

Section 4.13 Paid Parental Leave

Original Effective Date: December 14, 2021

Revised: August 8, 2023

Revised: November 14, 2023

General Information

The County will provide up to six (6) weeks of paid parental leave to employees following the birth of an employee's child or the initial placement of a child with an employee in connection with adoption, legal guardianship, or foster care. The adoption of a new spouse's child is exempt from this policy.

Paid Parental Leave and FMLA Coverage

The purpose of paid parental leave is to enable the employee to care for and bond with a newborn or a newly placed child. Paid Parental Leave will be required to run concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave when applicable. If an employee is eligible and has FMLA coverage at the time they request parental leave but has utilized some or all the allotted twelve (12) weeks of FMLA coverage, the employee will nevertheless be entitled to parental leave pursuant to all other provisions of this policy and provided that the employee submits an FMLA certification form to support the request for parental leave. Please refer to Policy 4.8 - Leaves of Absence for further guidance on the FMLA.

Each week of paid parental leave is compensated at 100 percent of the employee's regular, straight time hourly rate (non-exempt) or weekly rate (exempt).

Paid Parental Leave will be in effect for births, adoptions, legal guardianships, or initial placements of foster children occurring on or after the effective date of this policy.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this paid leave, an employee must be classified as a regular full-time or part-time employee and have been employed with Lake County for six (6) months. However, County employees with less than six (6) months tenure may still be eligible for unpaid parental leave pursuant to state or federal law and should contact Human Resources.

Eligible employees will receive a maximum of six (6) weeks of paid parental leave per birth, or initial placement, of a child/children within one 12-month period. The fact that a multiple birth(s) or placement(s) occurs (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings or multiple foster placements), does not increase the total amount of paid parental leave granted.

Procedure for Requesting Parental Leave:

To apply for paid parental leave, an employee must:

- a) Inform their supervisor of the request in writing utilizing the Parental Leave Request Form at least thirty (30) days before the expected date of delivery, adoption, or placement, and
- b) Submit a copy of the Parental Leave Request Form to Human Resources at least thirty (30) days prior to the expected date of delivery, adoption, or placement, along with all documentation required by HR to support the leave, and
- c) Submit a completed application for FMLA coverage to FMLASource at least thirty (30) days before the expected date of delivery, adoption, or placement.

To the extent that thirty (30) days' notice is not possible, the employee must comply with (a), (b), and (c) as soon as practicable.

Leave Process:

The six (6) weeks of Paid Parental Leave described in this policy will be available for use for the 6-month period following the date of birth, adoption, or placement. Once an employee commences their paid parental leave, they must take the leave in one continuous six (6)-week period. Any unused paid parental leave will be forfeited.

Paid parental leave taken under this policy will customarily run concurrently with the beginning of leave under the FMLA; thus, any leave for a birth(s) or placement(s), taken under this policy will be counted toward the twelve (12) weeks of available FMLA leave. All other requirements and provisions under the FMLA and the County's FMLA policy will apply. Employees who qualify for paid parental leave will be required to use this leave before other benefit time.

The County will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid parental leave period. Employee payroll deductions for all group health and other voluntary benefit programs will continue during this leave.

An employee who takes paid parental leave that does not qualify for FMLA leave will be afforded the same level of job protection for the period of time that the employee is on paid parental leave as if the employee was on FMLA-qualifying leave.

If any County holiday occurs while the employee is on paid parental leave, such day will be charged to holiday pay; however, such holiday pay will not extend the total paid parental leave entitlement.

The County may take disciplinary action, up to and including termination, against an employee who uses Paid Parental Leave for purposes other than those described in this policy.