



# Parental Leave

## CITATION REFERENCE

<b>OFFICIAL TITLE</b>	POLICY ON PARENTAL LEAVE
<b>VOLUME</b>	HUMAN RESOURCES
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICE</b>	USG HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE
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## Policy Statement

In accordance with the Georgia’s Parental Leave law for state employees, the University System of Georgia (USG) provides up to a maximum of 120 hours of paid parental leave, during any rolling 12-month period, to eligible employees for qualifying life events as defined in this policy. The purpose of paid parental leave is to enable the eligible employee to care for and bond with a newborn or a newly adopted or newly placed foster child of the eligible employee.

Provided that the use of paid parental leave does not unduly disrupt the institution’s operations, no institution shall interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of or the attempt to exercise the provisions of this policy by any eligible employee. No institution shall discharge or in any other manner discriminate or retaliate against any eligible employee for lawfully exercising the provisions of this policy.

Institutions may exercise disciplinary action, to include termination, as deemed appropriate against an employee who submits a false or fraudulent document or otherwise provides false or fraudulent information in an attempt to obtain paid parental leave.

This policy provides guidance for situations involving paid parental leave for eligible employees and ensures consistency among USG institutions.

## Applicability

All units of the USG are covered by this policy.

## Who Should Read This Policy

All University System of Georgia employees should be aware of this policy.

## Definitions

These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy:

- **Eligible Employee.** An eligible employee is defined as:
  - 1) A full-time regular employee, part time regular employee, or temporary employee who has been employed with the USG for at least 6 months of continuous service and has worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six (6) months immediately preceding the initial parental leave request. The full leave entitlement must be taken within twelve months of the qualifying life event.  
  
To determine the parental leave 700 hours eligibility for a 10-month employee, the summer months will be excluded from the calculation at the time of the request.
  - 2) Employees that meet the parental leave criteria are eligible for parental leave regardless of whether the employee is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under other USG policies and/or federal law (such as FMLA).
  - 3) Rehired retirees are not eligible for paid parental leave while receiving retirement annuity payments.
- **Qualifying Life Events.** The following are eligible qualifying life events:
  - 1) The birth of a child of an eligible employee.
  - 2) The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
  - 3) The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.

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- **Parental Leave.** Parental leave is paid leave which is provided to eligible employees who experience a qualifying life event.
  - 1) An eligible employee may take a maximum of 120 hours of paid parental leave in a rolling 12-month period. The rolling period will be measured backward from the first date of leave taken. The amount of leave in a rolling 12-month period cannot exceed 120 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying events that occur during that period and regardless of transfers between USG institutions.
  - 2) Parental leave may be taken continuously or intermittently in increments as small as one hour.
  - 3) Paid parental leave may only be taken during the months in which an employee is actively working and receiving compensation.
  - 4) Unused parental leave that remains 12 months after the qualifying life event will not carry over for future use.
  - 5) Unused paid parental leave shall have no cash value at the time an eligible employee separates from the employing institution.

## Process and Procedures

Effective July 1, 2021, a USG employee who meets the established eligibility and qualifying life event criteria as defined within this policy, may request the use of parental leave.

The process and procedures section below provides guidance for the consistent administration and use of USG's parental leave policy across all institutions. USG employees should seek guidance from their institutional office of human resources should they have questions regarding parental leave.

### **Requests for Paid Parental Leave**

- The employee must provide their supervisor and the human resources department with notice of the parental leave request at least 30 days prior to the proposed leave start date (or if the leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible).
- The employee must follow institutional leave request procedures and provide all documentation as required by the HR department to substantiate the request and existence of a qualifying life event.

Documentation of the qualifying need for leave may include certification from a healthcare provider for leave requests related to the birth and care of a newborn child or appropriate supporting court documents for leave requests related to the adoption or foster care placement of a minor child.

- If both parents are USG employees who meet the eligibility criteria, each parent is eligible to receive up to the maximum 120 hours paid parental leave benefit within 12 months of the qualifying life event, provided that the use of such leave does not unduly disrupt the institution's operations.
- Parental Leave must be appropriately entered and documented into the system to ensure proper tracking and reporting.

### Coordination with Other Leave and Benefits

- **Other Paid Leave.** Employees may not concurrently use vacation, sick leave, holidays, or another Paid Time Off (PTO) while receiving paid parental leave.
- **FMLA.** Paid parental leave taken under this policy will run concurrently with unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Thus, any leave taken under this policy that also qualifies for FMLA leave due to the birth or placement of a child or due to adoption or foster care, will count towards any available FMLA leave. In no case will the total amount of leave—whether paid or unpaid—granted to the employee under the FMLA exceed 12 weeks during the 12-month FMLA period. Please refer to the [HRAP on Family and Medical Leave Policy](#) for further FMLA guidance.

After the paid parental leave is exhausted, the balance of FMLA leave may be compensated through, accrued sick, vacation, or other eligible accrued leave, if approved by the employing institution.

- **Short Term Disability.** In the event of a female employee who herself has given birth, she must coordinate between the short-term disability leave benefit and any requested paid parental leave. An employee may not receive paid parental leave or any other type of paid leave while receiving short term disability benefits.
- **Benefits.** The institution will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid parental leave period just as if they were taking any other paid leave such as vacation leave or sick leave.
- **Holidays.** If a holiday or emergency closure occurs while the employee is on paid parental leave, such day will be charged to holiday pay or unscheduled closing instead of parental leave.

### Usage and Overtime

- Paid parental leave hours for nonexempt employees are not added to hours worked in calculating overtime.

### Employment outside of the state of Georgia

If a USG employee is working and residing outside of the State of Georgia, due to their employment situation, local state law may be applicable for Parental Leave. The Human Resource Director of the employing institution may need to seek assistance from either the employing institution's or the University System's Office of Legal Affairs for interpretation of applicable state law.

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### Responsible Parties and Contact Information

Party	Responsibility	Phone/Email/URL
<b>Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, USG</b>	Maintain and revise parental leave policy as appropriate.	404-962-3235 <a href="mailto:usg-hr@usg.edu">usg-hr@usg.edu</a>
<b>Institution Chief Human Resources Officers</b>	Each institution shall establish and maintain procedure for implementing this policy.	See University System <a href="#">HR Officer Listing</a>

### Appendices (Internal Documents, Forms and Web Links)

- HRAP on FMLA
- [USG Parental Leave FAQs – Last updated 9.2.22](#)
- [Sample Paid Parental Leave Form – Last updated 9.2.22](#)
- [HR Practitioner Job Aid](#)
- Knowledge Articles
  - USGKB0012455: How Do I Enter Parental Leave as an Administrator? (PRA Job Aid)
  - USGKB0012213: How Do I Update Job Data When an Employee is Using Parental Leave? (PRA Job Aid)
  - USGKB0012209: Parental Leave Request Form (ESS Form)
  - USGKB0012306: How Do I Request Parental Leave as a Temporary Employee? (ESS Job Aid)
  - USGKB0012210: How Do I Request Parental Leave as a Benefited Employee? (ESS Job Aid)

### Related Documents and Resources (External)

- [State of Georgia Parental Leave Law](#)

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