PARENTAL LEAVE GUIDE AND CHECKLIST
(FOR BIRTH PARTNERS, ADOPTION OR FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT)

This guide is designed for birth partners that would like to take a leave of absence following the birth of their child. This guide can also be used for individuals that are adopting or will have a foster child placed with them and would like to take a leave of absence for bonding. In this guide, you will find information to help you understand the leave entitlement and paid time off options that may apply to your time away from work. The guide can also be used as a tool to help plan the steps you will need to take before, during and after your leave. A helpful leave checklist is also available at the end of this guide.

TAKING A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM WORK
Eligible employees may request a leave of absence under FMLA. Please review important policy information about FMLA leave, including eligibility and entitlements as well as employee rights and responsibilities.

Why should I apply for FMLA for my parental leave?
FMLA allows you to take time away from work to bond with your child following the birth, adoption or placement. FMLA does not provide pay but while approved for FMLA leave, your job is protected.

What should I do if I am not eligible for FMLA?
You may request a personal leave. More information about personal leave can be found on the Benefits website.

PAY DURING FMLA
FMLA does not provide pay but there may be paid benefits and time off options that can run concurrently with FMLA. Eligibility for these benefits will vary depending on your employee classification and years of benefits eligible service. Below you will find an outline of benefits that may apply to your parental leave.

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE (PPL)
After two years of benefits eligible service, full-time staff and medical residents are eligible for paid parental leave (PPL).

- PPL covers up to 6 weeks immediately following the birth of a child.
- PPL is paid through Payroll Services and considered paid status for annual and sick time accruals.

Employees must meet eligibility criteria for paid parental leave prior to the birth or placement of a child. More information about paid parental leave can be found in the Time Off and Leave Guide.

ANNUAL AND SICK TIME
If you do not meet the eligibility requirements for paid parental leave, you can elect to use available annual or sick time to remain in a paid status while you are on FMLA. If you are eligible for paid parental leave, you can also elect to use annual or sick time once the PPL benefit concludes. Employees can also elect to take FMLA unpaid.

ACTION NEEDED: Please provide Benefits with a breakdown of the paid and unpaid time off that you would like to use during your leave. Benefits will process your time off requests while you are on parental leave.
COORDINATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL PAID BENEFITS
When an employee is eligible for paid family leave benefits under state or local programs (i.e., DC Paid Family Leave), the benefit is considered deductible income under GW’s paid parental leave programs. This means the amount eligible for under the state and local programs will be subtracted from GW paid benefit payments. For more information on state and local programs, please review the Benefits website.

BENEFITS CONTINUATION
Carefully review important benefits continuation information on the Benefits website. Failure to review this information may have negative impact on benefits coverage.

COMMUNICATE
• Provide Benefits with your preferred email address and phone number. Otherwise, all benefits communications will be sent to your GW email address.
• Notify your manager of your leave and your expected return to work date, if known.

MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR BENEFITS
The birth or placement of your child is a qualified life event that allows you to make certain changes to your benefits. If adding your child to your health coverage, update your benefits in the EasyEnroll System at go.gwu.edu/easyenroll and provide supporting proof of birth within 60 days of the birth or placement.

Important: Due to IRS regulations, FSA dependent care accounts cannot be continued or newly elected while on paid or unpaid leave longer than 30 days. You can enroll/re-enroll in the FSA dependent care benefit within 30 calendar days after your return from leave.

RETURNING TO WORK
• Review the Benefits website for information on returning to work including benefits re-enrollment guidelines.
• Confirm your return to work date with your manager and Benefits. Failure to notify Benefits of your return to work may negatively affect payroll and benefits processing.

HOW TO APPLY FOR YOUR PARENTAL LEAVE
• Review the application instructions on reporting your claim and leave and contact Lincoln Financial to apply at least 30 days prior to the estimated due date or placement date.

Once you apply:
• If you are eligible for PPL, you will be assigned a Lincoln Financial claims manager to assist you through the process. You will be required to provide proof of birth, adoption or placement for PPL and FMLA approval.
• If you are eligible for FMLA but not PPL, Lincoln Financial will assign you a leave specialist. You will be required to provide proof of birth, adoption or placement for FMLA approval within 15 days of the birth or placement.
CHECKLIST OF IMPORTANT ACTION ITEMS

BEFORE YOUR LEAVE BEGINS

➢ Review Policy, Understand Your Benefits and Apply
   □ Review the FMLA leave and paid parental leave policies.
   □ Apply for FMLA (and paid parental leave, if applicable) through Lincoln Financial.
   □ Review eligibility for any state or local paid leave benefits to understand application requirements and important deadlines.
   □ Review important benefits continuation information on the Benefits website.
   □ If eligible for PPL, connect with your case manager at Lincoln Financial. Your case manager will reach out to you after they have received your application.

➢ Communicate with GW Benefits and Your Manager
   □ Contact Benefits if you have questions about paid time off or leave.
   □ Provide Benefits with a breakdown of your paid and unpaid time off plans, at least two weeks prior to your expected leave begin date.
   □ Provide Benefits with your preferred email address and phone number.
   □ Notify your manager of your upcoming leave.

DURING YOUR LEAVE

□ Provide proof of birth, adoption or placement to Lincoln Financial so that they can process your pending claims.
□ Apply for any state or local paid leave benefits you are eligible for.
□ Update your benefits in the EasyEnroll System at go.gwu.edu/easyenroll and provide supporting proof of birth to Benefits within 60 calendar days of the birth.
□ If taking unpaid leave and cancelling benefits, submit your cancellation in Easy Enroll.
□ If taking unpaid leave and continuing benefits, remit payment for your premiums.

RETURNING TO WORK

□ Confirm your return to work date with your manager and Benefits.
□ Review the Benefits website on returning to work, including benefits re-enrollment.
□ If applicable, enroll/re-enroll in the FSA dependent care account within 30 calendar days after your return date at go.gwu.edu/easyenroll.

NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE?
For questions regarding paid time off and leave programs, please contact Benefits at:
Email: timeoff@gwu.edu | Phone: (571) 553-8382 | Online: hr.gwu.edu/time-and-leave

ADDITIONAL BENEFIT RESOURCES

- GW’s Well-Being Hotline can help support a wide range of life events, including work-life solutions and confidential counseling.
- Pregnant employees (or dependents) covered under a GW health plan are eligible to participate in the UHC Maternity Support Program at no cost which includes access to 24-hour toll-free call support from experienced nurses, educational materials, and more.
- Employees enrolled in GW’s group life insurance are eligible for the LifeKeys® program which provides access to a wide array of services including estate planning, identity theft resources and beneficiary support.
• GW's Health Advocate program is an independent healthcare advocacy company that offers personalized, expert help to navigate healthcare systems to save time and money.
• Additional well-being programs can be found on the Benefits website.