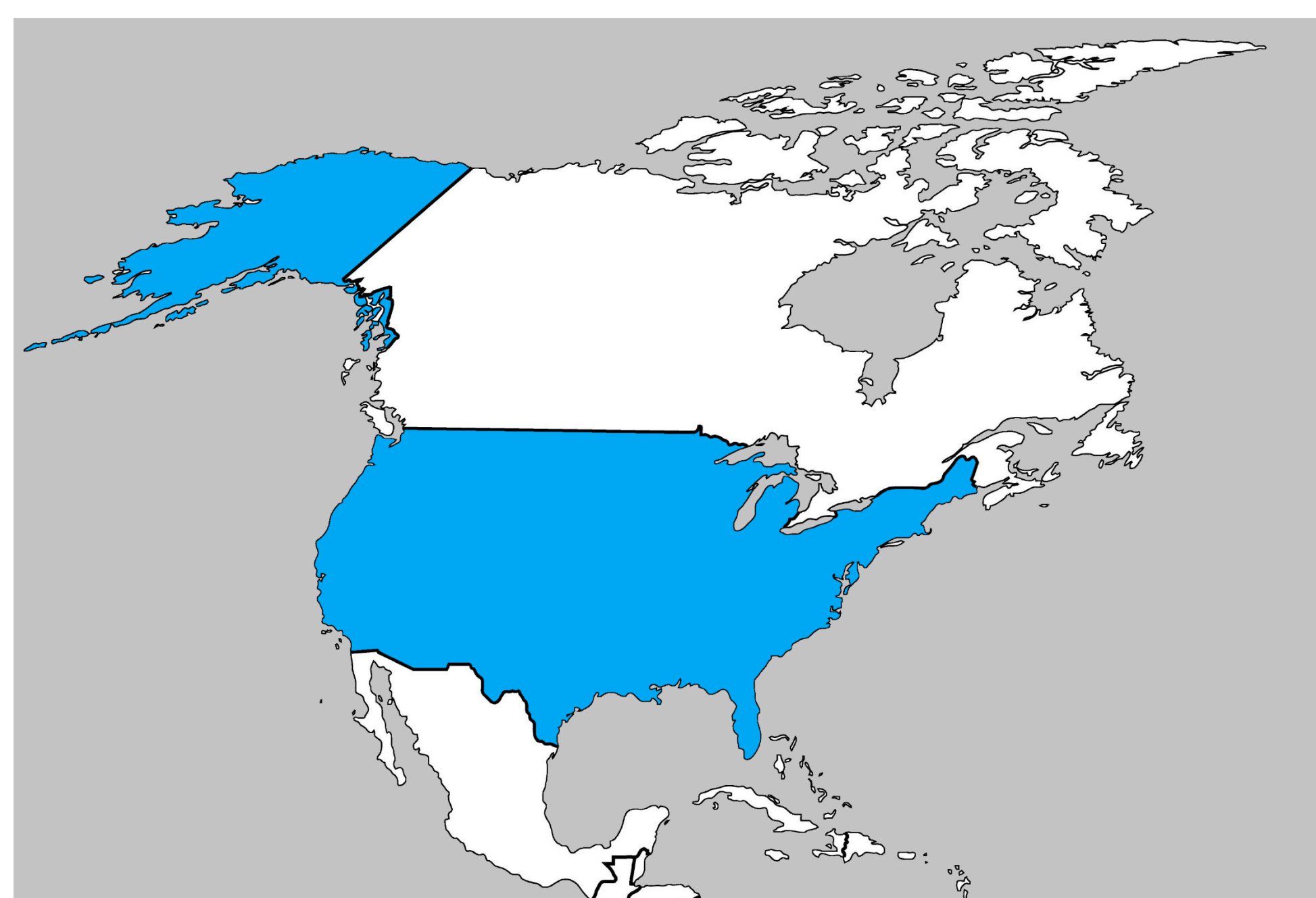
There is no specific maternity leave under United States federal policy.

Paternity Leave

There is no specific paternity leave in the United States.

Parental Leave

Parental leave for eligible workers is an unpaid, individual entitlement in the United States.



History of leave policy and recent changes

In contrast to most countries that utilize parental, maternity, and/or paternity leave policies, U.S. leave policies most commonly focus on family leave.

At the national level, the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for childbirth or the care of a newborn, newly adopted, or newly placed foster child. Only 58% of U.S. workers are eligible for leave under the FMLA, and overall take-up rates of FMLA leave are low. In 2012, approximately 3.4% of eligible workers used FMLA for reasons related to a new child.

In addition, 6 states and Washington, D.C. have adopted paid family leave insurance programs. These programs provide 4-12 weeks of wage replacement during leave, paid at 55-90% (varying by state and income level). In 2018-2019, new paid family leave legislation was introduced in 13 states. Additionally, 5 states and 22 of the 40 largest U.S. cities offer paid leave to public (state or municipal) workers.

Some employers also provide workers with paid family leave. In 2018, 16% of private workers and 25% of state and local government workers had access to paid family leave benefits. Access to these benefits is much more likely in professional and high-paying occupations. A recent survey of employers also suggests that 58% of employers (50 employees or more) offer maternity leave with at least some replacement pay (funded through disability insurance), but only 15% offer paternity leave with at least some replacement pay.

DEFINITIONS

FAMILY LEAVE

Family leave is defined as leave to care for a family member (such as a parent, spouse or child), which includes, but is not exclusive to, care for a new child.

INTRODUCING THE NETWORK ON LEAVE POLICIES AND RESEARCH

The international network on leave policies and research, consists of over 60 members, all of whom are experts on leave issues and who come from 43 countries across the world. Members bring not only expertise to the network, but great commitment and enthusiasm, enabling the group to grow and flourish without any regular source of external funding and to provide a unique forum for exchange, dialogue and collaboration on issues of care, employment and gender.

Detailed Country Notes, Cross-country tables and definitions of leave policies are available at

www.leavenetwork.org/leave-policies-research/

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Engeman, C. (2018). Time for care: A history of state leave legislation in the United States. Swedish Institute for Social Research (SOFI) Stockholm University working paper 9/2018.

Kaufman, G. (2019). United States: Leave policy, failure and potential. In P. Moss, A. Duvander, & A. Koslowski (Eds.) Parental leave and beyond: Recent international developments, current issues and future directions. Bristol: Policy Press.

Petts, R.J., Knoester, C., & Li, Q. (2018). Paid paternity leave-taking in the United States. Community, Work, & Family. doi: 10.1080/13668803.2018.1471589.

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