

	<p>Paid Parental Leave</p> <p><i>Adopted: 09/06/2023</i></p>
<p>Last Revision Date: 1/8/2025</p>	<p>Policy No. 4.704</p>
<p>Last Enabling Resolution:</p> <p>008-2025/901-2025</p>	<p>Developer/Reviewer:</p> <p>Human Resources</p>

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to allow eligible employees the ability to bond with a child following birth, adoption or foster care placement.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Sedgwick County employees who meet the eligibility criteria.

3. Policy Statement

Sedgwick County recognizes the importance of healthy families and communities. This policy exhibits the organization’s commitment to our employees by offering eight (8) weeks of full salary and benefits to eligible employees for use within three (3) months of the birth, adoption or placement of a foster child.

A. Amount of Leave

1. An eligible employee is allowed the equivalent of eight (8) weeks of Paid Parental Leave in a 12-month rolling year regardless of the number of children born, adopted or placed in the home for foster care.
2. This program may only be used once per child.
3. In cases of short term foster placements, or when children are no longer in the care of the employee, the paid time will stop.

B. Compensation

1. Employees approved for Paid Parental Leave will be paid 100% of their regular wages during the leave period effective with the date of delivery, placement or another elected date within the three (3) month eligibility period.
2. All benefit contributions and deductions will continue during the leave period.
3. Vacation and sick leave will accrue during the leave period.
4. If eligible for Family & Medical Leave (FML), employees’ leave will run concurrently utilizing Paid Parental Leave first, then accrued sick, vacation and comp time, in that order.

4. Definitions

- A. An eligible employee has been employed by Sedgwick County:
 - 1. In a benefits eligible position for at least 180 days prior to the anticipated start date for Paid Parental Leave, and;
 - 2. Has had no break in service for the 180 days prior to the anticipated start date for Paid Parental Leave.
- B. Child includes biological, adopted or foster child.
- C. Parent is a biological, adoptive or foster parent.
- D. Rolling Calendar Year is a 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses leave. Each time an employee uses Paid Parental Leave, the remaining leave entitlement is any balance of the eight (8) work weeks that has not been used during the preceding twelve (12) months.
- E. Break in Service – An employee who has remained continuously employed with Sedgwick County without a voluntary or involuntary separation where the employee would be deemed inactive. A break in employment does not include participants of a voluntary or involuntary furlough, employees who transferred between positions, an absence due to Family Medical Leave, Military Leave, or employees who are, or who have been, on an approved Unpaid Leave of Absence.

5. Procedures

- A. Employees requesting Paid Parental Leave should submit the Paid Parental Leave application form as soon as reasonably possible prior to the start of the anticipated leave. Requests may take up to fourteen (14) days to process for payroll purposes once received.
- B. Employees who are eligible for Family Medical Leave and have not previously exhausted their FML entitlement have the option to request up to four (4) additional weeks of FML. A request for additional FML weeks may be made on the PPL application.
- C. Employees giving birth who are not eligible for FML will have job protection granted for the eight (8) weeks of Paid Parental Leave under the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.
- D. Approved Paid Parental Leave can be applied retroactively for no more than 30 calendar days but not prior to the birth, adoption or foster placement once documentation has been received by the Division of Human Resources.
- E. Employees who have not yet reached their 180th consecutive day of employment may apply for Paid Parental Leave effective with their eligibility date. Access to the Paid Parental Leave benefit will expire three (3) months from the date of the birth, adoption or foster placement. The eight (8) week benefit cannot be extended past the third month.
- F. Required documentation:

1. For live birth, the Birth Confirmation Letter or equivalent documentation provided by the hospital confirming the date of birth and parental relationship.
 2. For adoption or foster placement, legal documentation substantiating the adoption or foster placement date is required.
- G. During a rolling 12-month period, an employee is only eligible to request a total of eight (8) weeks of Paid Parental Leave to be taken within three (3) months of the event. An employee can request Paid Parental Leave more than once for two separate events occurring within the rolling 12-month period beginning with the first Paid Parental Leave usage. For example, an employee may use three (3) weeks for a child placed with the employee for foster care within three (3) months of the placement and five (5) weeks for the birth of a child within three (3) months of birth when the two separate events occur at different times within the same rolling 12-month period.
- H. Leave must be taken continuously unless otherwise authorized at time of application by the Division/Department Director or Elected/Appointed Official. If leave is used intermittently, or on a reduced schedule basis, it may not span longer than an eight (8) consecutive week period. In this situation, any unused hours are forfeited. For example, a full-time employee may not work part-time and extend the Paid Parental Leave benefit to 16 weeks.
- I. Employees eligible for Family Medical Leave will have Paid Parental Leave tracked concurrently and deducted from their FML entitlement.
- J. In a department requiring staffing on observed County holidays, the employee who is scheduled to work on a Sedgwick County observed holiday will receive Paid Parental Leave and Holiday Pay. However, Holiday Pay will take precedence over Paid Parental Leave for employees who receive Holiday Pay for the observed holiday.
- K. Unused Paid Parental Leave will not be compensated and may not be donated to the Sedgwick County Leave Donation Program.
- L. Documentation Confidentiality and Disclosure Agreement
All medical information submitted is considered Protected Health Information (PHI) and will be maintained confidentially in the employee's medical file. Only Human Resources, or those persons identified as having a legitimate need to know, will have access to the confidential information. Protected health information may be disclosed only as required by State or Federal law.
- M. Returning to Work
1. Employees returning from Paid Parental Leave must coordinate the return with their direct supervisor at least two (2) business days prior to their anticipated return date. If on an approved FML, then the Return to Work Guidelines would follow policy 4.711.
 2. When an employee returns from a continuous parental leave, Sedgwick County will attempt to return the employee to the position held prior to the leave.

If this is not possible, the employee will be placed in an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment.

3. If a reduction-in-force occurs while an employee is on approved Paid Parental Leave, and their position would have been included in the reduction had they remained at work, they will forfeit their right to return to their eliminated position.

N. Application

1. The Paid Parental Leave Application form can be found on E-line on the FMLA Documents page or along with the Personnel Policy under the Human Resources tab.
2. Requests for Paid Parental Leave are to be submitted directly to the FMLA/ADA Specialist at FMLA@sedgwick.gov or fax (316) 941-5132.
3. Employees who do not meet the requirements for Paid Parental Leave and/or Family Medical Leave should contact the FMLA and ADA Specialist to discuss their options.