

Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts PFML program provides eligible workers job protected paid time off. When you return from leave, your employer must restore you to the same job you had before taking leave, or to a job that has the same pay status, employment benefits, length-of-service credit, and seniority. The exception to job protection is when others at your level have been laid off.

Eligibility

You must work in Massachusetts. This includes work for the Commonwealth and its agencies and people who work in Massachusetts for out-of-state employers. Federal employees are excluded. Municipal employers may opt in, but most do not. **If you are self-employed you may opt-in**, and may qualify for immediate benefits if you pay your contribution for the previous 2 quarters (you must stay in the program for 3 years after you join). Learn more about types of work that are **not** covered: mass.gov/info-details/your-eligibility-for-paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml

You must have earned at least

- \$6,300 during the last 4 completed calendar quarters (for 2024) **and**
- At least 30 times more than how much you would be eligible to get each week from your Paid Family Medical Leave benefits. See the benefit calculator at calculator.digital.mass.gov/pfml/yourbenefits/.

Types of Leave

- Up to 20 weeks of paid leave for an **employee's own serious health condition**
- Up to 12 weeks of paid leave for the **birth, adoption, or foster care placement** of a child
- Up to 26 weeks of paid leave to **care for a family member in the armed services** who has a serious health condition
- Up to 12 weeks of paid leave to **care for a family member** with a serious health condition
 - **Family members** for this purpose include your spouse; domestic partner; child; parent or parent of a spouse or domestic partner; a person who stood in loco parentis when you were a minor; a grandchild; grandparent; or sibling.

Intermittent leave

Medical and family leave may be taken all at once or may be intermittent. You must get your employer's approval for intermittent bonding leave.

What is a serious health condition?

A serious health condition is a physical or mental condition that prevents you from doing your job for **more than 3 consecutive full calendar days, AND requires:**

- Two or more treatments by a health care provider (in-person or during telehealth visit) within 30 calendar days of an inability to perform your duties, or
- Overnight stay in a hospital, hospice, or medical facility, or
- At least 1 treatment by a health care provider within 30 days of an inability to perform your duties, with plans for continued treatment, including prescriptions

Serious health conditions can include:

- Chronic conditions, like asthma or diabetes, that stop you from working some of the time, go on for some time, and require going to the doctor more than twice a year
- Permanent or long-term conditions, like Alzheimer's disease, stroke, or terminal cancer, that might not be curable and will need ongoing attention but will not necessarily require active treatment. For example, when a person is in hospice
- Conditions requiring multiple treatments, like chemotherapy, kidney dialysis, or physical therapy after an accident
- Conditions due to pregnancy or post-birth recovery that prevent you from working, as certified by a health care provider
- Complications related to a diagnosis of COVID-19 that prevent you from working, as certified by a health care provider.

Cosmetic surgery is not considered a serious condition unless inpatient hospital care is required or unless complications develop.

Substance Use Disorder may be considered a serious condition covered by family or medical leave if you are receiving treatment from a health care provider or by a program licensed by the MA Department of Public Health.

Benefits

Benefits are subject to a 7-day waiting period. You will not receive benefit payments during this waiting period. Also, these seven (7) days will count against your total available leave for the benefit year. A second waiting period will be waived for birth parents who took medical leave either during pregnancy or to recover from childbirth and are now taking family leave to bond with a child immediately after the previous medical leave.

Your PFML benefits will be based a calculation that factors in your average weekly wage and the Massachusetts average weekly wage. The **maximum** PFML benefit for leaves that start in the 2025 benefit year is \$1,170.64. See the benefits calculator for an estimate of your individual benefit: <https://calculator.digital.mass.gov/pfml/yourbenefits>

Your benefits may be reduced based on your employer-sponsored benefits, any leave you have taken in the previous 12 months, and any other sources of income you may have.

To Apply

You must first provide notice of your need to take leave to your employer. If it is a planned leave, you must give at least 30 days' notice.

Then apply for PFML at paidleave.mass.gov/

- To file for medical leave for your **own serious health condition**, you

must provide certification from your health care provider using the **Certification of a Serious Health Condition form**: [mass.gov/doc/certification-of-your-serious-health-condition-form-0/download](https://www.mass.gov/doc/certification-of-your-serious-health-condition-form-0/download) completed by you and your health care provider

- To file for leave to **care for a family member with a serious health condition** use the **Certification of your family members serious illness health condition form**: [mass.gov/doc/certification-of-your-family-members-serious-health-condition-form/download](https://www.mass.gov/doc/certification-of-your-family-members-serious-health-condition-form/download) filled out by you, the employee, and your family member's health care provider.
- If you are applying for **military**-related paid family leave benefits, or if you are applying for paid family or medical leave benefits and you are currently **self-employed or unemployed**, please call the **Department's Contact Center at 833-344-7365 to begin your application.**

More information: [mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-for-paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml](https://www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-for-paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml)

Your employer and PFML

Your employer is part of the claim approval process. Employers may only reject your claim if they believe:

- You have already used your maximum amount of leave for the year
- That aspects of your claim are missing, incorrect, or fraudulent

Your employer cannot reject your leave claim for any budgetary or timing reasons.

Application Timeline

After you submit your application and all documents, expect it to take at least 35 days for processing. Here are the steps once your application is complete: first your employer has up to 10 **business** days to respond. The Department of Family and Medical Leave (DFML) then has up to 14 **calendar** days to review. If approved, DFML will then establish a Massachusetts Management Accounting and Reporting System (MMARS) account for you (if you don't already have one) to process payment. The DFML website says to expect an additional 10 **business** days to establish this account and for you to receive your first check. At this writing much longer delays are being reported.

Important Tips

- **Former employees** may qualify if you've been unemployed for 26 weeks or fewer (call the Contact Center to apply 833-344-7365)
- Depending on the situation, an **expectant parent** might also be eligible to take medical leave during or after pregnancy. When you are ready to transition to bonding leave, you can call the Contact Center at 833-344-7365 to make that transition. You should **not** submit a second application. In this situation the second 7 day waiting period will be waived.

For More Information see the PFML website: [mass.gov/paid-family-and-medical-leave-benefits](https://www.mass.gov/paid-family-and-medical-leave-benefits)