



CALIFORNIA PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Helping Californians be present for the moments that matter.

Helpful information for employers
and community counselors



California Paid Family Leave

California Paid Family Leave (PFL) provides partial pay to Californians who need to take time off work to care for a seriously ill child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or registered domestic partner. Benefits are also available to parents (individuals, spouses, or registered domestic partners) who need time to bond with a new child entering their family by birth, adoption, or foster care placement.

This guide was developed to help you assist your employees and/or customers in understanding and navigating the PFL program so they can be present for the moments that matter most.

How much does PFL cost employers? Is it a government subsidy?

Employers do *not* pay for California PFL and it is *not* a welfare or aid program. California PFL is funded by workers through State Disability Insurance (SDI) deductions from their paychecks. Most California workers pay SDI taxes, meaning they are most likely eligible for PFL benefits.



What is a qualifying life event for California Paid Family Leave?

There are two life events that qualify for PFL – bonding and caregiving.

Bonding – To qualify, an individual must be a new parent welcoming a child into the family through birth, adoption, or foster care placement within the past 12 months. A “parent” is defined as an individual, spouse, or registered domestic partner who will be serving as a parent for the child.

Caregiving – To qualify, an individual must care for a seriously ill child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or registered domestic partner.

PFL defines “seriously ill” as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that requires:

- At-home care or in-patient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility.
- Continuing treatment by a physician or health care practitioner.

How does California PFL work?

California workers are eligible to take up to six weeks of partially paid leave that can either be taken all at once or broken up over a 12-month period. But remember, bonding leave must be taken within 12 months of the child entering the family.

Example: After adopting a new child, the father may take two weeks of PFL initially and then another four weeks eight months later.

All individuals who wish to use PFL must serve a seven-day, unpaid waiting period before benefits can be paid. This seven-day waiting period does not count toward the individual’s six weeks of paid leave, and if leave is broken up over a 12-month period, the waiting period does not have to be served twice.

What is California’s PFL wage replacement rate?

California PFL pays claimants approximately 55 percent of their salary, with a maximum of \$1,173 per week. Employers may allow claimants to use vacation, sick, paid time off, or other leave to supplement their PFL benefits to receive up to 100 percent pay.

In January 2018, the wage replacement rate increases to approximately 60 to 70 percent of their weekly salary.

The Employment Development Department (EDD) provides an online calculator to help estimate a claimant’s weekly benefit amount. Visit edd.ca.gov/PFL_Calculator.

Does California PFL provide job protection?

PFL does not provide job protection, just paid benefits. Individuals should check with their human resources department about job protection before using PFL.

However, individuals may qualify for job protection through other laws that can be taken concurrently with PFL.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – The FMLA is a federal law that gives eligible employees 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period to bond with a new child or to care for an ill family member with a serious health condition, with job protection in some situations. The FMLA can be taken concurrently with PFL for six weeks. Visit dol.gov/whd/fmla to learn more.

California Family Rights Act (CFRA) – Similar to the FMLA, the CFRA allows eligible employees up to 12 weeks of leave in a 12-month period to bond with a new child or to care for a seriously ill family member. The CFRA expands on the FMLA by allowing registered domestic partners to use these leave options. Visit dfeh.ca.gov to learn more.

Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) – The FEHA does not provide leave and thus cannot always be taken concurrently with PFL, but it may provide job protection to individuals while they are using Disability Insurance (DI) for pregnancy disability, childbirth, or a related medical condition. Visit dfeh.ca.gov to learn more.





How do PFL and DI benefits work together?

Care: An individual receiving DI benefits due to a non-work-related injury or illness may require care due to their disability, and their family members may be eligible to receive PFL benefits to take time to provide that care.

Bonding: A mother receiving DI benefits due to pregnancy or childbirth may transition from her DI claim to a PFL bonding claim. She will automatically receive a *Claim for Paid Family Leave (PFL) Benefits – New Mother, DE 2501FP* form when her pregnancy-related DI claim ends to return to the EDD. There is no seven-day waiting period when transitioning from a DI pregnancy-related claim to a PFL bonding claim.

How can individuals apply for California Paid Family Leave?

An individual with a qualifying life event can apply for PFL either online or by mail. The EDD strongly recommends that claims be filed online for faster processing. Claims should be submitted *no sooner* than 9 days after the first day that the family leave begins (7 of those days are part of the unpaid waiting period) and *no later* than 49 days after the first day the family leave begins.

Individuals will need the following information to file a PFL claim:

- Name of employer(s).
- Last day of work before leave was taken.
- If bonding with a new child, include the birth certificate, hospital discharge record, declaration of paternity, or other official forms such as adoption or foster care forms.
- If caring for a seriously ill family member, a health care provider will have to certify to the illness and the need for care by completing PART D of the *Claim for Paid Family Leave (PFL) Benefits*, DE 2501F form.
- Information about the person who will be cared for and their signature for a caregiving claim.

To apply for PFL benefits online:

1. Visit SDI Online at edd.ca.gov/SDI_Online.
2. Register for a new SDI Online account or sign into an existing account.
3. Once signed in, select “File a New Claim.”

To apply for PFL benefits by mail:

1. Fill out a *Claim for Paid Family Leave (PFL) Benefits*, DE 2501F form. This form is available in English and Spanish. (Spanish version includes English form with Spanish instructions.)
2. Submit the form to the EDD with all required documentation.

The form can be found online or at an SDI office. Individuals can also request that a copy of the form be mailed to them by visiting edd.ca.gov/Forms.



What happens next?

A properly completed claim typically takes two weeks to be processed. Once a claim has been processed and benefits have been paid, the claimant will receive an EDD Debit CardSM with the available funds.

A properly completed PFL bonding claim includes:

- PART A – Statement of Claimant.
- PART B – Bonding Certification and supporting documentation showing evidence of the relationship.

A properly completed PFL caregiving claim includes:

- PART A – Statement of Claimant.
- Page 2 – Care Recipient’s Authorization for Disclosure of Personal-Health Information.
- PART C – Statement of Care Recipient.
- PART D – Physician/Practitioner’s Certification.

The EDD mails a *Notice of Computation*, DE 429D, which informs the individual that the claim was received and of their estimated benefit amount. Individuals will know their claim has been approved once they receive an *Electronic Benefit Payment (EBP) Notification*, DE 2500E. If more information is needed or the claim has been denied, EDD staff will contact the claimant directly by phone or mail.





Additional Information

Additional information about the program and forms for filing a PFL claim can be found at CaliforniaPaidFamilyLeave.com. Paper forms can also be ordered online at edd.ca.gov/Forms or by calling 1-877-238-4373.

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moments matter.



Contact the EDD

The EDD can be contacted by phone at 1-877-238-4373. In addition to English, representatives who speak Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Armenian, Tagalog, and Punjabi are available. TTY users can dial 711.

Individuals can also visit a PFL or DI office to obtain claim forms, receive information, or speak to a representative. Visit edd.ca.gov/Disability/Contact_SDI.htm to locate an office.

The EDD also offers an “Ask EDD” resource page, which is an online service that helps individuals get the information they are looking for quickly and easily. “Ask EDD” is available at askedd.edd.ca.gov.

The EDD is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Requests for services, aids, and/or alternate formats need to be made by calling 1-866-490-8879 (voice). TTY users, please call the California Relay Service at 711.