

# Paid Parenting Leave Q & A

EML – Emergency Medical Leave, FML – Family Medical Leave

	Category	Question	Answer
1	EML	I'm a full-time benefit eligible classified employee who has been in my current position/classification for 5 years. My baby is due September 16 <sup>th</sup> however, my healthcare provider placed me on bed rest approximately 10 weeks early (April 16 <sup>th</sup> ) and will not allow me to work in any capacity until sometime after the baby arrives. My baby is born April 17 <sup>th</sup> and, unfortunately, has extensive medical issues. She is placed in the neonatal intensive care unit for 8 weeks and then is released to home. While she is in the hospital I would like to work intermittently as I can each day. Some days it might be 4 hours and other days it might be 2 hours, it just depends on what her needs are. She finally comes home but has medical conditions which require me to provide medical care for her for the next 4 weeks. What are my leave, job protection and income replacement options under current policies and also the proposed policies B and C? Mainly, will I be eligible for FML due to my baby's serious health condition after my FML and potential paid parenting leave are exhausted?	Upon a release to return to work, intermittent or reduced schedule leave is available under FML. You may also qualify for extended medical leave, which is job and benefit protected leave. Although unpaid, does extend the period of protected leave for your own medical condition.
2	EML	I'm currently undergoing treatment for cancer. My health care professional says I will be able to return to work once I have completed the treatment plan. I have used 395 hours of the 480 hours allowed under FML but I will need approximately 300 additional hours to complete treatment. If paid parenting leave options B or C are adopted will I have job protection through extended medical leave to protect me for in excess of the 480 hours allowed under FML?	With Option B or C, the job protection beyond the Federal FML period of 12 weeks will be eliminated.
3	EML	If I deliver 7 weeks early and my baby is placed in the neonatal intensive care unit for approximately 14 weeks following his birth, can I use 2 weeks of paid parenting leave for the delivery, work ½ time from home while he is in the hospital and then use the remaining 8 or 10 weeks of paid parenting leave when he comes home from the hospital? How would that work under the current leave policies?	Federal FML covers continuous or intermittent leave for up to 480 hours (FT Employee) of protected leave. Proposed under Option B or C would allow for 8 or 12 weeks of paid leave, but not beyond the total of 12 weeks. Option B or C requires the use of paid leave within the first period following birth.  Under current leave policies, you can use 12 weeks of protected leave (unpaid if not using accumulated leave) continuously or intermittent. Extended Medical Leave may also be available for your own medical condition.
4	EML	Removal of Extended Medical Leave	Short-term and long-term disability will remain the same if paid parenting leave is implemented.

		<p>Why the removal of extended leave/disability (again, what does this mean for birthing parents who experience extended hospital stays?)</p> <p>Will EML be removed for all or just those who take parenting leave?</p>	<p>There will be no loss of the current disability benefits.</p> <p>Extended Medical and Non-FML parenting leave will be excluded from the benefits package if Option B or Option C is chosen in order to mirror like plans. This is a benefit the UI has offered, but is not offered under the other two proposed plans. This change impacts all eligible employees, whether or not they use paid parenting leave.</p>
5	EML	<p>What does this mean for our colleagues who are experiencing an extreme medical situation (cancer, etc)?</p> <p>Will they lose their jobs or are their other options?</p> <p>How many employees utilize this leave each year?</p>	<p>Implementation of Option B or Option C does reduce protected leave under Extended Medical Leave from up to 12 months to up to 12 weeks.</p> <p>Each medical situation is unique.</p> <p>This is not separately tracked from FML. However, an estimated number was used to help calculate savings. The removal of both Non-FML Parenting and Extended Medical were projected at savings of an estimated \$200,000. Consultants are engaged with UI to provide a independent review and impact analysis.</p>
6	Extended	Can employees still use accrued/sick leave after the 12 weeks paid parental leave?	Yes, annual leave and sick leave may be used according to FSH3710. Use of accumulated leave would not extend the period of protected leave.
7	Financial	Has there been any cost analysis to determine financial feasibility and sustainability?	Preliminary cost analysis has been done. We are also engaging with an external consultant to provide an analysis based on our preliminary review.
8	Financial	Have benefits to morale and employee retention been factored into the costs or considerations?	Increased retention, morale, and productivity were factored into the costs as reductions to the overall cost of payment to employees during leave.
9	Financial	I was wondering if the WSU policy is funded by the state. All Washington state employees have to “pay” or give up money each pay period for sick leave to the state. Does the money each state employee has to give up go to pay this leave versus WSU having to actually pay it?	Although we don’t know the full extent of how this is funded, you are correct in noting that each employee pays a % of their check for this benefit which in turns helps provide funding.

10	First 12 Weeks	<p>12 weeks immediately after birth/adoption/foster placement</p> <p>Why are we forced to take the 12 weeks immediately after birth as opposed to anytime during the calendar year (this basically robs any leave from summer births and could prevent NICU parents from actually spending their time off at home w/ their newborn)?</p>	<p>This Option B and Option C mirror like programs to the extent possible.</p> <p>Federal FML allows for 480 hours of leave within the first 12 months of the child birth. However, this is not paid leave.</p>
11	FML	<p>My biological son, age 19, is a full-time college student in Spokane, WA. He lives alone, is not married and does not have a significant other. He needs to undergo surgery which will require someone to assist him with activities of daily living (medications, food, walking) for approximately 2 weeks following surgery. If paid parenting leave options B or C are adopted how will this affect my ability to use job protected leave to care for him during this difficult time? Would I be able to care for him under current policies and have job protection?</p>	<p>This part of the proposed policy change mirrors the other two programs for consideration. Eligibility will mirror Federal FML criteria.</p>
12	Funding	<p>How will paid leave be funded? People need to understand FULLY where the funding behind the alternate proposals are coming from. My understanding is that fringe rates for everyone, faculty and staff, would increase to partially fund these options – that this is just not free paid leave, everyone covers it, including those employees who do not have or choose to not have kids.</p>	<p>Agreed – there is no free leave. It will cost the university something and the costs will need to be paid. We are looking into various options for funding, including this benefit in the CFR. In doing so, we are looking for equitable distribution of costs across the university, ease of administration and use, and accurate tracking.</p>
13	General	<p>Does FML and paid parental leave co-exist? Taken at the same time? Is parental leave under option B&amp;C protected leave like FML is?</p> <p>Hypothetically, could some take 12 weeks of FML with supplemental leave and 12 weeks with paid parental leave?</p>	<p>FML provides job protection and benefits during applicable approved leave. UI's paid parental leave policy will be categorized as FML and additionally provide wage replacement during the protected leave.</p> <p>A total of 12 weeks protected leave will be provided</p>
14	General	<p>How do I find out if I'm a board-appointed permanent staff person?</p> <p>Would PERSI eligible Temporary Help Employees be considered board-appointed?</p>	<p>This information is indicated in each employee's offer letter. If not available, contact your supervisor or Human Resources. Most employees that are not designated as TH are board appointed employees.</p> <p>PERSI eligible temporary help employees are not considered board-appointed.</p>
15	General	<p>If options two or three are endorsed and implemented, will extended FML for employees eligible for <i>any</i> medical condition be eliminated?</p>	<p>Extended Medical Leave will be eliminated.</p> <p>Extended Medical Leave is not offered by other institutions such as BSU/ISU/WSU. This is a unique benefit to UI.</p>

		Follow-up: Is this similar to other postsecondary institutions and WSU, the colleges being modeled? My cursory research indicates that WSU offers paid FML for any eligible event of which is not limited to birth or care of a child.	
16	General	Is relying on wage replacement a reasonable way to deliver a cost neutral plan, that could be made equitable by front loading sick leave on day one of employment?	Leave accrual for the UI is based on hours worked and governed by board policy and reported to the State Controller Office. We do not have the ability to front load sick or annual leave on day one of employment because it is earned based on hours worked. Additionally, policy states hours can not be used prior to accrual.
17	General	Plan B provides for 90% pay or \$1,206 a week, whichever is lower. By my back-of-envelope math, anyone earning more than \$1,809 a week would receive more paid parental leave under plan c (100% for 8 weeks: $1809 \times 8 = 14,472$ ) than they would under plan b (\$1,206 for 12 weeks: $1206 \times 12 = 14,472$ ). Could you let us know (a) what percent of full-time faculty and staff at the University earn more than \$1,809 a week? Also, would it be possible to provide (b) what percent of full-time faculty and staff in their first 20 years of service with the University earn more than \$1,809 a week (on the assumption that faculty and staff are more likely to use these benefits in their first twenty years with the University, and that faculty/staff who have been with the University for more than 20 years likely earn higher salaries, which might skew the previous number)?	<p>Total # of employees (classified, exempt, postdoc and faculty – excludes temporary help) 2449</p> <p># of those earning at least \$1809 per week for all weeks contracted 559 (22.83%)</p> <p># those earning at lease \$1809 per week with 20 or less years since current hire 410 (16.74% of total employees)</p>
18	General	The Parental Leave Option Chart that was provided is helpful, and I understand wanting to be transparent about potential changes, but the way the information displayed and the communication around it (excluding the subcommittee's endorsement of Option C) seems to favor remaining on option A – is there a reason for that?	The subcommittee's endorsement for option C was included along with Staff Counsel and Faculty Senate support for Option C.
19	General	What are the "lesser used" benefits being eliminated?	Non-FML Parenting Leave and Extended Medical Leave
20	Non-FML	I am not sure I understand why changing the current coverage would require that the University is no longer able to support folks that would currently be eligible for non-FML leave (180 days from their date of hire) but are not yet eligible for FML. Please explain why support for that population would need to be eliminated with option B or C.	This part of the proposed policy change mirrors the other two programs for consideration.

		Similarly, why would grandparents no longer be eligible for leave under option B or C? Would it be possible to include an exception if they will be the primary caregiver of the child?	
21	Non-FML	I'm a board appointed full-time employee who has been employed by the University for 6 months. I'm due to deliver my first child during the 8 <sup>th</sup> month of my employment. I will qualify for the current non-FML parenting leave however, will I also qualify under the proposed paid family leave options B and C?	You will not qualify for protected leave under proposed options B or C. HR will work with your supervisors to use leave for the medically necessary period following the birth of the child.
22	Option B	Do we have information on how BSU or ISU find their parental leave offerings?	Representatives from both institutions have reported that the funding is from department funds when the employee uses the leave.
23	Option B	If option B is preferred, can an eligible employee take the 8 weeks of paid parental leave and then use accumulated leave up to the total of 12 weeks protected leave.	Yes, employees eligible for protected leave are able to take 12 weeks for birth, adoption or foster placement. This includes parental leave. As noted, if both parents are employed at the UI and eligible, they must split the total 12 weeks of protected leave.
24	Option C	I like this policy for those who aren't making as much, but would I be able to use just FML (unpaid) and use sick leave to replace my wages so I'm not taking the cut that the \$1206 cap would lead to?	An employee may choose not to use paid parental leave and may use sick leave for wage replacement during approved protected leave.
25	Option C	I'd love to know more about the \$1206 weekly salary cap, which constitutes a substantial pay cut for....any 9-month contract holders who make over 50K.  Can employees use sick/annual leave to supplement the gap of 10% and any gap if they make over \$1206/per week?	The Option C program has a cap of \$1206/week.  The Option B plan is not capped. This is representative of the tradeoff between 12 weeks of paid leave under Option C and 8 weeks of paid leave under Option B.  Paid leave is only available during the contract period.
26	Option C	If I understand correctly, WSU employees pay a premium that supports at least part of the parenting leave program. Did the workgroup survey employees to see if they would be willing to support a premium payment for a pooled benefit so that other employee benefits would not need to be reduced?	Employees were not surveyed regarding funding mechanism or supporting a premium payment for the benefit.
27	Option C	The weekly cap of the Washington State plan is revised annually to keep up with inflation and wage raise. How is UI going to deal with increases?	To keep up with the increases, options could be considered such as increasing by the CEC amount, etc. Things we will need to consider and work through if this is the preferred option.
28	Option C	Why the capped dollar amount of \$1206/week or up to 90%, whichever is less, as opposed to a standard 90% of salary?	This change mirrors the paid leave program offered at WSU.
29	Option C	With option C, is it possible for employees to receive 100% pay by using their sick or annual leave instead of the salary allotted amount of 90% for 12	The paid parenting leave offered by WSU is a state policy and considered additional insurance.

		weeks? I think a lot of employees will not be able to afford taking a pay cut for that period of 12 weeks and want to make sure there are options for us who want to take time off without a 10% or higher cut if this is the final decision.	It is currently unclear how supplementing the 90% paid leave up to the cap would be implemented. The UI will mirror the plan preferred to the extent policy.
30	Split Leave	If both partners work at U of I, can they split the 12 weeks of paid leave one way or another and then use sick leave to still both be out for 12 weeks? Or would that be up to supervisor discretion since it's beyond the 12 weeks total?	The 12 weeks may be split however the parents determine. However, the total number of weeks of protected leave between the parents may not exceed 12 weeks.  As always, sick leave may be used according to FSH 3710.
31	Split Leave	Splitting 12 week paid parental leave between dual UI career co-parents:  Splitting the weeks is a disadvantage to the dual career couples we try to hire as they have to split leave if both at UI. Why is the no-split policy changing?	This part of the proposed policy change mirrors the federal guidelines as well as the other two programs for consideration.
32	Timeline	If approved option B or C, when would they be implemented?	Following the preference input, a policy will be developed and go through the normal policy setting process. This includes Faculty Senate, Staff Council as well as approval from the State Board of Education. It is tentatively planned for a January 1 implementation date.
33	Timeline	What is the reasoning behind parental leave needing to be taken during the first 12 weeks after the birth/arrival of a child?  For context, while not common, I had a baby 8 weeks early at the beginning of the year. My baby was in the NICU for 5 weeks. My choices were to take my full 12 weeks of FML time (with only 7 being after he came home) or go back to work part-time, meaning I couldn't qualify for STD. I chose to go back part-time in order to 'save' my hours for when he came home to delay daycare until his immune system was less fragile. But that was my choice for my unique situation. While it would be great if I had had paid parental leave when I had my child, it would have been difficult to be off work that long as a faculty member as I would likely take FML time for an additional 5 weeks after the paid 12 weeks was up because it would be too risky for him to go to daycare.	This change mirrors the paid leave program offered at BSU/ISU and WSU.  Under the current leave programs, you would be able to take 12 weeks of FML leave and may also qualify for extended medical leave.