Executive Summary:

Family leave has significant benefits for the health of individual family members and for the well-being of the family overall. Paid maternity leave positively affects breastfeeding rates, infant mortality, vaccination rates, maternal health, and paternal caregiving. Paternity leave results in increased father-infant bonding, more equitable division of household labor, increased child-engagement, and improved health and development outcomes for children.

Parental leave also has significant economic benefits:
- Paid maternity leave can increase female labor force participation by making it easier for women to stay in the workforce after giving birth, which contributes to economic growth.
- When parents are supported by work benefits such as paid family leave, they are less likely to rely on public assistance benefits.
- Paid maternity leave increases employee retention and reduces turnover, saving businesses significant costs associated with replacing employees.
Research has demonstrated very strong connections between parental leave and the well-being of mother, child, father and close caregivers. Paid maternity leave improves health and development outcomes for children. It helps prevent maternal depression and stress, especially if the leave is longer than 12 weeks. Parental leave results in increased, regular and more equitable involvement in child rearing and household labor. This document is the compilation of what we believe is the most compelling of this research.

Paid maternity leave increases rates and duration of breastfeeding

Women are more likely to breastfeed when they take maternity leave and longer leaves increase both the likelihood and duration of breastfeeding. A 2011 study found that mothers who took paid leave breastfed for twice as long as those who did not take leave. In addition, multiple studies show that early return to work after childbirth increases the probability of early cessation of breastfeeding. The Canadian National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth measured the effects of increasing paid maternity leave from 6 to 12 months and found that women who took paid maternity after policy reform breastfed longer and were more likely to breastfeed exclusively for the recommended 6 months. Breastfeeding increases bonding between the child and nursing mother, stimulates positive neurological and psycho-social development, strengthens a child’s immune system, reduces the risk of health problems like diarrheal disease, respiratory illnesses, asthma, acute ear infection, obesity, Type 2 diabetes, leukemia, and sudden infant death syndrome. In addition, breastfeeding can help reduce woman’s risk for breast and ovarian cancer and rheumatoid arthritis. The longitudinal Nurses’ Health Study found that breastfeeding may lower the risk of Type 2 diabetes in young and middle-aged mothers.

Paid maternity leave results in lower rates of infant mortality

Heymann, Raub, and Earle found that across 141 countries, 10 paid full-time weeks of maternity leave were associated with a 9 to 10 percent reduction in neonatal mortality, infant mortality, and under-5 mortality rates. Other multi-country studies have affirmed these finding, and additionally that paid leave is significantly associated with a decline in infant mortality, while nonpaid leave has no effect at all.

Paid maternity leave increases rates of well-baby checkups and vaccinations. When mothers stay home with an infant for at least 12 weeks after giving birth, their children have a greater likelihood of receiving all
recommended vaccinations. Daku, Raub, and Heymann’s study comparing maternity leave in 185 countries to vaccination schedules found that each 10 percent increase in the duration of full-time paid leave increased vaccinations while nonpaid maternity leave had no significant association with immunization rates.

**Paid maternity leave helps prevent maternal depression and stress.**

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study found an improvement in overall and mental health and fewer depressive symptoms when maternity leave is paid and longer than 12 weeks. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study on Early Child Care found that returning to work less than 12 weeks after childbirth is linked to greater levels of depressive symptoms, stress, and self-reported poor health. A study that followed 817 Minnesota employed mothers during the first year after childbirth shows that longer durations of leave are associated with lower rates of postpartum depression. Moreover, this study finds that the total length of paid leave provided by employer policy predicts women’s leave duration after childbirth, consistent with the findings of other studies. A 2015 study found that mental health benefits of maternity leave longer than 12 weeks extend over time. Women who took more than 12 weeks paid maternity leave are 18% less likely to suffer from depression 30 years later, when they were 50 or older.

**Paternity leave results in increased father-infant bonding, child-engagement, and reduced family stress.**

At least two weeks of paternity leave result in increased, regular, and more equitable involvement with childcare during the first few months of the child’s life. Fathers who take paternity leave also report higher levels of satisfaction with parenting. These benefits extend over time; in Iceland, where each parent gets three months paid leave and then can split an additional three months leave, 70% of men who take paternal leave are still equitably sharing child rearing duties three years later. Further, when men take paternity leave, time studies show that the amount of household work fathers and mothers perform become more gender balanced. The effects of paternity leave extend to gender equity in the workplace, as it shortens leave-time for women, thus increasing their potential tenure and wage growth. These benefits accumulate, improving workplace moral and human capital for all employees, which leads to increased productivity in workplaces with paid leave policies.

Paternity leave leads to improved health and development outcomes for children. These outcomes include fewer behavioral problems, improved cognitive, and better mental health outcomes. Paternity leave of 12 weeks or more is associated with higher cognitive test scores for their children.
At the end of 2014 President Obama gave federal employees the right to take six weeks of paid leave when they become parents. Then, in January 2015, in his State of the Union Address Mr. Obama framed paid leave as a crucial economic matter. “It’s time we stop treating child care as a side issue or a women’s issue, and treat it like the national economic priority that it is. Paid leave could help increase the percentage of women in the work force and help middle-class families earn stable incomes.” During his campaign, President Trump proposed a larger childcare-tax provision plan which would ensure a minimum of 6 weeks maternity leave to biological mothers in all sectors whose employers do not offer paid maternity leave.

Availability of paid family leave increases the number of women in the workplace.

In 1990 the United States had one of the top employment rates in the world for women but has now fallen behind many European countries. After climbing for six decades, the percentage of women in the American work force peaked in 1999 at 74 percent for women during prime working age (25 - 54 years). In 2015 the rate of women of prime working age in the workforce had fallen to 57 percent according to the US Department of Labor. In many other countries the percentage of working women has continued to climb. Switzerland, Australia, Germany, France, Canada, and Japan now outrank the United States in prime-age women’s labor force participation. Nearly a third of the relative decline in women’s labor-force participation is explained by Europe’s expansion of policies like paid parental leave according to a Cornell study. Further, the study calculates that with similar policies, the United States’ women’s labor force participation rate would have been seven percentage points higher.

Paid maternity leave reduces disparities and decreases reliance on public assistance benefits.

Economists have found that with paid leave, more people take time off, particularly low-income parents who may have taken no leave or dropped out of the work force after the birth. Paid leave raises the probability that mothers return to employment later, and then work more hours and earn higher wages. Mothers in California who took leave were 6 percent more likely to be working a year later than those who did not, according to a University of Virginia study. In New Jersey, in the year after giving birth, women who take paid leave are 40 percent less likely to receive public aid or food stamps. Additionally, women who took leave and returned to their jobs worked 15 to 20 percent more hours during the second year of their child’s life than those who did
not take leave and their hourly wages increased about 5 percent. Paid family leave reduces disparities in leave-taking between low and high socioeconomic groups, and does so without damaging these women’s later labor market prospects. Further, prospective research suggests that these economy-wide benefits would bring concomitant economic gains, generating a larger tax base and increased consumer spending.

**Paid maternity leave increases employee retention and reduces turnover, saving businesses significant costs.**

After Google increased paid family leave from 12 weeks to 18 weeks for mothers and fathers after the birth or adoption of a child in 2007, the rate at which new parents left Google fell by 50 percent. YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki stated that the policy was “much better for Google’s bottom line,” it avoided costly turnover and allowed the company to retain expertise, and skills of valued employees. A review of 27 separate case studies found that the median cost of replacing an employee was 21 percent of that employee’s annual salary – a substantial cost that can be reduced with family leave policies. According to data analyzed from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, women with access to paid leave are 40% more likely to return to work and after 12 weeks of paid leave, they are 69% more likely to return than mothers without access to paid leave. First-time mothers in particular, who utilized paid leave were 26.3% less likely to quit their jobs and were 18.2% more likely to work for the same employer after the birth of their first child.

**Businesses have experienced mostly positive or neutral experiences after implementing paid family leave policies.**

A national survey of large and medium-sized firms found that almost half of surveyed firms reported a positive return on investment in their flexible work arrangements or family leave policies. Similarly, 80 percent of businesses found such policies to be at least cost-neutral. Further, the birth of a child is an infrequent event and evidence from California and New Jersey demonstrates that family leave policies do not cause undue interruptions or burdens in the workplace. In fact, the opposite holds true – paid family leave policies benefit employers by improving their ability to recruit and retain talent, lowering costly worker turnover and minimizing loss of firm-specific skills and human capital, and boosts morale and worker productivity.
**Parental Leave Benchmarks**

**Louisville Employers:**

- **Amazon** offers **up to 20 paid weeks of leave**, consisting of 4 weeks of paid pre-partum medical leave for pregnant employees, followed by 10 weeks of paid maternity leave and 6 weeks of paid parental leave.

- **Brown-Forman** provides **12 weeks paid maternity leave** to childbearing mothers and **6 weeks to non-childbearing parents** (e.g., fathers, same sex couples, adoptive parents).

- **University of Louisville** employees **receive 6 weeks of paid parental leave** in connection with the birth or adoption of a child.

- **Humana** offers parents – birth mothers and non-childbearing parents – **4 weeks of 100% paid parental leave**. This paid parental leave runs concurrently with other leave programs, including 6 weeks Short Term Disability benefits for birth mothers and 12 weeks of unpaid leave under Family Medical Leave Act.

- **GE Appliances** offers **8 paid weeks of leave for mothers**, and 2 paid weeks of leave for non-childbearing parents.

- **Ford Motor Company** offers **6-12 paid weeks of maternity leave** based on medical need, including hourly workers.

- **UPS** offers **6 weeks of paid maternity leave, 12 weeks of unpaid maternity leave** and reported 2 weeks of paid leave for non-childbearing parents.

- **Kindred Healthcare** offers **6 weeks** of paid maternity leave.

- **Papa John’s** offers **4 weeks** at 100% pay, and 60% for remainder of medically necessary leave.

- **Yum! Brands** reports **6 weeks of maternity leave**.

- **Metro United Way** provides **12 weeks of paid parental leave** to child bearing parents, consisting of 6 weeks at 100% of salary and 6 weeks at 70%. For non-child bearing parents they provide 6 weeks of paid leave, consisting of 4 weeks at 100% of salary and 2 weeks at 70% of salary.

*information gathered from public websites, please contact us to update information or add your organization*
A number of our peer cities are offering their Municipal Employees parental leave benefits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Length of Paid Leave</th>
<th>Employee Status</th>
<th>Primary/Non-Primary</th>
<th>Funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
<td>Six weeks plus an additional two weeks for complications</td>
<td>Full and part time employees for at least one year</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Full base pay, city general fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>Six weeks</td>
<td>Full and part time employees for at least one year</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Funded by city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greensboro, NC</td>
<td>Six weeks</td>
<td>Full and part time employees for at least one year</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Full salary, funded by the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati, OH</td>
<td>Six weeks (four PPL, two PTO)</td>
<td>Permanent employees working at least 3/4 time</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>70% of pay, funded by the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td>Six weeks (four PPL, two PTO)</td>
<td>Full and part time employees for at least one year who have received FMLA</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>70% of pay, funded by the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>Six weeks, plus an additional two weeks for complications</td>
<td>Full and part time employees for at least one year</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Full base pay, city general fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>Three weeks for full time, one and a half weeks for part time</td>
<td>Benefit eligible full and part time employees</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Wages and benefits, funded by the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dane County (Madison), WI</td>
<td>Six weeks full time, prorated for part time</td>
<td>Benefit eligible full and part time employees</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Full pay funded by county</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
References:


