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Relationship & Parental Recognition: State Family Leave Laws

No updates required since June 20, 2025

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Background

State family leave laws govern whether a person can take leave from work to care for their family members. How the state law chooses to define family members can also impact which family members or loved ones a person can take leave to care for. For example, definitions of spouse or partner can be narrow (only including those in legally recognized relationships), or they can be broad (including those even if not in a legally recognized relationship). Similarly, definitions of child or parent can be narrow (only including those to whom the worker is legally or biologically related), or they can be broad (including those regardless of legal or biological relationship).

This factsheet and corresponding Equality Maps track definitions of spouse/partner and child/parent in state family leave laws, as well as whether the state provides *paid* family leave (independent of the definitions of family).

Note:

- Under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), certain employers are required to provide *unpaid* leave for employees to care for their or certain family members' health or obligations. State laws may provide additional benefits or requirements, including that such leave be paid. This resource focuses on state laws.
- Under state law, definitions of employer vary, which may affect which workers are eligible for leave. For more detail, visit [A Better Balance](#).
- Family and medical leave is distinct from sick leave; this resource focuses on family and medical leave.

Equality Map & Additional Resources

- See our [Equality Maps: Family Leave Laws](#), which are updated and maintained in real-time alongside this document.
- See also numerous resources from the [Center for American Progress](#), including:
 - Molly Weston Williamson. 2025. [LGBTQI+ People Are Working, Healing, and Caring in a Country Without Guaranteed Paid Leave](#).
 - Molly Weston Williamson. 2025. [The State of Paid Family and Medical Leave in the U.S. in 2025](#).
 - Caroline Medina and Molly Weston Williamson. 2023. [Paid Leave Policies Must Include Chosen Family](#).
- See also numerous resources and research from [A Better Balance](#), including:
 - (2025) [Statewide Paid Leave Protections Guide: What Should Trans & Non-Binary People Know?](#)
 - (2025) [The Family and Medical Leave Act: What Should LGBTQ Families Know?](#)



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Details on Categories & Scoring

Spouse/partner categories and scoring:

- (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship [broad]
- (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, but only if couple is in a legally recognized relationship [narrow]
- (0) State lacks family leave law

Child/parent categories and scoring

- (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship [broad]
- (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, but only if the worker has a legal or biological relationship to the child [narrow]
- (0) State lacks family leave law

This factsheet and accompanying Equality Maps also provide information on whether state leave laws also require that such leave be paid. See state-by-state info below for more details.

Summary Table

State	Definition of Spouse/Partner	Definition of Child	Paid Leave
Alabama	-	-	-
Alaska	-	-	-
Arizona	-	-	-
Arkansas	-	-	-
California	Broad	Broad	Yes
Colorado	Broad	Broad	Yes
Connecticut	Broad	Broad	Yes
Delaware	Narrow	Broad	Yes
District of Columbia	Broad	Broad	Yes
Florida	-	-	-
Georgia	-	-	-
Hawai`i	Narrow	Narrow	-
Idaho	-	-	-
Illinois	Broad	Broad	Yes
Indiana	-	-	-
Iowa	-	-	-
Kansas	-	-	-
Kentucky	-	-	-
Louisiana	-	-	-
Maine	Broad	Broad	Yes



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Maryland	Narrow	Broad	Yes
Massachusetts	Broad	Broad	Yes
Michigan	-	-	-
Minnesota	Broad	Broad	Yes
Mississippi	-	-	-
Missouri	-	-	-
Montana	-	-	-
Nebraska	-	-	-
Nevada	Broad	Broad	Yes
New Hampshire	-	-	-
New Jersey	Broad	Broad	Yes
New Mexico	-	-	-
New York	Broad	Broad	Yes
North Carolina	-	-	-
North Dakota	-	-	-
Ohio	-	-	-
Oklahoma	-	-	-
Oregon	Broad	Broad	Yes
Pennsylvania	-	-	-
Rhode Island	Narrow	Narrow	Yes
South Carolina	-	-	-
South Dakota	-	-	-
Tennessee	-	Narrow	-
Texas	-	-	-
Utah	-	-	-
Vermont	Narrow	Narrow	-
Virginia	-	-	-
Washington	Broad	Broad	Yes
West Virginia	-	-	-
Wisconsin	Broad	Narrow	-
Wyoming	-	-	-
American Samoa	-	-	-
Guam	Narrow	Broad	-
Northern Mariana Islands	-	-	-
Puerto Rico	-	Narrow	Yes
U.S. Virgin Islands	Yes	-	-
State	Definition of Spouse/Partner	Definition of Child	Paid Leave



State-by-State Sources & More Detail

Alabama

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Alaska

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Arizona

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Arkansas

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

California

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [AB 1041](#) (2022), defining a “designated person” as “any individual related by blood or whose association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.” Formerly, law granted workers leave only for a legally recognized relationship.
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - See [CA Ch 7 Paid Family Leave 3302\(c\)](#): “‘Child’ means a biological, adopted, or foster son or daughter, a stepson or stepdaughter, a legal ward, a son or daughter of a domestic partner, or the person to whom the employee stands *in loco parentis*.”
 - See also [AB 1041](#) (2022).
- Paid leave (temporary disability insurance) available, [enacted 2002 and effective 2004](#). Benefits expanded by [AB 908](#) (2016).



Colorado

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [Family Care Act](#) (2013): “...if the person (a) is related to the employee by blood, adoption, legal custody, marriage, or civil union; or (b) resides with and is in a committed relationship with the employee.”
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - Originally required legal or biological relationship. See [Family Care Act](#) (2013): “...if the person (a) is related to the employee by blood, adoption, legal custody, marriage, or civil union; or (b) resides with and is in a committed relationship with the employee.” Definition expanded by [Proposition 118](#) (2020): “...or any other individual with whom the covered individual has a significant personal bond that is or is like a family relationship, regardless of biological or legal relationship.”
- Paid leave enacted through statewide ballot initiative [Proposition 118](#) (2020, effective 2023/2024 depending on the benefit).

Connecticut

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - Family member defined as “a spouse, sibling, son or daughter, grandparent, grandchild or parent, or an individual related to the employee by blood or affinity whose close association the employee shows to be the equivalent of those family relationships.” See [Sec. 31-51kk](#).
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - Family member defined as “a spouse, sibling, son or daughter, grandparent, grandchild or parent, or an individual related to the employee by blood or affinity whose close association the employee shows to be the equivalent of those family relationships.” See [Sec. 31-51kk](#).
- Paid leave created by [SB1](#) (2019, effective 2021/2022 depending on the benefit).



Delaware

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, but only if in a legally recognized relationship
 - [SB1](#) (2022) defines spouse using the [federal FMLA](#) definition, which refers only to “a husband or wife, as the case may be.”
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - [SB1](#) (2022) defines child using the [federal FMLA](#) definition: “...a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis...”
- Paid leave created by [SB1](#) (2022, effective 2023/2025 depending on the benefit).

District of Columbia

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - “‘Family member’ means ... (c) a person to whom an eligible individual is related by domestic partnership... or marriage,” with domestic partnership defined broadly to include a person with whom the employee shares or has shared, within the last year, a mutual residence, and with whom the employee maintains a committed relationship. See [§ 32-541.01](#).
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - “‘Family member’ means ... (A) A biological, adopted, or foster son or daughter, a stepson or stepdaughter, a legal ward, a son or daughter of a domestic partner, or a person to whom an eligible individual stands in loco parentis...” See [§ 32-541.01](#).
- Paid leave created by [B21-415](#) (2017, effective 2020). See also DC’s official [paid leave site](#).

Florida

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Georgia

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law



Hawai`i

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, but only if couple is in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [Hawai`i Family Leave Act](#)
- Child
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, but only if the worker has a legal or biological relationship to the child
 - See [Hawai`i Family Leave Act](#)
- No paid leave law

Idaho

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Illinois

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [SB208](#) (2023, effective 2024), which grants workers leave for any reason, making it unnecessary to define which relationships qualify for a worker to take leave. Law further says employees are not required to give a reason for the leave, or to provide documentation to support the leave.
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - See [SB208](#) (2023, effective 2024), which grants workers leave for any reason, making it unnecessary to define which relationships qualify for a worker to take leave. Law further says employees are not required to give a reason for the leave, or to provide documentation to support the leave.
- Paid leave created by [SB208](#) (2023, effective 2024)

Indiana

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law



Iowa

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Kansas

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Kentucky

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
 - Note, [Sec. 337.015](#) (1982; amended 2021) requires that if an employer offers leave-related benefits given to birth parents, they must also be given to adoptive parents. This is not the same as statewide family leave benefits.

Louisiana

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Maine

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [Maine Law 26.7.6-A](#), with domestic partner defined without requirements for a legally recognized relationship
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - See [Maine Law 26.7.6-A](#), with leave permitted to care for a child or domestic partner's child, with domestic partner defined without requirements for a legally recognized relationship
- Paid leave enacted 2023, effective 2026. See [LD 258](#) (2023; see [here](#), starting p319, including broad definitions of “family member” on p321).



Maryland

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, but only if couple is in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [SB275](#) (2022), with relevant spouse/partner language defined only to include “the spouse of the covered individual”
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - Formerly, law granted workers leave to care for a child, but only if a legal or biological relationship exists. See [Maryland Parental Leave Act](#) (2014), leave permitted for birth or adoption of a child. Definition expanded by [SB275](#) (2022).
- Paid leave enacted 2022, effective 2023/2025 depending on the benefit. See [SB275](#) (2022).

Massachusetts

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [H4640](#) (2018), with domestic partner broadly defined
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - Formerly, [Maternity Leave Act](#) / [Parental Leave Act](#) permitted (unpaid) leave only for the birth or adoption of a child (i.e., child with a legal or biological relationship). Definition expanded by [H4640](#) (2018).
- Paid leave permitted to care for “the spouse, domestic partner, child, parent or parent of a spouse or domestic partner of the covered individual; a person who stood in loco parentis to the covered individual when the covered individual was a minor child; or a grandchild, grandparent or sibling of the covered individual.” See [H4640](#) (2018, effective 2019/2021 depending on the benefit).

Michigan

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law



Minnesota

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [HF 2](#) (2023), including broad definition of “family member” on [p15-16](#).
 - Formerly, law granted workers leave to care for a partner, but only if couple was in a legally recognized relationship. See [MN § 181.9413](#) or [SF 840](#) (2013).
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - See [HF 2](#) (2023), including broad definition of “family member” on [p15-16](#).
 - Formerly, law granted workers (unpaid) leave to care for a child, but only if a legal or biological relationship existed. See [Pregnancy and Parental Leave Act](#): leave was permitted to care for biological or adoptive child in conjunction with birth or adoption.
- Paid leave enacted 2023, effective 2026. See [HF 2](#) (2023).

Mississippi

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Missouri

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Montana

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Nebraska

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law



Nevada

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [SB312](#) (2019, effective 2020), which grants workers leave for any reason, making it unnecessary to define which relationships qualify for a worker to take leave. Law further says employees are not required to give a reason for the leave.
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - See [SB312](#) (2019, effective 2020), which grants workers leave for any reason, making it unnecessary to define which relationships qualify for a worker to take leave. Law further says employees are not required to give a reason for the leave.
- Paid leave created by [SB312](#) (2019, effective 2020)

New Hampshire

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

New Jersey

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - [A.3975](#) (2019) expanded both paid leave benefits and definition of family member to include “any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship.” Formerly, required legally recognized relationship.
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - [A.3975](#) (2019) expanded both paid leave benefits and definition of family member to include “any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship.”
- Paid leave (family leave insurance) first [enacted 2008, effective 2009](#); expanded by [A3975](#) (2019).



New Mexico

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

New York

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [S3004-A](#) (2016; effective 2018)
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - See [S3004-A](#) (2016; effective 2018)
- Paid leave permitted for spouse or domestic partner (does not require registration). See [S3004-A](#) (2016; effective 2018).

North Carolina

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

North Dakota

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Ohio

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Oklahoma

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law



Oregon

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [HB 2005](#) (2019, effective 2023)
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - See [HB 2005](#) (2019, effective 2023)
- Paid leave permitted to care for many family members, including “any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with a covered individual is the equivalent of a family relationship.” See [HB 2005](#) (2019, effective 2023).

Pennsylvania

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Rhode Island

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, but only if couple is in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [Parental and Family Medical Leave Act](#)
- Child
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, but only if the worker has a legal or biological relationship to the child
 - See [Parental and Family Medical Leave Act](#)
- Paid leave (temporary disability insurance) to care for a child, spouse or registered domestic partner. [R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-41- 35](#). Enacted 2013, effective 2014.

South Carolina

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

South Dakota

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law



Tennessee

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, but only if the worker has a legal or biological relationship to the child
 - See [Maternity Leave, 4-21-408](#): Leave permitted for “adoption, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing an infant.”

Texas

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Utah

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Vermont

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, but only if couple is in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [21 V.S.A. Sec. 472](#)
- Child
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, but only if the worker has a legal or biological relationship to the child
 - See [21 V.S.A. Sec. 472](#): leave permitted for “birth of employee’s child” or child placed with employee for the purpose of adoption (parental leave); “child, stepchild or ward of the employee who lives with the employee, or foster child” (family leave)

Virginia

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law



Washington

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [RCW 50A.05.010](#), with “family member” defined to include “a child, grandchild, grandparent, parent, sibling, or spouse of an employee, and also includes any individual who regularly resides in the employee’s home or where the relationship creates an expectation that the employee care for the person, and that individual depends on the employee for care.”
 - Formerly, law granted leave only for a legally recognized relationship. See [SB5975](#) (2017), expanded by [SB5097](#) (2021).
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
 - See [RCW 50A.05.010](#), with “family member” defined to include “a child, grandchild, grandparent, parent, sibling, or spouse of an employee, and also includes any individual who regularly resides in the employee’s home or where the relationship creates an expectation that the employee care for the person, and that individual depends on the employee for care.”
- Paid leave enacted by [SB5975](#) (2017). See also Washington’s [official paid leave page](#).

West Virginia

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

Wisconsin

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, even if not in a legally recognized relationship
 - See [Family and Medical Leave Act 103.10](#).
- Child
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, but only if the worker has a legal or biological relationship to the child
 - See [Family and Medical Leave Act 103.10](#).
- Unpaid family and medical leave established in 1987 ([SB 235](#)) with narrow definitions of both child and spouse. State began recognizing domestic partnerships in 2009 (see [AB 75 § 771-774](#)) with no legal registration of partnership required.
- See also Wisconsin’s [official family and medical leave page](#).



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Wyoming

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) State lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) State lacks family leave law

U.S. Territories

Note: The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) applies to employers and employees in the five territories. Several territories have their own family or medical leave laws that cover more employees, offer more time, or include paid time off.

American Samoa

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) Territory lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) Territory lacks family leave law

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) Territory lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) Territory lacks family leave law

Guam

- Spouse/partner
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a partner, but only if couple is in a legally recognized relationship
- Child
 - (0.5) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, regardless of legal or biological relationship
- See [Guam Family and Medical Leave Act](#) (2016), which applies to employers with fewer employees than federal law and recognizes *in loco parentis* for children, but requires legal connection for spouse.



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Puerto Rico

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) Territory lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0.25) Law grants workers leave to care for a child, but only if the worker has a legal or biological relationship to the child
 - [Act No. 3](#) (1942) provides **paid maternity leave** for a pregnant employee for the birth of a child. Updated in 2000 to provide paid maternity leave for adopting mothers of pre-school minors or minors having five years of age or less who are not enrolled in school.
- Note, [Law No. 251](#) (2016) allows employees to use accrued paid sick days to care for a legally connected family member, though this is not the same as a distinct family leave law (which creates leave in addition to a worker's existing sick or vacation days).

U.S. Virgin Islands

- Spouse/partner
 - (0) Territory lacks family leave law
- Child
 - (0) Territory lacks family leave law