

# Paid Leave Means A Stronger Colorado

FEBRUARY 2023

**Colorado will soon be home to the tenth state paid family and medical leave program in the United States.** Colorado's program, the first to be enacted through a ballot initiative, will go fully into effect in 2024. The program builds on lessons learned from older state programs to be one of the most progressive in the nation, including job protection, a progressive wage replacement rate and an inclusive definition of "family" for family caregiving.<sup>1</sup>

**Coloradans have work and family responsibilities. Paid leave means no longer having to choose between job and family.**

**People in  
Colorado both  
work and provide  
care**

- ▶ About 62,900 children are born in Colorado each year, and in 71 percent of all Colorado households with children – nearly 850,000 homes – all parents have paying jobs.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Women's wages support their households. In Colorado, 62 percent of Black mothers, 49 percent of Latina mothers, 46 percent of white mothers and 41 of AAPI mothers are key family breadwinners. State-level data is limited, but nationally 64 percent of Native American mothers are breadwinners.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Women make up nearly half of Colorado's labor force (46 percent) and more than one-quarter of its business owners (29 percent).<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ Across the country, many men want to play a larger role in caring for their children, but unsupportive policies and stigma hold them back.<sup>5</sup>

**Colorado families' care needs are increasing. Paid leave means older adults and people with disabilities can provide and receive care, and our care workforce is more resilient.**

- ▶ Older workers and older adults are more likely to experience serious medical conditions that require care.<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ In Colorado more than one-fifth of workers are 55 and older,<sup>7</sup> and in the next 20 years, the share of the state's population age 65 and older will grow by about nine percent.<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ Paid leave reduces nursing home utilization and can help recruitment and retention of care workers.<sup>9</sup>

**The state's  
caregiving needs  
are significant,  
and growing**

- ▶ Nearly 200,000 Coloradans report having long-term COVID-19 symptoms that affect their daily activities.<sup>10</sup> Paid leave helps family caregivers and people with disabilities (who are often caregivers themselves) manage their health and care needs while maintaining their income and employment.<sup>11</sup>

**Colorado will soon see the benefits of paid leave for workers, families and businesses. Paid leave means people – especially women – aren't forced to leave the labor force to care for their families or health, reducing turnover for employers of all sizes and boosting the economy.**

**Colorado's  
paid leave  
program will soon  
help tens of  
thousands**

- ▶ Paid leave helps improve health outcomes and helps working people remain economically secure and stay connected to their jobs.<sup>12</sup>
- ▶ Businesses' employee retention can also improve significantly with paid leave, helping to strengthen bottom lines.<sup>13</sup>
- ▶ State programs are used as intended by workers without overburdening employers.<sup>14</sup>

**Colorado will soon add to the growing body of evidence that paid leave programs work – a common sense, tested approach that works for families, businesses and economies.**

But people's access to paid leave shouldn't depend on where they live or work or what job they hold. The United States needs a common sense, national paid leave program that:

- ▶ includes all workers, no matter where they live or work or what kind of job they have;
- ▶ replaces enough income that workers at any income level can afford leave;
- ▶ provides enough time for workers to meet their care and health needs;
- ▶ covers the range of major needs workers face, including addressing their own health conditions, caring for seriously ill, injured or disabled family members and welcoming newborn, newly adopted or foster children;
- ▶ provides education and outreach to ease implementation for workers and small businesses;
- ▶ has a sustainable funding source that is affordable for workers, employers and the government without harming other essential programs, such as Social Security or the Child Tax Credit.

**A national paid  
leave plan is  
the solution**

**National paid family and medical leave means a stronger economy, healthier families and businesses, and greater equality for all women and families.**

**To learn more, visit [NationalPartnership.org/PaidLeave](https://NationalPartnership.org/PaidLeave).**

- 1 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2022, October). *State Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Laws*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-leave/state-paid-family-leave-laws.pdf>
- 2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, May). *National Vital Statistics Rapid Release, Births: Provisional Data for 2021* (Table 4. Total number of births, by state of residence, provisional 2021, and percentage of cesarean delivery and preterm births, by state of residence: United States, each state and territory, final 2020 and provisional 2021). Retrieved 15 December 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr020.pdf>; U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2021, Geographies: All States within United States and Puerto Rico, Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from <https://data.census.gov>
- 3 Shaw, E., Mason, C. N., Lacarte, V., & Jauregui, E. (2020, May). *Holding Up Half the Sky: Mothers as Workers, Primary Caregivers, & Breadwinners During COVID-19*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from Institute for Women's Policy Research website: <http://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Holding-Up-Half-the-Sky-Mothers-as-Breadwinners.pdf>; "Key breadwinner" means a single mother who heads a household or a married mother who contributes 40 percent or more of the couple's joint earnings. Nationally, 79 percent of Black mothers are key breadwinners; 64 percent of Native American mothers are key breadwinners; 60 percent of mothers identifying as multiracial or "other" race are key breadwinners; 49 percent of Latina mothers are key breadwinners; 48 percent of white mothers are key breadwinners; and 43 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander mothers are key breadwinners.
- 4 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022). *Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Expanded State Employment Status Demographic Data (2021 Annual Averages)*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from <https://www.bls.gov/lau/ex14tables.htm>; Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2021). *Status of Women in the States (Table 4.1)*. Retrieved 26 January 2021 from <https://statusofwomendata.org/explore-the-data/poverty-opportunity/additional-state-data/composite/>
- 5 Lenhart, A., Swenson, H., & Schulte, B. (2019, December). *Lifting the Barriers to Paid Family and Medical Leave for Men in the United States*. Retrieved 13 December 2022 from New America website: <https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/reports/lifting-barriers-paid-family-and-medical-leave-men-united-states/>; Livingston, G. (2018, January 8). *Most dads say they spend too little time with their children; about a quarter live apart from them*. Pew Research Center Publication. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/08/most-dads-say-they-spend-too-little-time-with-their-children-about-a-quarter-live-apart-from-them/>
- 6 Atkinson, I. (2021, September). *Our Aging, Caring Nation: Why a U.S. Paid Leave Plan Must Provide More Than Time to Care for New Children*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-leave/our-aging-caring-nation-why-a-us-paid-leave-plan-must-provide-more-than-time-to-care-for-new-children.pdf>
- 7 See note 4, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- 8 See note 4, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; University of Virginia Demographics Research Group. (2018). *National Population Projections: Projections for the 50 States and D.C. (Age and Sex)*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from <http://demographics.coopercenter.org/national-population-projections/?q=demographics/national-population-projections> (Unpublished calculation based on projected rate of growth of older adult population from 2019 to 2040)
- 9 Arora, K., & Wolf, D. A. (2017, November.) Does Paid Family Leave Reduce Nursing Home Use? The California Experience. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 37(1), 38-62; Espinoza, R. (2020). *Would You Stay? Rethinking Direct Care Job Quality*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from PHI National website: <https://www.phinational.org/caringforthefuture/wouldyoustay/>
- 10 U.S. Census Bureau. (2022, November 29). *Week 51 Household Pulse Survey: November 2 – November 14* (Health Table 11. Duration of COVID-19 Symptoms and Ability to Carry Out Everyday Activities, by Select Characteristics). Retrieved 15 December 2022, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/demo/hhp/hhp51.html>
- 11 Setty, S., Koball, H., Hartig, S., & Sutcliffe, T. J. (2019, February). *Disability Perspectives on Paid Leave: A Qualitative Analysis of Leave-taking Among Workers Affected by Disabilities or Serious Health Conditions*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from The Arc of the U.S. website: <https://thearc.org/policy-advocacy/paid-family-medical-leave/>
- 12 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2022, February). *Paid Leave Works: Evidence from State Programs*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-leave/paid-leave-works-evidence-from-state-programs.pdf>
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at [NationalPartnership.org](http://NationalPartnership.org).

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