



Paid Family Leave Outreach Funding

April 1, 2015

A Report to the Legislature

**Employment Development Department
Disability Insurance Branch**

Table of Contents

Purpose.....1

Program Background.....1

Paid Family Leave Outreach Funding.....2

Funding Expenditures and Timeline.....2

Approach.....6

Measuring Success.....7

Path Forward.....7

Purpose

This report provides an overview of the Employment Development Department's (EDD) expenditures and plans for the Paid Family Leave (PFL) outreach funding provided in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014-15, as required by the *Supplemental Report of the 2014-15 Budget Package* Item 7100-001-0870. It includes the expected type of outreach activities the EDD will pursue and timeline for implementation. The remainder of the report documents the process the department is using to determine the most appropriate outreach activities and target populations, and how the effectiveness of the outreach activities will be measured.

Program Background

The State Disability Insurance (SDI) program, funded by workers, contributes to the economic security of California by providing partial wage replacement benefits to eligible workers. The SDI program is administered by the EDD and is comprised of two components: Disability Insurance (DI) and PFL. The SDI program was added to the California Unemployment Insurance Code in 1946 to provide DI benefits to workers who suffer a loss of wages due to a non-work-related illness or injury, or due to pregnancy or childbirth.

On September 23, 2002, Governor Davis signed Senate Bill (SB) 1661 (Chapter 901, Statutes of 2002), which provides PFL benefits for California workers covered by the SDI program. Paid Family Leave provides partial wage replacement benefits to individuals who take time off work to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, parent, or registered domestic partner, or to bond with a new minor child. Claimants are eligible for PFL bonding benefits within a year of the birth or adoption of a new child. Employee contributions began on January 1, 2004, with benefit payments beginning on July 1, 2004. On July 1, 2014, SB 770 (Chapter 350, Statutes of 2013) expanded PFL eligibility to include caring for parents-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, and siblings.

Approximately 13.1 million California workers are covered by PFL. Employers are required by law to inform their employees of SDI benefits. The law requires coverage for employees working for employers with payrolls in excess of \$100 in a calendar year. There are a few exceptions. Those specifically excluded are: some domestic workers, some governmental employees, employees of the interstate railroads, employees of some non-profit agencies, and individuals claiming a religious exemption.

Key provisions of PFL:

- Provides up to six weeks of benefits over a 12-month period.
- Benefits are approximately 55 percent of the worker's income and payable at the same rate as DI benefits.
- Requires worker to have qualifying wages in the base period and be in the labor market when the family leave began.
- Requires worker to file a timely claim (no later than the 49th day after the family leave began).
- Requires a seven day, non-payable waiting period.
- Allows worker to apply without regard to length of employment with his or her current employer.

Paid Family Leave Outreach Funding

It is the EDD's belief that working Californians have the right to know about programs and services that they have paid for and how they can access them to sustain their families in times of need. To increase awareness of PFL, the Legislature approved a three-year plan to fund outreach activities with only the first year funding guaranteed. The funding amounts are as follows: \$1 million for SFY 2014-15, \$2.5 million for SFY 2015-16, and \$3 million for SFY 2016-17.

Funding Expenditures and Timeline

The DI Branch, which administers the SDI program, has chosen to increase PFL awareness and usage in the first year of this focused effort using the following methods: conducting market research, outreach to community partners and support organizations, and issuing grants to organizations that can assist in disseminating PFL information. The following provides a summary of the outreach effort, the timeline for implementation, and alternatives for the grant program if not established by the end of the SFY.

Outreach Effort	Expenditure		Timeline
Market Research Contract	\$325,000		March – June 2015
Outreach to Community Partners and Organizations (kits) ¹	\$300,000		May – October 2015
E-mail Subscription/Toll-free Hotline ²	\$11,800		May-June 2015
	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Timeline
Grants	\$300,000		June – December 2015
PFL Enhancement to SDI Online		\$275,000	May – August 2015
Outreach Expansion Efforts ³		\$20,000	May – October 2015
Total⁴	\$936,800	\$931,800	

¹ This amount includes the cost for development of the kit, printed materials, and postage. Community-based organizations, acute care hospitals, and county social services offices will each receive two kits, totaling almost 12,000 kits.

² This amount includes one-time and ongoing costs for equipment, subscription service, and staff to provide PFL information and respond to telephone calls from May 1 through June 30, 2015. These services will be available on an ongoing basis.

³ This amount provides an additional 800 information kits to be distributed.

⁴ The remaining funds of the \$1,000,000 are allocated to staff and material costs.

Market Research

A portion of the first year funding (\$325,000 of \$1,000,000) is devoted to conducting market research to help the EDD understand why working Californians decide to use or not use PFL.

The EDD has obtained a vendor to measure awareness and assess the motivating factors for individuals when choosing whether or not to file for PFL. The research will reflect the diverse socioeconomic and demographic population of the state with a special emphasis on English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Tagalog, Mandarin, Armenian, and Punjabi language speakers, the languages in which customers most commonly requested SDI services. The vendor is currently in the process of conducting statewide market research using focus groups, marketing surveys, and phone interviews to capture the perspective of California workers and key identified stakeholders.

A final results report will be provided to the EDD in June 2015, which will include, but is not limited to, a deeper understanding of program awareness and the reasons why Californians choose to use or not use the PFL program, the populations and/or geographic areas to target for outreach, their preferred method of receiving PFL information, and current and potential barriers that prevent workers from using PFL. Based on the research findings, EDD staff will develop a marketing strategy including how best to appropriate second year outreach funding, and conduct outreach activities in partnership with stakeholders.

Outreach to Community Partners and Support Organizations

Based on nationally recognized polling and research studies, the most effective communication with potential PFL customers is during their time of need or anticipated need for support. It is recognized that customers do not always come directly to the EDD, because they are unaware that the EDD is the administrator or due to a general mistrust in government services. Therefore, it is critical that the EDD leverage the abilities and capacity of all entities that have direct communication with California workers, in particular local and on-site support entities, such as community-based organizations, social service agencies, and hospital social workers. These entities have established networks and serve as conduits to thousands of California workers through their varied organizational interests. They interact with patients and their families for many different types of disability and rehabilitative services, and are involved in foster care and adoption placement. Through this partnership, stakeholders become better educated about PFL benefits and can provide workers and their care givers current and consistent information.

Paid Family Leave Outreach
Employment Development Department

To increase PFL awareness, the EDD will disseminate PFL information, via educational kits, to potential customers through a variety of community partners and support organizations that serve California's diverse population. The kit, which includes *A Guide to Paid Family Leave Benefits* booklet and a supply of various SDI forms, will provide eligible California workers with accurate information about the benefits available to them, and help organizations better assist their customers in the times of need addressed by the PFL program. Hospital social workers and county social services offices will also be included in this outreach effort.

Distribution of the kits is expected to begin May 2015 and be completed in October 2015. EDD staff will conduct workshops and presentations to key identified organizations.

The cost to develop and distribute these kits statewide to approximately 6,500 community-based organizations, 400 acute care hospitals in the state, and county social services offices is \$300,000. The EDD believes it is crucial to establish relationships with our partner organizations and sustain them by providing on-site training and workshops. These activities will occur after distribution of the kits.

E-mail Subscription Service and Toll-Free Hotline

This effort provides organizations that represent and support local communities a dedicated e-mail and phone option for reaching EDD representatives and receiving PFL information and program guidance when assisting their clients. This effort complements the EDD's outreach efforts to community partners and organizations and can be implemented by May 1, 2015. The cost to implement and provide the subscription service and toll-free hotline through the remainder of the SFY is \$11,800.

Grants

Stakeholders suggested that the EDD further collaborate with organizations and entities that support existing or potential PFL customers by offering some financial support to such organizations. To have the PFL awareness campaign reflective of California's diversity, the EDD is pursuing grants throughout the state to organizations with varied interests. Such grants would help strengthen collaboration between the EDD and a broader network of organizations that work with potential PFL customers.

The EDD is working to identify an agency with the resources and expertise to administer a grant program to disburse funds to organizations for PFL outreach. The EDD will commit \$300,000 (25 grants at \$10,000 per grant and \$50,000 for administration) to funding statewide outreach activities performed by organizations that seek to increase PFL awareness and program participation.

EDD intends to establish an interagency agreement, beginning June 2015, to announce the availability of funds for the purpose of conducting outreach activities to target populations and areas that are in need of PFL information. Organizations would be asked to use the market research results to develop and implement innovative and effective outreach activities to disseminate PFL information and increase awareness. The grant funds would be distributed through the remainder of calendar year 2015.

Alternatives

If a granting process cannot be completed this fiscal year, the EDD has developed and will implement the following alternatives for outreach activities with the remaining first year funds:

PFL Marketing Enhancement to SDI Online

The SDI Online system is the EDD's electronic claim filing system for DI and PFL benefits. This effort includes adding information text and questions to various SDI Online screens to inform users that they or an eligible family member may be eligible for a PFL bonding or care claim. Receiving this information when registering for an online account allows the customer or their family member to plan for time off due to a disability, pregnancy, bonding, or caregiving. The addition of questions and information text in the electronic claim form for DI benefits gives the EDD the opportunity to provide PFL information to customers based on their need for or awareness of the program.

Using the responses received from the customer and information submitted by their medical provider certifying to benefits, electronic notifications can be sent to claimants about PFL benefits that they or their eligible family members may qualify for, if otherwise eligible. This effort offers an additional method for the EDD to collect data on PFL awareness to better meet the needs of customers, provides multiple avenues for customers to access PFL material, and helps prevent the information from going unnoticed. The cost for this enhancement is \$275,000, which would begin in May 2015 and require 12 weeks for implementation.

Expansion of Outreach Efforts to Community Partners and Organizations

The EDD will work with stakeholders to identify new organizations and entities to expand efforts to reach communities in need of PFL information, based on market research results and existing EDD data. This is an augmentation of efforts described on pages 2-3. The cost of this effort is \$20,000, which ties with the existing marketing plan and would continue through the remainder of the calendar year.

Approach

Using best marketing practices, pursuing market research, and collaborating with PFL stakeholders has allowed the EDD to determine the most appropriate outreach activities to increase PFL awareness. The EDD recognizes that individuals are most attentive when there is a need for a particular service or program. It is for this reason that it is critical for working Californians to be made aware of the support PFL can provide for them during their specific times of need. To maximize results, the EDD will partner with those support organizations who have direct contact with the customer or patient and their families before and during these times.

Stakeholders, in particular advocacy and special interest groups, encourage and support the EDD's efforts to increase public awareness about PFL. During this process, EDD staff and representatives from various PFL advocacy groups have committed to meeting monthly to share information, discuss outreach strategies, and provide updates. The advocacy groups that have provided input and assisted the EDD in its efforts to inform Californians of their right to PFL benefits include: AARP, American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, Breastfeed LA, California Association of Caregiver Resource Centers, California Black Health Network, Inc., California Center for Research on Women and Families, California Commission on the Status of Women, California Labor Federation, California Small Business Majority, Child Care Law Center, Disability Rights Legal Center, Equal Rights Advocates, Legal Aid Society- Employment Law Center, Los Angeles Care Giver Resource Center, Next Generation, the Senate Office of Research, and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

The EDD values the relationships and experience stakeholders have with California workers. We solicited recommendations from stakeholders for outreach activities using a portion of the first year funds. The suggestions received specifically focused on reaching caregivers, working parents, and employers, but extend to a broader population by leveraging existing resources.

The group agreed that awarding grants to organizations would help strengthen the support network that interacts with potential PFL customers, and ensure an equitable and consistent process. In addition, applying market research findings would guarantee the activities target the populations and areas in most need of outreach. To keep stakeholders apprised of plans, a meeting was conducted to provide outreach alternatives to distributing grants this SFY if a grant process cannot be completed in the next few months. The group understood the time constraints and the value of implementing the alternatives with remaining first year funds. The EDD confirmed it would pursue grants for community organizations in the SFY 2015-16, if not successful in the current SFY.

The EDD and its stakeholders now await the market research findings. This data will help guide the development of ongoing outreach efforts, and will provide additional insight that will be helpful to policymakers and advocacy groups interested in family leave policies.

Measuring Success

The EDD will use department data to measure the overall effectiveness of the PFL outreach campaign. Primary measurements will be the number of claims filed in SFY 2014-15, in particular caregiving or bonding claims as a result of adoptions or foster care placement, and the number of PFL claims filed in counties previously identified as having low rates of PFL usage in comparison to the population within the county. Additional measurements include:

- Continued collaboration with support organizations to ensure they have up-to-date PFL information to meet the needs of their customers. The EDD staff will work with the organizations to develop methods, such as telephone surveys and e-mail communication, to solicit feedback and measure the success of this outreach effort.
- A requirement for organizations receiving funds from the EDD to increase PFL awareness is a report showing how funds were spent, the population(s) and/or area(s) targeted, the outreach activities conducted, status updates, and the results or effectiveness of those efforts.
- Review of the annual customer satisfaction survey results to identify at which “access point” customers filed or learned of PFL benefits; i.e., via their community-based organization, social service agencies, or hospitals.

Path Forward

The EDD will continue strengthening its relationship with stakeholders and meeting regularly to discuss outreach strategies on how to increase awareness of PFL benefits. Funding provided in SFY 2015-16 for PFL outreach will be used to develop and implement a marketing plan based on the findings of this year’s market research effort. If market research results support a media-buy campaign, funding provided in SFY 2015-16 will be allocated to this effort. Depending on the interest and success of using grant funds to increase PFL awareness, the EDD may include this effort as part of its continuing PFL outreach campaign.

Moving forward, the EDD will supplement and enhance outreach activities implemented in SFY 2014-15, seek innovative ways to meet the evolving needs of California families, and improve services to PFL customers.