


Paid Family and Medical Leave for Pennsylvanians with Disabilities



A Project of The Women and Girls Foundation 

The Women and Girls Foundation launched the Training Regional Advocates to Influence Leadership (TRAIL) program in 2020, in collaboration with Dr. Josie Badger. The goal of the program is to develop a statewide legislative advocacy training program for people with disabilities. TRAIL supports advocates with disabilities in learning strategies to make systemic change.

Recommendations represent the ideas of TRAIL members and do not represent those of the Women and Girls Foundation or any partners. For additional information please contact Dr Josie Badger at Josie@JBadgerConsultingInc.org

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His [story](#) he first shared with TRAIL:

His [letter](#) to the Editor on PFML:

Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) would provide Pennsylvania's workers paid time off to care for themselves or a family member during a serious illness, accident, or while bonding with a new child. PFML will benefit working families and help working Pennsylvanians with disabilities who need time to take care of their family and themselves. Without PFML, many Pennsylvania workers must be multitaskers finding the perfect balance on a tightrope juggling everyday needs for loved ones, themselves, and their job. Pennsylvanians need paid leave for all whether they are working in companies big or small.

What is it?

Paid Family and Medical Leave includes sick and medical days, family caregiving, and maternity/paternity leave. Currently there is legislation at the state and federal levels that would provide paid family and medical leave to nearly all workers in PA, at nearly no cost to employers.

What is the impact of not having PFML?

People with disabilities are more likely to be in part-time, low wage jobs; which, often do not provide paid time off. Without paid time off, people can lose their jobs, because of medical treatment needs related to chronic illnesses and/or lifelong disabilities. Additionally, when workers do not have access to paid leave, individuals tend to postpone medical care to prevent loss of pay, or rely on cash benefits as a safety net.


What are the benefits of PFML?

People with disabilities can seek out full time work and advance in their careers while also being able to take of continuing medical needs.

People with disabilities will have paid time off to handle medical situations that arise throughout their lives, including the birth or adoption of a new child.

Family members and caregivers could have paid time off to provide necessary care.



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Paid Family and Medical Leave for Pennsylvanians with Disabilities *Policy Recommendations*

Includes all employees with a buy-in option for individuals who are self-employed:

- As we work to continue to support the middle class and small businesses, all individuals and businesses, regardless of number of employees, should have equal access to paid family and medical leave.

Paid family and medical leave should be a public benefit:

- The low cost of this program should be maintained through a public benefit model.

Program should be paid for through a .06% income tax:

- Through numerous studies based on state paid family medical leave programs, a minimal tax of less than 1% could sufficiently cover the cost of this service. This would also prevent the depletion of Social Security, which is often the only safety net available for elders and people with disabilities.

Paid leave rates should be based on a sliding scale:

- Pay rates should be established on a sliding scale based on an individual's income where individuals would receive a percentage of their earned income. However, individuals earning less money should receive a higher percentage of their earnings.

Adequate time off should be available for individuals facing or recovering from health/illness/accidents/disability related issues and to care for individuals in these situations:

- Having an inadequate amount of time off can be almost as dangerous as having no time off. It is important to provide flexible and adequate time for individuals to heal and adjust to new life situations.
- It is vital to allow others to provide that care when possible. This will allow individuals to return to their jobs rather than needing to quit their jobs and go on public benefits while also alleviating some of the burden on the caregiver industry which has been struggling throughout the country and world.

Paid family medical leave has a critical role in all of the issues addressed in these papers, which are faced by people with disabilities. Each issue will include one way that paid family and medical leave could address each barrier.