

Know your rights: Alabama's new paid parental leave benefits for educators and state employees

It's a new day for Alabama families. As of July 1, 2025, if you are an employee of the state of Alabama, a local education agency, the Alabama Community College System or any of its institutions, you have new protections to help take care of your child and maintain your economic security under [SB 199](#). Below is more information on what this law will mean for you.

What does SB 199 do?

- SB 199 provides paid parental leave to state employees and employees of a local education agency, the Alabama Community College System or any of its institutions.
 - Mothers may receive eight weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the birth, stillbirth or miscarriage of a child that occurs on or after July 1, 2025.
 - Fathers may receive two weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the birth, stillbirth or miscarriage of a child that occurs on or after July 1, 2025.
 - The bill also allows eligible employees to take eight weeks of paid parental leave for the legal adoption that occurs on or after July 1, 2025, of a child who is aged 3 or younger at the time of placement with the eligible employee.
- Eligible employees will receive 100% of their regular salary during this leave.

Am I covered?

- The law covers eligible employees in Alabama who have been employed for at least 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the occurrence of a qualifying event.
- The following employees may be eligible:
 - Certified or uncertified employees of a local education agency (including the Board of Trustees of the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind),
 - Legislative personnel, officers and employees,
 - Court officials and employees of the Unified Judicial System,
 - Employees of the Alabama Community College System or any of the educational institutions under its authority and control, and
 - Certain other specified categories of workers.

What constitutes a qualifying life event?

- The birth, stillbirth or miscarriage of a child or the legal adoption of a child who is aged 3 or younger at the time of placement with the eligible employee constitutes a qualifying life event for paid parental leave.
- The paid parental leave must be taken either within 365 days of the qualifying event or within 365 days of the eligible employee first taking parental leave for a qualifying event, whichever occurs sooner.
- Paid parental leave may be taken only once in a 365-day period, no matter how many qualifying events you may experience in a year.
- Any unused paid parental leave cannot be carried over for future use during subsequent qualifying events or be otherwise paid out to the eligible employee.
- Covered employees may elect to take paid parental leave intermittently to bond with their child over a more extended time period, as long as this agreement is in place with their employer prior to starting leave. The eligible employee must maintain a continuing parental role with any child whose birth or adoption was a qualifying event.

If both parents are eligible employees, can they each take paid parental leave?

- Yes. If both parents work for the state, a local education agency, the Alabama Community College System or any of its institutions, they each may be able to take the applicable amount of paid parental leave in connection with the birth, stillbirth or miscarriage of their child. (See above.) In the case of legal adoption, if both parents are eligible employees, one parent may take eight weeks of paid leave and the other may take two weeks, regardless of sex.

How do I request paid parental leave benefits?

- You should contact your supervisor or the employing entity to request paid parental leave in writing with a plan of your intended use and any other leave you intend to take.
- You also must agree in writing to the employing entity that you agree not to separate from employment for at least eight weeks following the conclusion of any leave taken in connection with the qualifying event. However, this may be waived in circumstances where you are unable to return to work due to a serious health condition or you are caring for an immediate family member's serious health condition.

Can this leave be used for my pregnancy-related health needs prior to giving birth?

- It depends. Paid parental leave can be used in connection with the birth, stillbirth or miscarriage of your child or the adoption of a young child in certain situations. Here are some examples:
 - Attending prenatal appointments or other visits to a health care provider due to the expected birth of a child.
 - Being hospitalized in expectation of the birth or due to a condition caused by or related to the expected birth.
 - Requesting leave that is otherwise required due to a health care provider's order to limit physical activity prior to the expected birth.
 - Meeting with an attorney regarding the adoption of the child, or hosting in-home visits necessary for the completion of the adoption.
 - Attending judicial proceedings or counseling sessions regarding the adoption.
 - Submitting to a physical exam as it relates to the adoption.
 - Traveling to another country to complete an adoption.
- You may be able to use other forms of accrued time off or request time off or other accommodations under federal laws such as the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) or Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA). Learn more at abetterbalance.org/states/alabama.

How does paid parental leave interact with FMLA and Alabama unpaid family leave?

- If you qualify for FMLA and unpaid family leave under Alabama state law, paid parental leave will run concurrently with FMLA and Alabama unpaid family leave.

Do I have to use sick or vacation days beforehand?

- No. Under this law, paid parental leave is provided in addition to any accrued paid or unpaid sick, vacation or medical leave.
- You do not have to use your vacation or sick days before taking paid parental leave.

Questions? Call A Better Balance's free, confidential legal helpline at 833-NEED-ABB (833-633-3222) to speak with an attorney about your workplace rights.