Employee Toolkit
Navigating the Parental Leave Benefits
University of Colorado Boulder

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Planning for Parental Leave: Employee Checklist

- Notify the Leave Team of your need for leave least 30 days prior to your expected date of leave. You may complete the Family Medical Leave Request Form which can be found here: [https://www.colorado.edu/hr/employees/leave/family-medical-leave-act-fmla-employees](https://www.colorado.edu/hr/employees/leave/family-medical-leave-act-fmla-employees).
  - Leave Team Contact information:
    - E-mail: FMLA@Colorado.edu
    - Phone: 303-492-6475
  - *Note: You are required to take Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) in order to receive Parental Leave benefits.*

- Notify your supervisor that you plan to take Parental leave. Under the FMLA, you are required to give 30 days’ notice, for a foreseeable leave.

- Complete the Family and Medical Leave Certification and return the completed paperwork to the Leave team. FMLA@Colorado.edu

- Check with Employee Services to see if you are eligible for Short Term Disability. Employee Services: 303-860-4200 Option 3 for benefits.

- Discuss your leave plans ahead of time with your family. How much leave do you plan to take? Once you have an idea of your leave schedule, it’s a great idea to start discussing your leave with your supervisor. Here are some things to consider:
  - How many weeks/month of leave will I take?
  - Will I use all of my annual leave accruals? (Note: you may only keep 80 hours of annual leave accruals upon returning from leave).
  - How can I transition my work and help my department plan for my absence?
    - Project status updates
    - Day to day tasks
    - Share contacts or information you may only have access to
  - How do I want to be communicated with while I am out on leave? Do you want to be included on voluntary events such as holiday/staff parties?
  - Discuss timesheets with your supervisor – while out on leave you are still responsible for submitting your timesheet on a monthly basis!
  - Discuss your return to work plans. Do you plan to return full time? Will you be requesting intermittent parental leave upon your return?
  - How will you transition back into your role when you return?

Helpful tips:
- Plan to schedule a meeting on the first day back with your supervisor.
- If you are returning on a part time or reduced schedule, discuss what that looks like and how it will impact your workload.
- Do you need a refresher or training on anything before starting back into your role? If so, it’s a good time to discuss on your first few days back!
✓ Complete the Parental Leave agreement form and submit to the Leave team with supervisor approval signature *please contact the Leave team if you or your supervisor have questions completing this form*

✓ Confirm your child’s birth, adoption/foster, placement date as soon as possible by e-mailing your supervisor and Leave team contact.
  ✓ Please note: The Parental benefit leave does not start until the date of the qualifying event. In the event you need to take leave due to medical complication prior to birth, please contact the Leave team to initiate the FMLA process.

✓ Add your baby/child to your benefits if applicable. Contact Employee Services at 303-860-4200 option 3 to speak to a Benefits Counselor. https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/life-events

✓ Submit your timesheets on a monthly basis, per the leave instructions you have received. If you have any questions regarding your timesheet, please reach out to the Leave Coordinator as soon as possible.

✓ One week prior to your return, confirm your return to work date with the Leave team. If your return to work date is earlier than originally planned, you must notify the Leave team immediately for accurate payroll processing.

Notes:
Leave Benefits Overview

Parental Leave Benefits Overview

- 6 Months total of unpaid, job protected Parental Leave including:
  - 12 weeks of unpaid Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) for University Staff, or 13 Weeks of FMLA for Classified Staff
  - 6 weeks of Paid Parental Leave
  - 6-8 weeks of short-term disability (if enrolled and eligible)
  - Remainder of the leave will be paid through sick and annual leave accruals, or unpaid leave.

Parental Leave Overview (APS 5019)

The University grants eligible employees up to 6 consecutive months of unpaid job projected parental leave during the first 12 months after the qualifying event (birth, adoption or foster placement). The Parental leave will run in conjunction with the 3 months (or 12 weeks) of Family and Medical Leave (FMLA), thus not in addition to the 12 week of leave guaranteed by the FMLA. After the FMLA period has exhausted, the employee will have an additional 3 months of job protected leave under the Parental Leave policy (APS 5019). The amount of Parental leave will be prorated for part-time employees.

Parental Leave Eligibility (Aps 5019 additive)

Eligibility for paid parental leave an employee must meet the following criteria:
- University service for 12 consecutive months in a 50% or greater appointment immediately prior to the date of the qualifying event.

Example: Sally Smith started at the University on June 1, 2019. Sally would be eligible for Parental leave on June 1, 2020

To determine if you are eligible for Parental Leave, contact your Leave Team at 303-492-6475 or e-mail FMLA@colorado.edu.

Paid Parental Leave

6 months of parental leave is generally unpaid and runs concurrently with FMLA, during which time employees may receive pay by using any combination of the following:
- Paid Parental Leave (6 week or 240 hours – Boulder campus)
- Sick accruals
- Annual accruals
- Short term disability benefits
Note: Employees are required to use their accruals during the FMLA period (3 months) and may store up to 80 hours of annual leave during the Parental leave portion of their leave.

**Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal regulation that entitles eligible employee 12 or 13 weeks of job-protected leave and benefits continuation for qualifying events including the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child. University staff, faculty and research faculty are eligible for 12 weeks of FMLA. Classified staff are eligible for 12 weeks of FMLA. FMLA runs concurrently with University Parental Leave benefits.

**FMLA Eligibility**

In order to be eligible for FMLA leave, the employee must:

- Be employed at the University for at least 12 months
- Have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the start of the leave.

OR

- Be employed at a state employer for 12 months (Classified Staff Only)

To determine if you are eligible for Parental Leave, contact your Leave Team at 303-492-6475 or e-mail FMLA@colorado.edu.

**How to apply for FMLA:**

The employee must submit a Medical Certification that will require information from the medical provider. The medical certification will be reviewed to ensure the need for leave is qualified under the Family and Medical Leave Act. The University requires that the employee substitute available paid leave (sick and annual) for unpaid FMLA leave. If the employee’s leave has a duration of 29 consecutive calendar days (30 calendar days for Classified Staff), short-term disability (STD) pay may apply. Employees who elect to remain out of work longer than the disability period (such as after the birth of a child), will use their remaining sick and annual time as pay during the leave. If the employee does not have any sick or annual time left, the employee’s leave will be unpaid.

**Benefits and Payroll Deductions**

During the FMLA leave period, there are certain payroll deductions that will continue as long as the employee is on paid leave. These deductions include medical, dental, life insurance, retirement contributions, parking, Rec Center membership, etc. Should any portion of the leave go unpaid, the employee will maintain coverage under CU’s benefit plans. CU will continue to pay the employer portion of the premium while the employee is on leave. The employee will need to arrange to continue to pay his/her share of the premium. The employee is ultimately responsible for managing his/her benefits while on leave. The Benefits Office can be reached at 303-860-4200 Option 3.
Returning to Work

Upon returning from FMLA, the employee will be returned to the same position s/he held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

One week before the scheduled return to work date, the FMLA Coordinator will check-in with the employee and the employee’s supervisor to ensure there is no need for additional leave. An employee returning to work because of his/her own serious health condition will be required to present written documentation from his/her health care provider that s/he is able to return to work. The employee’s return to work will be delayed until the required FTR is provided.

Examples of Leave:

Parental Leave and FMLA can be utilized in a variety of ways. Eligible employees are automatically entitled to a block period of leave for up to 6 months. If employees choose to take leave intermittently or a reduced schedule, employees must receive approval from their department via the Parental Leave agreement form.

Some common examples:

Block Leave:

An employee may choose to take the full 6 months of job protected leave at one time. An employee is entitled to take the full 6 months of leave in a block of time, per University policy. Example: Julie has her child on July 1, 2019 and will return to work on January 1, 2020. During this time, Julie will use her 6 weeks of Paid Parental Leave, along with her sick and annual leave accruals. Julie has approval from her department to save 40 hours of annual leave upon her return to work.

Block and Intermittent:

An employee may choose to take a block period of leave after the birth of the child, followed by a reduced or intermittent leave schedule. For reduce or intermittent leaves, employees must receive approval from their departments using the Parental Leave Agreement Form. Example: Julie gives birth on July 1, 2019. Julie plans to take 12 weeks of Parental leave and FMLA returning to work on September 30, 2019. Julie will return to work on September 30th working part time (20 hours per week) until she exhaust her total 6 months or 1040 hours of Parental Leave.
Parental Leave: FAQ

• How do I request/apply for this benefit?
  Please contact the FMLA office at FMLA@colorado.edu to inquire about parental leave. A leave coordinator will review your work history to determine eligibility, and will send you paperwork to be completed. You must apply to Family and Medical Leave in order to be eligible for Parental Leave.

• How do I know if I’m eligible for Parental Leave?
  You are eligible for Parental Leave if you have been employed by the university for at least one year at a 50% or greater appointment at the time of your qualifying event.

  Eligible employees are entitled to the following Parental Leave benefits:
  o 6 months unpaid job protected Parental Leave
  o 12 weeks (university staff) or 13 weeks (classified staff) pf Family and Medical Leave (FMLA). This leave runs concurrently with Parental Leave.
  o 6 weeks or 240 hours of Paid Parental Leave benefit

• What is a qualifying event?
  A qualifying event is the birth of a child or placement with foster care or adoption.

• Does this policy apply to foster children?
  Yes! This benefit is available to all eligible employees for the foster, adoption, or birth of a child in their care.

• Are non-birthing parents eligible for the same benefit as birthing parents?
  Yes! Both birthing parents and non-birthing parents are eligible for up to 6 months of unpaid parental leave as long as they meet the workplace qualifications. Eligible employee also qualify for the paid parental leave benefit which provides 240 hours of paid parental leave which runs concurrently with the unpaid portion of the leave.

• I don’t qualify for FMLA or parental leave, what can I do?
  Please don’t hesitate to contact the FMLA office to verify that you do not qualify. Our office can walk you through your benefits as an employee and provide you with additional campus resources.

• I had a baby before 1 year of service at CU. Will I qualify for parental leave once I have been here for one year?
  No, per the Parental Leave policy an eligible employee needs to have 12 consecutive months at a 50% or greater appointment at the time the event happened to qualify. However, you may be eligible for 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA to care for a newborn child within one year of birth. Once you qualify. Please contact the FMLA office to inquire about this policy.

• How much time am I eligible for under the parental leave policy?
  Qualifying employees are eligible for up to 1040 hours (6 months) of unpaid leave through the parental leave policy. The Paid Parental Leave benefit allows for 240 of
these hours (6 weeks) to be covered by the university. For the remainder of this leave, employees may use their sick and vacation accruals. If employees run out of accruals while on leave, the remainder of their leave will be unpaid.

- **Can I use short-term disability while taking Parental Leave?**
  Yes! Please contact the benefits office to verify that you have elected into STD benefits. University staff must elect the benefit during new hire open enrollment, or another open enrollment period. Classified staff are automatically enrolled in the short-term disability benefit. If you have elected into these benefits, you may request paperwork from the benefits office. They can also address any questions you have about the STD process.

- **I’m eligible to take parental leave for a qualifying event. Can I choose to take it at a later time?**
  Yes! You are eligible to take parental leave for up to one year after the qualifying event. Many employees choose to take a portion of their leave directly following the birth and a second portion later on into the year. *Please note: birthing parents who wish to return within 6-8 weeks after giving birth will be required to submit medical documentation in support of this.
# Contacts and Resources

| Family & Medical Leave at CU Boulder | Molly Berry  
| Leave Program Manager  
| 303-492-1107  
| Molly.Berry@colorado.edu | Administrative Research Center  
| 3100 Marine St. 3rd Floor  
| Boulder, CO 80309 |
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| Parental Leave  
| Joe Constancia  
| Leave Coordinator  
| 303-735-4996  
| FMLA@Colorado.edu |  |
| | Stephanie Leon  
| Leave Coordinator  
| 303-735-8431  
| FMLA@Colorado.edu |  |
| Short-Term Disability and Employee Benefits | Employee Services  
| 303-860-4200  
| employeeservices@cu.edu | 1800 Grant St. Suite 400  
| Denver, CO 80203 |
| Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Office | ADA Compliance Office  
| ADA Coordinator  
| 303-492-9725  
| ADAcoordinator@Colorado.edu | Administrative Research Center  
| 3100 Marine St. 2nd Floor  
| Boulder, CO 80309 |