



# Employee Toolkit

## Navigating Parental Leave Benefits

### University of Colorado Boulder

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## Planning for Parental Leave: Employee Checklist

- ✓ Notify the Central HR Leave Team of your request for Family and Medical Leave at least 30 days prior to the date that the requested leave is to begin.
  - Central HR Leave Team contact information:  
E-mail: [Leave@Colorado.edu](mailto:Leave@Colorado.edu)  
Phone: 303-492-6475
  
- \*Employees are required to take Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) in order to receive Parental Leave benefits at the university.***
  
- ✓ Notify your supervisor that you plan to take Parental leave. Under the FMLA, you are required to give 30 days' notice for a foreseeable event.
  
- ✓ Work with your medical provider to complete the FMLA medical certification and return the completed paperwork to the Central HR Leave team at [Leave@Colorado.edu](mailto:Leave@Colorado.edu)
  
- ✓ Check with Employee Services to see if you are eligible for Short-term Disability.
  - Employee Services contact information:  
Phone: 303-860-4200
  
- ✓ Discuss your leave plans ahead of time with your family. Once you have an idea of your leave schedule, it is a great idea to start discussing your leave with your supervisor. Here are some things to consider:
  - How many weeks/months of leave will I take?
  - Will I exhaust my personal leave accruals? (**Note: employees can reserve up to 80 hours of accrued annual leave for use upon their return to work from parental leave**)
  - How can I help my department plan for my absence?
    - Project status updates
    - Day to day tasks
    - Share contacts or information that only you 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 with your supervisor on your first day back
    - 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 any job duties before starting back into your role?
- ✓ Complete the Parental Leave Agreement Form and submit to the Central HR Leave Team with your supervisor's signature included
  - Please contact the leave team if you or your supervisor have questions on completing this form
- ✓ Confirm your child's date of birth, or date of adoption/foster care placement as soon as possible by e-mailing your supervisor and the leave team
  - ***Note: The Parental Leave benefit does not start until the date of birth or placement. In the event you need to take leave due to medical complication prior to birth, please contact the leave team***
- ✓ Add your child to your benefits, if applicable. Contact Employee Services at 303-860-4200 to speak to a Benefits Counselor. For more information, see below:  
<https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/life-events>
- ✓ Submit your timesheet on a monthly basis, per the leave instructions you will receive. If you have any questions regarding your timesheet, please reach out to your Leave Coordinator as soon as possible.
- ✓ One week prior to your return to work date, confirm your return with the leave team. If your return to work date is earlier or later than originally planned, you must immediately notify the leave team to ensure accurate payroll processing.

### **Personal Notes Section:**

# Leave Benefits Overview

## Parental Leave Benefit Overview

6 months of unpaid, job-protected Parental Leave, which includes:

- 12 weeks of unpaid Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) for University Staff, Faculty and Research Faculty
- 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA for Classified Staff, plus an additional one (1) week of state medical leave (total = 13 weeks)
- 6-8 weeks of short-term disability (if enrolled and eligible)
- 6 weeks of paid parental leave
- Remainder of leave will be paid by sick and annual leave accruals, or unpaid leave

## University of Colorado Parental Leave Policy (APS 5019)

The University grants eligible employees up to six consecutive months of unpaid job-projected parental leave during the first 12 months after the qualifying event (birth, adoption or foster care placement). The parental leave will run concurrently with the 3 months (or 12 weeks) of Family and Medical Leave (FMLA), thus not in addition to the 12 weeks of leave guaranteed by the FMLA. After the FMLA period has exhausted, the employee will have an additional 3 months (or 26 weeks) 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)

In order to qualify for parental leave, an employee must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A regular 12-month faculty member, university staff or classified staff member is eligible for paid parental leave if the employee has worked for 12 consecutive months in a 50% or greater regular appointment at the university immediately prior to the date of birth, adoption, foster care placement or guardianship of a child.
- A regular 12-month faculty member, university staff or classified staff member must have a regular appointment of 50% or greater on the date of birth, adoption, foster care placement or guardianship of a child to be eligible for paid parental leave.

***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 the leave team at 303-492-6475 or e-mail [Leave@colorado.edu](mailto:Leave@colorado.edu).

## Paid Parental Leave

The 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 paid parental leave or personal accruals during the FMLA period (12 weeks)***

## Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal regulation that entitles eligible employees up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave and benefits continuation for qualifying events including the birth, adoption or foster care 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 plus an additional one (1) week of state medical leave for a total of 13 weeks. FMLA runs concurrently with university parental leave benefits.

## FMLA Eligibility

In order to be eligible for FMLA, an employee must:

- Be employed at the university for at least 12 months within the past 7 years
- 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 FMLA, contact the leave team at 303-492-6475 or e-mail [Leave@colorado.edu](mailto:Leave@colorado.edu)

## How to apply for FMLA

The employee must submit a medical certification that will require specific information from a 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, annual, paid parental) 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, annual, or paid parental leave to receive pay. If the employee does not have any sick, annual, or paid parental leave available, the employee's leave will be unpaid.

## Benefits and Payroll Deductions

During the FMLA leave period, there are certain payroll deductions that will continue if an employee is on paid leave. These deductions include medical and dental premiums, life insurance premiums, retirement contributions, parking fees, Rec Center membership fees, etc. Should any portion of the leave go unpaid, the employee will maintain coverage under CU's benefit plans. CU will continue payment of the employer portion of the benefit premium while the employee is on leave. The employee will need to arrange payment of their share of the premium. The employee is ultimately responsible for managing their benefits while on leave. The Benefits Office can be reached at **303-860-4200**.

## Returning to Work

Upon returning from FMLA and parental leave, the employee will be returned to the same position they 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 Leave 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 their own serious health condition will be required to present written documentation from their medical provider stating that they are 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 on a reduced schedule basis, employees must receive approval from their supervisor via the Parental Leave Agreement Form. Some common examples of parental leave schedules include:

### **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 for use upon her return to work.

### **Block and Intermittent**

An employee may choose to take a block period of leave after the birth or placement of the child, followed by a reduced or intermittent leave schedule. For reduced 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 30 working part time (20 hours per week) until she exhausts her total 6 months (1,040 hours) of parental leave.

## Parental Leave FAQ

### How do I request/apply for this benefit?

Please contact the Central HR Leave Team at [Leave@colorado.edu](mailto:Leave@colorado.edu) to inquire about parental leave. A Leave Coordinator will review your work history to determine eligibility and will send you necessary paperwork to be completed. You must apply for Family and Medical Leave in order to be eligible for Parental Leave.

### How do I know if I am eligible for Parental Leave?

You are eligible for Parental Leave if you have been employed at the university for at least 12 consecutive months in a regular, 50% or greater appointment at the time of your qualifying event.

### What is a qualifying event?

A qualifying event is the birth, foster care placement or adoption of a child.

### Does this policy apply to foster care placement of a child?

Yes! This benefit is available to all eligible employees for the foster care placement, adoption, or birth of a child.

### 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 if they meet all eligibility requirements. Eligible employees also qualify for the paid parental leave benefit, which provides employees with up to 240 hours of paid parental leave. Paid parental leave runs concurrently with the unpaid job-protected parental leave.

### I do not qualify for FMLA or parental leave, what can I do?

Please do not hesitate to contact the Central HR Leave Team 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 12 months of service at CU. Will I qualify for parental leave when I hit my 12 months of service?

No, per the Parental Leave policy an eligible employee needs to have 12 consecutive months in a regular, 50% or greater appointment at the time of the qualifying event in order to qualify. However, you may be eligible for 12 weeks of FMLA to care for a child. Please contact the Central HR Leave Team to inquire.

## How much time am I eligible for under the Parental Leave policy?

Qualifying employees are eligible for up to 6 months (1,040 hours) of unpaid, job-protected leave through the Parental Leave policy. The paid parental leave benefit allows for 240 of these hours (6 weeks) to be paid without the employee using personal leave accruals. For the remainder of the leave, employees may use their sick and annual 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 (303-860-4200) 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 necessary paperwork from the Benefits Office. They can also address any questions you have about the STD application process.

## I am eligible to take parental leave for a qualifying event. Can I choose to take it at any 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 or placement and a second portion later in the year. ***Note: Birthing parents who wish to return within 6-8 weeks after giving birth will be required to submit medical documentation stating their ability to return to the workplace.***

## Contacts and Resources

<p style="text-align: center;">Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) at CU Boulder</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Parental Leave</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Employee Relations Central HR Leave Team Department of Human Resources <a href="mailto:Leave@colorado.edu">Leave@colorado.edu</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Administrative Research Center 3100 Marine St. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Boulder, CO 80309</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Short-term Disability and Employee Benefits</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Employee Services 303-860-4200 <a href="mailto:employeeservices@cu.edu">employeeservices@cu.edu</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1800 Grant St. Suite 400 Denver, CO 80203</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ADA Compliance Unit ADA Coordinator 303-492-9725 <a href="mailto:ADAcordinator@Colorado.edu">ADAcordinator@Colorado.edu</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Administrative Research Center 3100 Marine St. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Boulder, CO 80309</p>