



## Washington Family Leave Insurance – Benefits for All New Families

In October 2009, parents of newborn and newly adopted children in Washington will be able to take up to 5 weeks off work after a 1 week waiting period, with a benefit of \$250 a week for full-time workers, pro-rated for part-time.

**But will all workers, even those with lower incomes, be able to take advantage of the program? Put simply: Yes.** Washington’s Family Leave Insurance program is universal, providing benefits for middle-class and low-income worker alike. California’s Paid Family Leave program provides us with the best data for making estimates about Washington’s new program. Based on California’s experience we can project that in Washington:

- Parents of about 40% of newborns will take family leave insurance, once the program is widely known.
- People of all income levels will use the program – the majority from families of modest means.
- People working in all types of businesses will use the program – the majority in large companies.

### A Closer Look: Who Will Use Washington’s Family Leave Insurance?

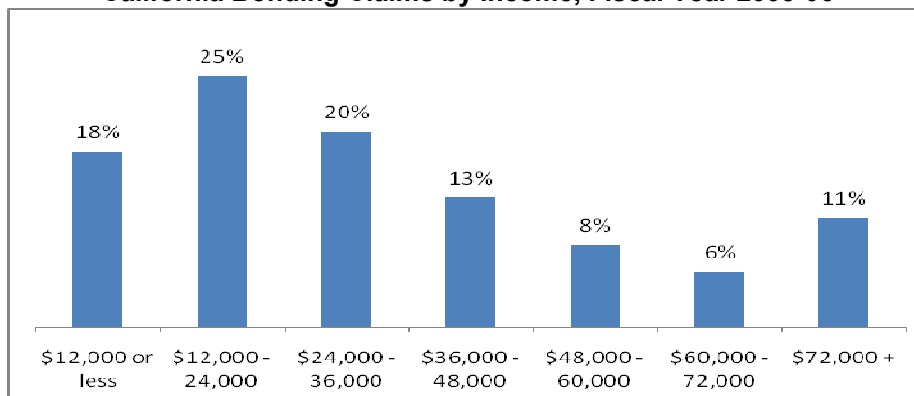
**California’s Paid Family Leave Program** provides up to 6 weeks with 55% of pay to care for a new child (“bonding leave”) or a seriously ill family member. The program is in addition to the state’s disability insurance, which allows workers up to 52 weeks off for their own illness or disability, also at 55% of pay. Under the disability program, birth mothers in California have had 6 to 12 weeks paid maternity leave since the 1970s. Now, new mothers may take their maternity disability leave, then an additional 6 weeks of bonding leave.

In 2006, 161,000 workers took Paid Family Leave, out of a workforce of 13 million:

- 88% were caring for a new child; 12% were for caring for an ill family member.
- 2/3 of women taking maternity disability leave also took bonding leave.
- 82% of mothers and 35% of fathers used the entire 6 weeks of available leave.
- Of those taking leave to care for a new child, 63% made less than \$36,000 annually.
- 18% of bonding leaves were taken by parents earning less than \$12,000 annually (20% of the workforce).
- The weekly benefit of someone earning \$12,000 in California would be \$127.

**In Washington:** Family leave insurance benefits are based on hours rather than wages. Workers earning up to \$11.36 per hour will receive higher benefits in Washington than they would in California, while those earning more will receive lower benefits. **Even with their low benefit level, California’s lowest income workers take bonding leave at close to the same rate as all workers**, and mostly in addition to maternity disability leave.

**California Bonding Claims by Income, Fiscal Year 2005-06**



Source: California Senate Office of Research: [http://www.leg.wa.gov/documents/joint/fli/CA\\_Senate-BalancingWorkFamily.pdf](http://www.leg.wa.gov/documents/joint/fli/CA_Senate-BalancingWorkFamily.pdf)