

New Parent Leave Policy

Armoire is here to support you in spending time away from work with your new family. The addition of a child to your family is exciting and busy! We value your families and want to make it easier for you to be there with them during these important first months. Our policy also provides you with options for how you transition back to work.

The new parent leave policy applies to all caregivers whether they are the birth mother, adoptive parent, secondary caregiver, foster parent, or legal guardianship. All employees that have worked at Armoire at least 12 months are eligible for New Parent Leave benefits.

If you are giving birth, you will be eligible for **medical leave** after your child is born. Typically, the amount of medical leave is 6 weeks – 8 weeks and is authorized by your physician. Once your medical leave ends, you are eligible to begin your bonding leave.

All caregivers are eligible for **bonding leave**. For mothers giving birth, the bonding leave will begin once the medical leave ends and Armoire will provide you full pay (up to \$2,000/week) for a total of 16 weeks (combination of medical and bonding leave). All other caregivers will receive up to 12 weeks of full pay (up to \$2,000/week).

Your pay while on both **medical and bonding leave** will normally come from two sources - state legislated benefits ([WA State Paid Family and Medical Leave “PFML”](#)) and from Armoire. The combination of both will cover your full salary (up to \$2,000/week) while on leave for up to 12 weeks or 16 weeks if you are giving birth. If you have serious complications (bed rest, surgery, etc.) you may be eligible for an additional 2 weeks of state paid benefits, but Armoire paid leave will end at 16 weeks.

While many employees will want to take their full paid leave, depending on your family situation, you may also choose to use your paid leave from Armoire to pay a **caregiver**. As an example, if you take 6 weeks of medical disability leave and 4 weeks of bonding leave, you could then return to work and use 6 weeks of Armoire paid benefits to help cover the cost of a caregiver. If you are not the parent giving birth you may choose, as an example, to take 8 weeks of bonding leave and use 4 weeks of benefits to pay a caregiver. This allows you to return to work and still utilize the new parent leave benefits. Once you return to work you are no longer eligible for WA PFML benefits.

The Armoire child care assistance stipend is calculated according to the Washington State average childcare cost and will be adjusted at regular intervals. The 2021 stipend is \$1,213 / month, and was calculated according to: <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/WA>.

FAQ for New Parent Leave

What is the first step I should take if I’m planning on taking leave?

Please notify your manager and HR with the tentative dates you plan to take to bond with your child. This should be completed a minimum of 60 days before you plan to take bonding leave. Once you have a tentative plan, your manager can begin making plans for how your role will be filled while you are on leave.

If you are giving birth, you will apply for medical leave first for the period of your disability and then apply for bonding leave. WA State recognizes medical disability and bonding leave as two separate leaves.

Is my job protected while I'm on leave? Do I need to be worried about whether there will be a role to return to?

We will hold a job for you. You will be entitled to return to the same job or a similar job at the same rate of pay. You may also have other job protections and pay benefits through the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or local and state laws. Your paid bonding leave will run concurrently with any FMLA leave.

If you are interested in taking additional, unpaid leave beyond the allotted time, please work with your manager to ensure that you will have a return-to-work option. We are supportive of this necessity for some families and extended leave will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

What is the difference between the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and the WA State Paid Family and Medical Leave.

Both the federal and state leave legislation allow you to take time off to care for yourself or a family member. The federal FMLA provides employees of most 50+ person companies with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave during a 12 month period. Employees are eligible for FMLA if they have worked for the organization for 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours. The WA State Paid Family and Medical Leave legislation allows for paid leave for medical reasons and to care for a family member including a new child. Federal and state leaves will run concurrently.

How do I apply for the state paid benefits? What if I am denied?

Armoire will provide you with assistance in applying for state paid benefits. It is your responsibility to apply early, upload the correct documents through the state portal and file weekly claims. Most employees will be applying for benefits through WA State Paid Medical and Family Leave. The only reason you would not be eligible for benefits is if you just recently moved to WA State. In those unique situations we will work with individuals to ensure you still receive the same benefit as your WA state colleagues. If you live outside of WA State, we will work with you to determine if there are state paid benefits available to you in your state. If not, we will work with you to receive an equivalent benefit to those employees in Washington.

How does the caregiver pay work? How soon do I need to make a decision on whether to use this benefit?

You do not need to decide on whether to utilize this benefit right away. For planning purposes, you need you to notify us 2 weeks before you plan to return to work. If you choose to return to work sooner than 12 weeks (16 weeks for birth mothers) Armoire will reimburse you for a caregiver according to the stipend calculation stipulated above (\$1,213/month). This stipend can be prorated by 50% for part-time, and by week for duration.

What happens to my benefits while I am on leave? Will I still have medical insurance?

Your benefits will remain as if you were working. If you are currently paying premiums toward your insurance, those same premiums will be deducted while you are on leave. If for any reason you have unpaid leave, you will need to reimburse the company for any premiums paid on your behalf while on leave.

Will I be required to use my PTO?

If you choose, you may take PTO to extend your leave either prior to birth/adoption or after you have exhausted your leave benefits. All employees that do not have a set amount of PTO should work with their manager to gain approval for additional leave beyond what is outlined in this policy. Generally we expect employees to return for a minimum of one month prior to taking additional time off.

Will I maintain my medical insurance while I am on leave?

Yes, the birth or adoption of a child is a qualifying life event. You have 30 days to request that your child be added to your insurance. You may also make other benefit election changes at the same time and update beneficiaries.

What does “placement” with a child for adoption, foster care, or legal guardianship mean?

Placement for adoption, foster care or legal guardianship is the act of physically housing a child for care by the employee in the employee’s home for the first time. Finalizing the adoption is a separate legal process that need not be achieved prior to using the leave. An employee may receive the Parental Leave benefit once per child (an employee does not receive the benefit upon placement and then again after the adoption has become final).

Can I take my leave intermittently?

Yes, you can take your leave anytime within 12 months of birth or adoption. We will ask you to work with your manager to schedule your leave if you plan to take it intermittently.

Example of Paid Leave calculation

Employee A has a weekly salary of \$2,000/week and plans to take 16 weeks of leave. The state of WA will pay the employee \$1,206/week and Armoire will pay the remaining amount to bring employee A up to full pay.

Employee B has a weekly salary of \$1,000/week and plans to take 16 weeks of leave. The state of WA will pay the employee \$768/week and Armoire will pay the remaining amount to bring employee B up to full pay.

Employee C has a weekly salary of \$1,000/week and plans to take 4 weeks of leave. The state of WA will pay the employee \$768/week and Armoire will pay the remaining amount to bring employee B up to full pay (max of \$2,000/week) for the first 4 weeks. For the remaining 8 weeks of their standard benefit, the employee can collect a child care assistance stipend of \$303.25/week in addition to their full salary to assist with childcare costs.

New Parent Leave Step by Step Guide

Pre-planning steps for a successful leave

- Read Armoire's New Parent Leave Policy and Caregiver benefits
- Understand your leave options
 - Unpaid [Family and Medical Leave Act](#)
 - Paid benefits available through [WA State Paid Family and Medical Leave](#)
 - Armoire New Parent Leave Pay

Must do Action items

- Develop a plan with your manager that builds in flexibility
 - Set some tentative dates for your leave
- You will be notified whether your leave qualifies under [FMLA](#). (Reminder - FMLA is federal unpaid leave that includes job protection). If you don't qualify, you are **still eligible** for Armoire New Parent Leave benefits.
- Create an account at [Secure Access Washington](#)
- [WA State Paid Family and Medical Leave](#) (video tutorial)

While on Leave

- If you give birth, you are eligible for **medical leave** - Apply for benefits through the account you set up at [WA State PFML](#).
 - You are required to upload a [doctor's certification](#) to your account.
 - You will need to file claims weekly indicating you are still on leave
 - When applying for WA State PFML you will be asked if you are receiving pay from Armoire. You will indicate "yes" and state it is "supplemental benefits".
- If you are applying for **bonding leave** only you will apply once your child is born/or placed in your home.
 - A birth certificate or [certification of birth](#) from the physician must be uploaded
 - You will need to file weekly claims through your Secure Access Washington account indicating you are still on leave
 - When applying for WA State PFML you will be asked if you are receiving pay from Armoire. You will indicate "yes" and state it is "supplemental benefits".
- If you are eligible for both medical and bonding leave, you need to apply for both types of benefits.
- If you choose to return to work and would like to take advantage of the Caregiver benefits, please notify your Manager and HR.
- Add your child to your health insurance (Please contact Shefali McDermott to make the change)
- Touch base with your manager and update them on your leave timeline.

Returning from your Leave

- Prep for your first day back at work
 - Agree on a message to be sent out by your manager announcing your return to work. Perhaps give yourself a few days to catch up on emails and any changes that have occurred while on leave.