

Why Families Need Paid Leave TODAY!

Paid leave provides paid time off to workers. It helps workers with disabilities and family members when they need time off to care for themselves or others. When workers have paid leave, they do not have to choose between their jobs and their loved ones. Especially after the pandemic, we need paid leave for everyone.

What is paid leave?

Paid leave provides paid time off for workers who need it.

Paid leave is also called paid family and medical leave.

Workers may take paid leave for several reasons:

- To care for a loved one
- To care for their own serious health issue
- To be with a newborn, foster, or newly adopted child

In nine states and the District of Columbia, all workers have access to paid leave.

And, some employers choose to provide paid leave to their workers.

But, many people who work do not have access to paid leave.

People who work in low-wage or part-time jobs often do not get paid leave.

This group includes many people with disabilities—especially people who are also Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC).

Why is paid leave so important?

Paid leave helps workers:

1. Take time off without risking their families' finances
2. Take time to care of themselves if they have a disability or health concern
3. Take time to care for family members with disabilities
4. Improve their and their families' well-being

Below, we share why each change is important.

Take time off without risking their families' finances.

People with disabilities and their families often do not have as much money and savings as other families. This means that taking any unpaid time off is risky because the family may not be able to pay their bills. Or, the worker may be fired from their job because of taking the leave. People may also find it hard to find another job because of the need to take leave.

Things are often even harder for BIPOC with disabilities and their families.

This is because there is a gap in money and savings between white workers and families and BIPOC workers and families.

So, BIPOC workers and their families often have even fewer resources and savings to plan for or deal with crises. This makes paid leave even more important.

Paid leave helps workers and families take the time off they need without:

- Losing money from their work
- Needing to work part time or fewer hours
- Moving to a different, lower-paying job

2 Take time to care for themselves if they have a disability or health concern

The main reason workers take unpaid leave is to care for themselves. Workers with disabilities are more likely to be in jobs that do not offer any paid leave.

This includes jobs that offer low wages or are part-time.

Many of these jobs are essential jobs like working in restaurants or grocery stores.

Paid leave helps workers with disabilities take time off without losing:

- Their jobs
- The money they earn from their jobs

- Any health insurance they get through their job

It also allows workers to take time to go to doctor's appointments or have surgery.

It can give them time to address any health needs related to their disability.

Paid leave programs can help workers improve their health by giving them time to care for themselves—without risking their job.



3 Take time to care for family members with disabilities

Many people with disabilities are on waiting lists for **home and community based services (HCBS)**. Other people with disabilities have HCBS waiver services, but have trouble finding care because there are not enough direct support professionals.

If family members can't find care for their loved ones, they may need to take time off to provide care.

Right now, family members often take unpaid time off, move to jobs that are part-time or take fewer hours, or even stop working.

Paid leave allows workers to care for their families and:

- Keep their work hours and jobs
- Continue building their career
- Still get paid and keep health insurance provided by their job



4 Improves their and their families' well-being

Being able to access paid leave helps all workers and families feel better. It benefits all workers and their families, regardless of their background.

Knowing that you can take time off when you need it:

- Gives you peace of mind that you have the money to take time off, which improves workers' emotional health.
- Makes sure when you feel sick, you can get help.

We all need paid leave programs.

Congress should be sure when they pass a paid leave program that it helps people with disabilities and their families. It must:

- Provide time off for people to care for their own illness, care for others, or take leave to bond with a new child
- Allow all family members to take time off, including siblings, grandparents, and friends
- Be available to all workers, even those who are part-time or who work for themselves
- Pay people enough while on leave so that they can afford to take the time off
- Ensure that people will not lose their jobs or be punished for taking leave
- Allow people to take time off for an hour if that's what they need—or for weeks at a time
- Be easy for all workers to use

Learn more about paid leave and what you can do to make a national paid leave program a reality.

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