



Alamance County

Parental Leave Policy

Effective Date: August 1, 2023

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to promote a family-friendly workplace within Alamance County Government by providing paid leave to eligible employees to bond and care for a child after the birth, adoption, or foster-to-adopt placement.

Policy: To be eligible for Paid Parental Leave, employees must meet the following criteria:

- Employed as a benefited budgeted employee, regular employee (part-time non-benefited and temporary employees are not eligible); and have been employed with the County as a full-time or benefited part-time regular employee for at least one-year (12 months) continuous months prior to the birth, adoption, or foster-to-adopt placement of a child. Employees who have not reached one year (12 months) of continuous employment may use other available paid leave, such as accrued vacation or compensatory time, for parental support purposes.
- In addition, employees must meet one of the following criteria:
 - Be a new parent by birth of a child;
 - Be the new adoptive parent of a child who is 17 years or younger; or
 - Be the foster parent to a new foster-to-adopt child who is 17 years or younger and placed with the foster parent.
- This policy applies to a child that is newly added to the household through birth, adoption, or foster-to-adopt placement and not a child who is already a member of the household of either parent. This policy also does not apply to the adoption of a stepchild by a stepparent. If both parents work for Alamance County and want to use parental leave, leave cannot exceed 30 days combined between both parties.

Procedures:

- Eligible employees will receive a maximum of four (4) weeks of Paid Parental Leave in any rolling 12-month period for the birth, adoption or foster-to-adopt placement of a child/children. Multiple births, adoptions, or placements does not increase the length of Paid Parental Leave.
- The numbers of hours of leave granted under this policy is determined by the number of hours the position is scheduled to work within the up to four (4) weeks in which the time is requested and approved.
- An employee will not receive more than the maximum allotted amount of Paid Parental Leave in a rolling 12-month period, regardless of whether more than one birth, adoption, or placement event occurs within that 12-month time frame.
- For child bonding purposes, Paid Parental Leave must be used entirely before other forms of paid or unpaid leave are used after the birth, adoption, or foster-to-adopt placement of a child.

- Approved Paid Parental Leave may be taken at any time, but only during, the 12-month period immediately following the birth, adoption or foster-to-adopt placement of a child with the employee.
- Paid Parental Leave may not be used or extended beyond this 12-month time frame. Employees must take Paid Parental Leave in one continuous period of leave.
- Parental Leave is compensated at the employee's regular rate of pay. Any unused Paid Parental Leave is not compensable and will be forfeited at the end of the 12-month time frame or when an employee separates from employment with Alamance County or moves to an ineligible position, whichever occurs first.
- Employees must follow their department's call-in procedures and provide periodic status reports to their department when on Paid Parental Leave.

LIMITATIONS OF PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

- An employee may not use Paid Parental Leave in excess of the employee's normally scheduled workweek.
- Eligible employees are strongly encouraged to plan in advance for when they expect to use Paid Parental Leave and communicate their plans to their immediate supervisor or Department Head, so they can do the necessary planning for their department's operational needs.
- Paid Parental Leave must be used only for caring for or bonding with the child. Employees are not allowed to engage in any employment during the time the employee is being compensated by the Paid Parental Leave policy. (For example – an employee who normally works Monday-Friday, 8 AM – 5 PM, cannot take Paid Parental Leave and work (earn other wages) during those hours while on leave. Department Heads may take disciplinary action against an employee who uses Paid Parental Leave for purposes other than those described in this policy.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER LEAVE

- Paid Parental Leave is a supplement to the employee's existing sick and other leave at the time of the qualifying event (birth, adoption, or foster-to-adopt placement).
- While on approved Paid Parental Leave, employees will continue to qualify for elected and applicable Alamance County benefits as if they were actively working.
- Paid Parental Leave is designed to run concurrently with Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and is not intended to extend the 12-week FMLA period. An employee on Paid Parental Leave who meets the FMLA eligibility requirements will be placed on FMLA leave at the start of the Paid Parental Leave. If the employee meets FMLA eligibility during the Paid Parental Leave period, the employee will be placed on FMLA at that time.
- All other requirements and provisions under the FMLA will apply. The County will maintain all benefits for employees during the Paid Parental Leave period just as if they were taking any other County paid leave. Requesting Paid Parental Leave Employees should notify their supervisor or Department Head of their intention to request Paid Parental Leave as soon as practicable, no less than 30 days prior to, and provide them with the anticipated start date and duration of the leave.

- To receive Paid Parental Leave, eligible employees must complete a Request for Paid Parental Leave Form and submit it to Human Resources. The request must include appropriate documentation that shows that the employee's use of Paid Parental Leave is directly connected to a birth, adoption, or foster-to-adopt placement of a child. If the employee is eligible for FMLA leave, the FMLA leave requirements will govern,
- Paid Parental Leave is not to be used concurrently with short-term disability or other supplemental leave benefits.
- Documentation of the birth or adoption/placement of a child should be submitted as soon as it becomes available and no later than thirty (30) days after the birth or adoption/ placement.
- If the employee fails to provide Human Resources with the required documentation or certification within the specified time period, HR may determine that the employee is not entitled to Paid Parental Leave and may require that the absence be charged to leave without pay or other forms of paid time off. To validate an absence, appropriate documentation may be required at any time if requested by Human Resources.
- Employees begin their Paid Parental Leave on the date specified in their request unless their child is born or adopted earlier or later. In these cases, employees need to notify their department and Human Resources as soon as possible to be able to begin leave.
- This policy is meant to supplement, and not supplant, other requirements and provisions of the various legal protections afforded to new parents, including (but not limited to), the FMLA, The Pregnant Worker's Fairness Act (PWFA), Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amended Acts (ADAAA), Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP), as applicable.

Definition:

Foster-to-adopt – the placement of a foster child with a foster parent as the putative adoptive parent based on an appointment by the adoption selection committee of any County department of social services and/or a court order.