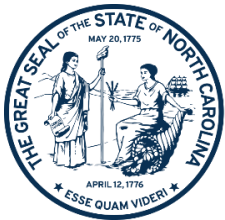


2024 PAID PARENTAL LEAVE REPORT



NORTH CAROLINA Office of *State Human Resources*

Report to the Governor's Office on Providing Paid Parental Leave
to Eligible State Employees

July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

SEPTEMBER 4, 2024

Barbara Gibson | State Human Resources Director
Andrea Clinkscales | Director, Total Rewards Division

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Executive Summary

Pursuant to Section 4 of the Paid Parental Leave Policy established by the State Human Resources Commission, the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) makes this annual report to the Office of the Governor on usage of Paid Parental Leave.

New Law on Paid Parental Leave

On July 1, 2023, the new law on Paid Parental Leave for state employees became effective. The new law, section 126-8.6 of the North Carolina General Statutes, continues to provide Paid Parental Leave to eligible state employees using the same framework as Executive Order 95, signed by Governor Roy Cooper on May 23, 2019.

Structure of Paid Parental Leave

The new law continues to provide Paid Parental Leave for eligible employees who become parents via childbirth, adoption, foster care, or another legal placement.¹ It provides eight weeks of fully Paid Parental Leave to eligible state employees who have given birth to a child, and also provides four weeks of fully Paid Parental Leave to eligible state employees who are the non-birthing parent.

Paid Parental Leave runs concurrently with Family and Medical Leave (FML), which provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year. Paid Parental Leave is prorated for part-time employees.

While on Paid Parental Leave, eligible employees receive 100 percent of their straight time pay. For purposes of the Paid Parental Leave law and policy, employment is aggregated between North Carolina state agencies, universities, community colleges, and public-school units, and an employee could qualify if the employee worked for one of these participating employers without a break in service within the immediate 12 preceding months of a qualifying event. Employees have the option to take Paid Parental Leave in one continuous period or to use Paid Parental Leave intermittently. Employees are granted 12 months after the date of eligibility to use Paid Parental Leave.

Use of Paid Parental Leave

More employees utilized paid parental leave in fiscal 2023-2024 than ever before, with 2,084 agency and university employees using paid parental leave. New parents used more than 9,921 weeks of paid parental leave in the last fiscal year. Each person using paid parental leave took an average of 4.8 weeks of leave. The tables following this Executive Summary provide further statistics about the use of Paid Parental Leave in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

As of June 30, 2024, a total of 9,675 employees have used Paid Parental Leave since the benefit became available. This number is the total for all state agencies and university employees who took paid parental leave under Executive Order 95, the State Human Resources Commission Paid Parental Leave Policy, or new N.C.G.S. 126-8.6 from September 1, 2019, to June 30, 2024. Over that time, state agency

¹ Paid Parental Leave is structured as (1) four weeks for recuperation and recovery, which is available only to eligible employees who gave birth, and (2) four weeks for parental bonding, which is available to both eligible employees who gave birth and eligible employees who did not give birth. Through this structure, employees who gave birth receive eight weeks of Paid Parental Leave, while employees who did not give birth receive four weeks. These leave amounts are for full-time eligible employees; part-time employees receive prorated leave.

and university employees have taken a total of 11,267 months of paid parental leave. The total salary paid to employees taking Paid Parental Leave since September 2019 is \$53,529,363.66.

Demographics Regarding Use of Paid Parental Leave

Based on a review of the data, Paid Parental Leave is utilized across the full age spectrum, ranging from 20 to 69 years. However, employees in the 30-39 age range continue to be in the group with the highest utilization of Paid Parental Leave.

Paid Parental leave utilization by gender is roughly the same when comparing the number of female employees (4,793) to male employees (4,882) who have utilized this benefit since it became available in 2019. However, in each of the last two fiscal years, there has been a trend of more men than women taking paid parental leave; in fiscal year 2023-2024, 53.7% of employees using paid parental leave were male.

Comparison, Implementation and Changes to the Program

OSHR conducted a survey with National Compensation Association of State Governments (NCASG) to measure the competitiveness of North Carolina's state government's Paid Parental Leave program. The results reveal that out of 19 states that completed the survey, 12 offer Paid Parental Leave in some capacity. Based on the state agencies that offer Paid Parental Leave, the average leave benefit offered is 8.66 weeks for birth parents and 8 weeks for non-birth parents. This is slightly greater than North Carolina's benefit program, which is 8.0 weeks for birth parents and 4.0 weeks for non-birth parents.

Two aspects of the new law are under implementation at the time of this report.

First, the Paid Parental Leave program is changing to include new paid leave benefits for state employees in the case of stillbirth or miscarriage. The new law required the State Human Resources Commission to issue rules on leave for stillbirth or miscarriage. Permanent administrative rules which include provisions for stillbirth and miscarriage were finalized on August 1, 2024. The new stillbirth and miscarriage benefit is 4 weeks of paid leave to birth parents for any stillbirth or miscarriage after the 12th week of pregnancy. Under the new rules, the non-birth parent will not receive any paid parental leave in the case of a miscarriage or stillbirth, although that parent may be able to take sick leave or compensatory time. The first statistics on miscarriage or stillbirth leave will be available in next year's report.

Second, under the new law, paid parental leave is now available statewide for teachers and other employees of public schools. Information on use of paid parental leave by teachers and public-school employees will be available from the Department of Public Instruction. Their data were not available at the time this report was prepared. OSHR will continue to track, in these reports, the paid parental leave usage for state agency and university employees.

Why Paid Parental Leave Matters

Paid Parental Leave is a vital benefit that is leveraged as a recruitment and retention tool to improve recruitment initiatives across the state and retain state employees who support agencies in meeting their mission to provide programs and services to the people of North Carolina.

"The North Carolina Office of State Human Resources is dedicated to providing well-rounded, family-friendly benefits that help recruit and retain employees in our state government," said State Human Resources Director Barbara Gibson. "We are encouraged by the General Assembly's new law that provides Paid Parental Leave to a broader group of state employees, including public school employees and community college employees. The new Paid Parental Leave benefits, which match the structure under Governor Cooper's Executive Order 95, are essential to ensuring the work-life balance of our new parents. I am hopeful that Paid Parental Leave under this new law will encourage dedicated, public service-oriented individuals to not only join state agencies but also our public schools and community colleges."

According to the American Psychological Association, "paid parental leave can reduce financial stress, allow parents to focus on bonding with their child, and increase gender equality when fathers have more time to participate in childcare duties. All the positive effects trickle down to benefit the child and the family as a whole" Also, the report states that parental leave policies are also linked with better mental health. Women who are not able to take as much time off—especially those who return to work in under 2 months—face more depressive symptoms and more marital and self-esteem problems."

"Among all fathers in the study, more time spent on childcare predicted more connectivity between the amygdala and the superior temporal sulcus, a key empathy pathway in the brain."²

The following pages provide specific data about the Paid Parental Leave program, along with testimonials from North Carolina state employees who have used Paid Parental Leave.



² [The urgent necessity for paid parental leave \(apa.org\)](https://www.apa.org/press-releases/2019/07/23/parental-leave)

List of Agencies and Universities Included in this Report

Cabinet Agencies	
Administration	Adult Correction
Commerce	Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs
Environmental Quality	Health and Human Services
Information Technology	Natural and Cultural Resources
NC State Bureau of Investigation	Office of State Budget and Management
Office of State Human Resources	Office of the Governor
Public Safety	Revenue
Transportation	

Non-Cabinet Agencies	
Agriculture and Consumer Services	Commissioner of Banks
Community Colleges System	Cosmetic Arts
Dept of Justice	Dept of State Treasurer
Education Lottery*	Insurance
Labor	Office of Administrative Hearings
Office of the State Controller	Psychology Board
Public Instruction	Secretary of State
State Auditor	State Board of Elections
Wildlife Resources Commission	

*The NC Education Lottery, an independent part of state government, also offers Paid Parental Leave to eligible employees.

Universities	
Appalachian State University	East Carolina University
Elizabeth City State University	Fayetteville State University
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University	North Carolina Central University
North Carolina School of Science and Math	North Carolina State University
UNC Asheville	UNC Chapel Hill
UNC Charlotte	UNC Greensboro
UNC Pembroke	UNC School of the Arts
UNC System Office	UNC Wilmington
Western Carolina University	Winston Salem State University

Additional Information

Pilot Program (Alternate Option – Expired February 16, 2024)

Section 126-1 of the North Carolina General Statutes establishes one system of personnel administration under the Governor. Currently, nothing allows separate leave or benefit policies for State Human Resources Act (SHRA) subject employees to be independently established outside of the confines of Chapter 126 by any official except the Governor.

The State Human Resources Commission and the Office of the Governor approved a pilot plan to provide an alternate option for participating agencies to administer Paid Parental Leave. The Commission established a policy to align with the pilot plan. The pilot program provided eight weeks of fully Paid Parental Leave to all eligible state employees who become parents, regardless of whether they have given birth to a child or became a parent in other circumstances. Two state entities elected this pilot option: the Department of Justice and the North Carolina Psychology Board. After the Paid Parental Leave law was passed, this pilot option sunset for new qualifying events on February 16, 2024.

Reporting Responsibility

Executive Order 95 and the Paid Parental Leave Policy also charge OSHR to report to the Office of the Governor on the implementation and usage of Paid Parental Leave by September 1, 2020, and each year thereafter. The reporting period for this report is July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

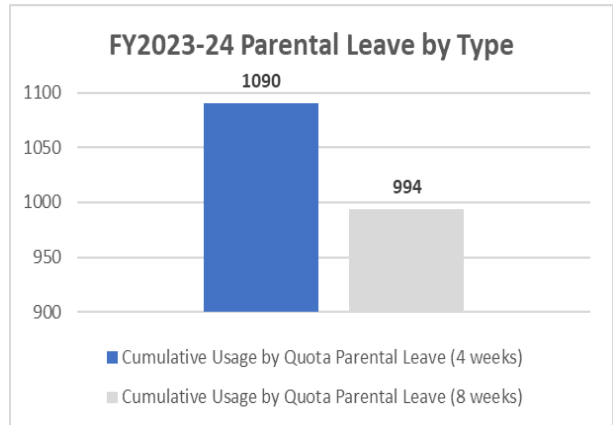
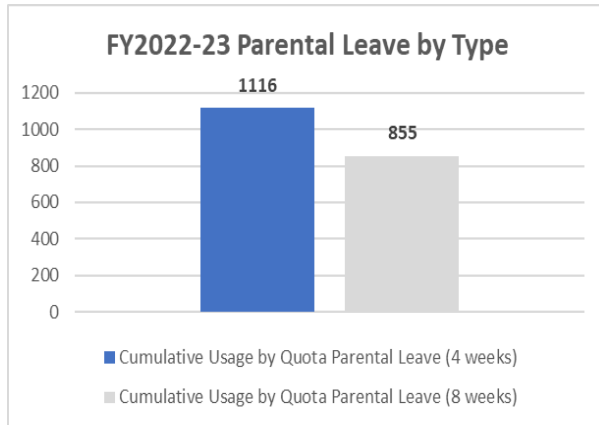
The previous year's report can be found on the OSHR website by clicking [here](#).

Conclusion

Since the inception of the Paid Parental Leave Program, more than 9,600 state employees have used the leave benefit. OSHR and state agencies continue to market the benefits of the Paid Parental Leave program, as research suggests organizations that offer paid leave tend to experience an improvement in recruitment, retention, and employee engagement.

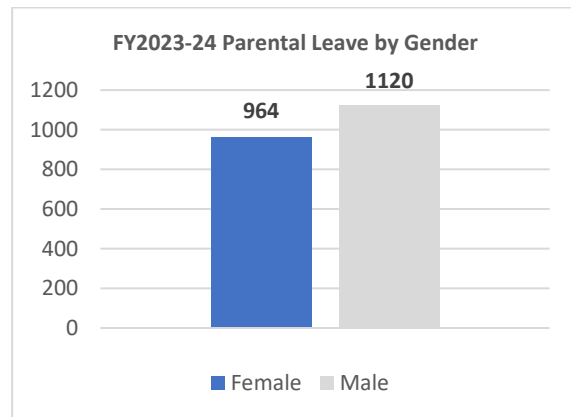
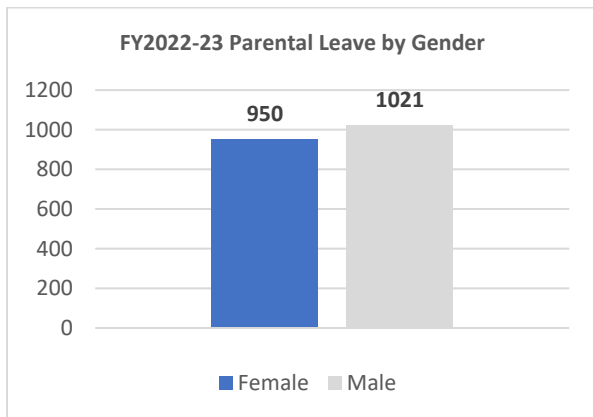
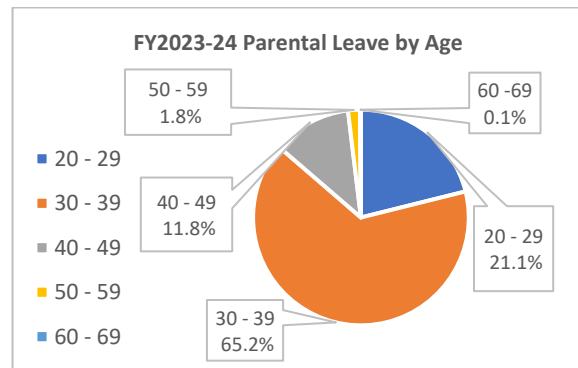
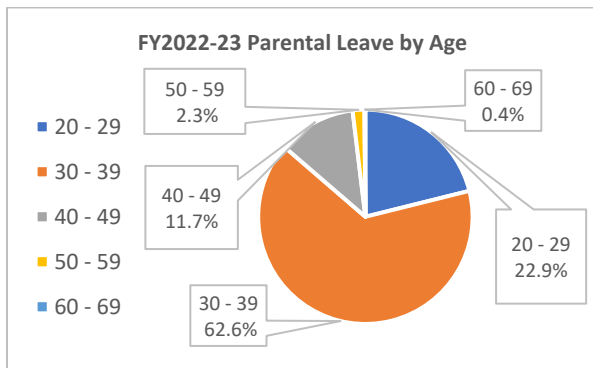
Data, metrics, and testimonials for the Paid Parental Leave Program can be found on the following pages.

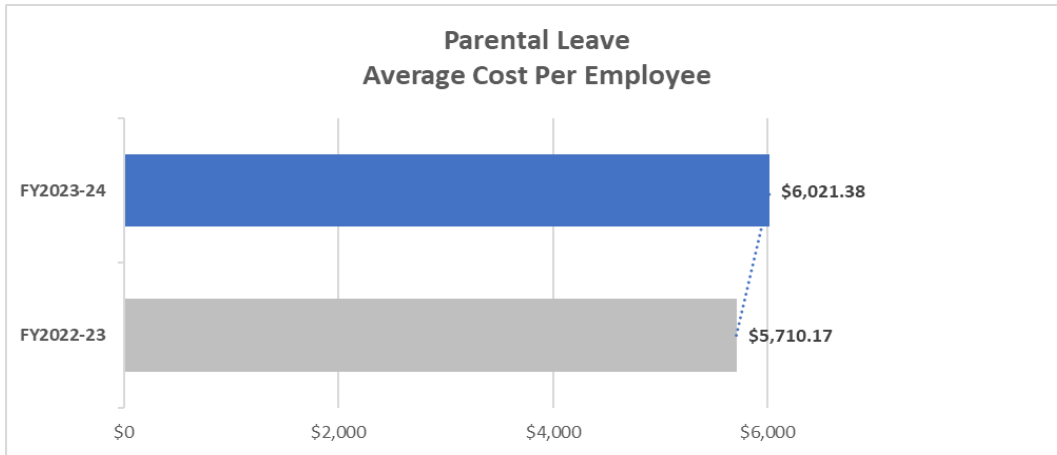
Data and Metrics



The data and metrics listed below summarize Paid Parental Leave by usage by employees in state agencies and universities. All data for FY2023-24 is presented in tables, along with comparisons to FY2022-23 represented in charts and graphs.

All references to “cost” in the tables below list the salary of employees while they are on Paid Parental Leave. Note, Paid Parental Leave would not produce any additional cost to the State unless the employer hires another employee to temporarily backfill the duties of the employee who is out on leave.





Employee Usage by Agency			
Agency	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
Administration	2	3	5
Adult Correction	187	130	317
Agriculture and Consumer Services	23	13	36
Commerce	2	0	2
Commissioner of Banks	0	1	1
Community Colleges System	4	2	6
Cosmetic Arts	1	0	1
Dept of Justice	1	24	25
Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs	0	2	2
Dept of State Treasurer	3	2	5
Education Lottery	3	4	7
Environmental Quality	27	10	37
Health and Human Services	72	126	198
Information Technology	12	2	14
Insurance	3	6	9
Labor	4	0	4
Natural and Cultural Resources	13	12	25
NC State Bureau of Investigation	26	8	34
Office of Administrative Hearing	1	0	1
Office of State Budget & Management	2	1	3
Office of State Human Resources	2	0	2
Office of the Governor	1	3	4
Office of the State Controller	0	1	1
Psychology Board	0	0	0
Public Instruction	4	9	13
Public Safety	191	21	212
Revenue	14	13	27

Secretary of State	3	1	4
State Auditor	5	3	8
State Board of Elections	0	1	1
Transportation	218	26	244
Wildlife Resources Commission	30	6	36
Totals	854	430	1284

Agency Totals by Gender		
Gender	Number of Employees	Salary Cost
Female	460	\$3,581,491.17
Male	824	\$3,372,969.52
Totals	1284	\$6,954,460.69

Agency Average Salary Cost per Employee		
Number of Employees	Total Cost	Average Cost
1284	\$6,954,460.69	\$5,416.25

Total Hours Used by Agency		
Agency	Total Hours Used	Salary Cost
Administration	1280	\$38,524.80
Adult Correction	60219.5	\$1,579,244.11
Agriculture and Consumer Services	7233.75	\$196,451.12
Commerce	260	\$6,547.80
Commissioner of Banks	320	\$14,899.20
Community Colleges System	1089	\$41,343.30
Cosmetic Arts	160	\$5,040.00
Dept of Justice	6063.75	\$248,577.26
Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs	640	\$17,180.80
Dept of State Treasurer	1001	\$45,409.15
Education Lottery	1480	\$45,557.22
Environmental Quality	6628	\$216,287.29
Health and Human Services	46011.1	\$1,286,568.30
Information Technology	2047.6	\$84,740.04
Insurance	1988	\$73,909.44
Labor	576	\$19,226.24
Natural and Cultural Resources	5087.75	\$131,089.84
NC State Bureau of Investigation	5728.5	\$185,389.41
Office of Administrative Hearing	160	\$9,760.00

Office of State Budget and Management	536	\$21,906.48
Office of State Human Resources	148	\$5,937.72
Office of the Governor	912	\$48,148.20
Office of the State Controller	192	\$5,070.72
Psychology Board	0	\$0.00
Public Instruction	3084	\$134,757.30
Public Safety	28111.5	\$957,982.85
Revenue	5435.5	\$157,081.17
Secretary of State	659.5	\$22,375.50
State Auditor	1680	\$80,060.80
State Board of Elections	320	\$6,880.00
Transportation	32395.03	\$1,102,370.80
Wildlife Resources Commission	5771	\$166,143.85
Totals	227,218.48	\$6,954,460.69

Agency Totals by Age Group		
Age	Count by Age	Salary Cost
20 - 29	318	\$1,436,691.30
30 - 39	785	\$4,597,314.75
40 - 49	151	\$826,770.00
50 - 59	29	\$91,291.72
60 - 69	1	\$2,392.92
Totals	1284	\$6,954,460.69

Agency Employee Usage by Ethnicity			
Agency	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	33	6	39
Asian	11	11	22
Black or African American	147	150	297
Hispanic or Latino	22	16	38
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	1	3
Not Specified	0	2	2
Two or More Races	10	8	18
White	629	236	865
Totals	854	430	1284

Employee Usage by University			
University	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
Appalachian State University	15	24	39
East Carolina University	28	60	88
Elizabeth City State University	0	0	0
Fayetteville State University	8	10	18
North Carolina Central University	4	2	6
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University	7	6	13
North Carolina State University	0	180	180
North Carolina School of Science and Math	5	1	6
UNC Asheville	5	2	7
UNC Chapel Hill	85	161	246
UNC Charlotte	22	37	59
UNC Greensboro	17	24	41
UNC Pembroke	6	7	13
UNC School of the Arts	3	3	6
UNC System Office	6	4	10
UNC Wilmington	9	27	36
Western Carolina University	13	13	26
Winston Salem State University	3	3	6
Totals	236	564	800

University Totals by Gender		
Gender	Number of Employees	Salary Cost
Female	504	\$4,174,853.88
Male	296	\$1,419,247.56
Totals	800	\$5,594,101.44

University Average Salary Cost per Employee		
Number of Employees	Total Cost	Average Cost
800	\$5,594,101.44	\$6,992.63

Total Hours Used by University		
University	Total Hours Used	Salary Cost
Appalachian State University	8,608.00	\$220,915.36
East Carolina University	18,869.04	\$557,430.87
Elizabeth City State University	0.00	\$0.00
Fayetteville State University	4,444.00	\$142,545.20
North Carolina Central University	1,240.00	\$38,761.92
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University	2,909.00	\$105,395.74
North Carolina State University	36,352.00	\$1,226,801.04
North Carolina School of Science and Math	1,120.00	\$39,788.80
UNC Asheville	1,392.00	\$41,259.72
UNC Chapel Hill	52,279.80	\$1,914,275.40
UNC Charlotte	12,587.75	\$428,892.81
UNC Greensboro	9,340.00	\$262,941.73
UNC Pembroke	2,568.00	\$74,273.93
UNC School of the Arts	1,429.33	\$36,496.97
UNC System Office	2,192.00	\$90,014.16
UNC Wilmington	8,180.00	\$244,720.86
Western Carolina University	5,047.00	\$126,436.27
Winston Salem State University	1,080.00	\$43,150.65
Totals	169,637.92	\$5,594,101.44

University Totals by Age Group		
Age	Counts by Age	Salary Cost
20 - 29	122	\$738,726.40
30 - 39	574	\$4,117,533.71
40 - 49	94	\$698,125.03
50 - 59	8	\$27,398.23
60 - 62	2	\$12,318.08
Totals	800	\$5,594,101.44

University Employee Usage by Ethnicity			
Ethnicity	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	4	6	10
Asian	7	31	38
Black or African American	40	79	119
Hispanic or Latino	10	33	43
Native Hawaiian or Pacific islander	0	0	0
Not Specified	33	57	90
Two or More Races	2	11	13
White	140	347	487
Totals	236	564	800

Cumulative Usage by Quota			
Agency/University	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
Agency	854	430	1284
University	236	564	800
Totals	1090	994	2084

Cumulative Total by Gender		
Gender	Number of Employees	Salary Cost
Female	964	\$7,756,345.05
Male	1120	\$4,792,217.08
Totals	2084	\$12,548,562.13

Cumulative Salary Cost per Employee		
Number of Employees	Salary Cost	Average Salary Cost
2084	\$12,548,562.13	\$6,021.38

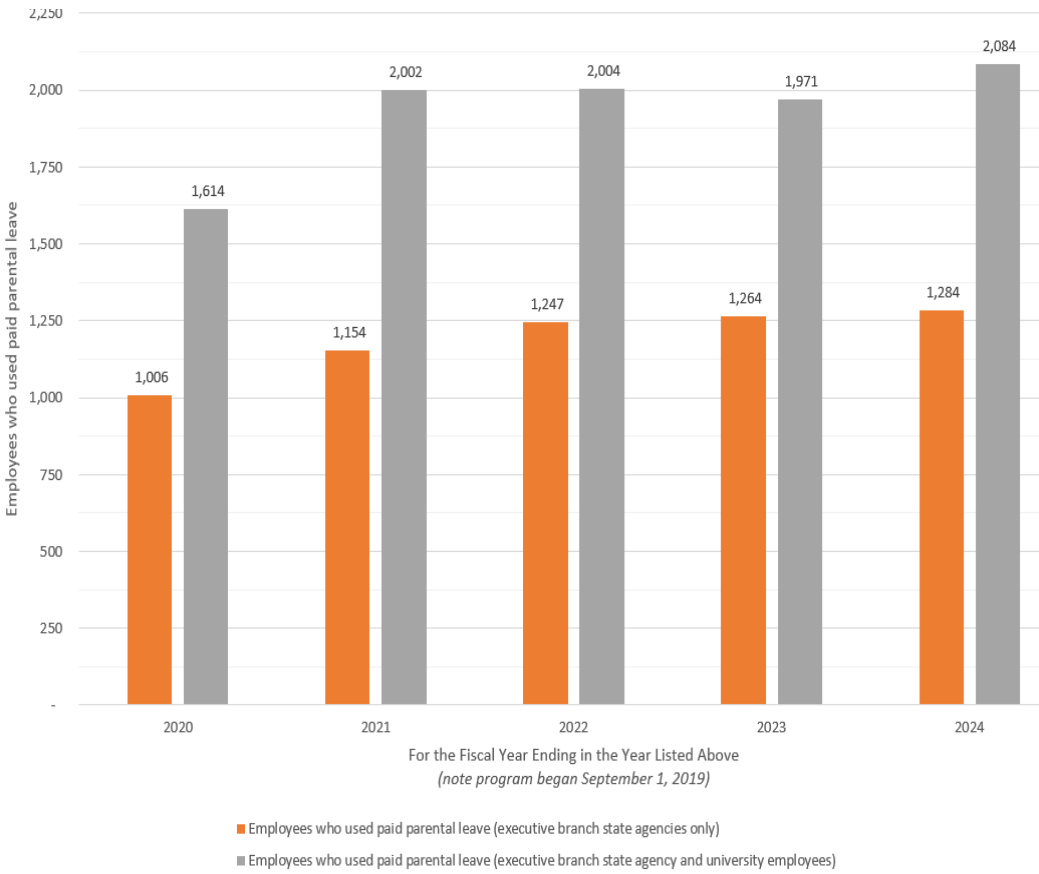
Cumulative Hours Used		
Agency/University	Total Hours Used	Salary Cost
Agency	227,218.48	\$6,954,460.69
University	169,637.92	\$5,594,101.44
Totals	396,856.40	\$12,548,562.13

Cumulative Totals by Age Group		
Age	Count by Age	Salary Cost
20 - 29	440	\$2,175,417.70
30 - 39	1359	\$8,714,848.46
40 - 49	245	\$1,524,895.02
50 - 59	37	\$118,689.95
60 - 69	3	\$14,711.00
Totals	2084	\$12,548,562.13

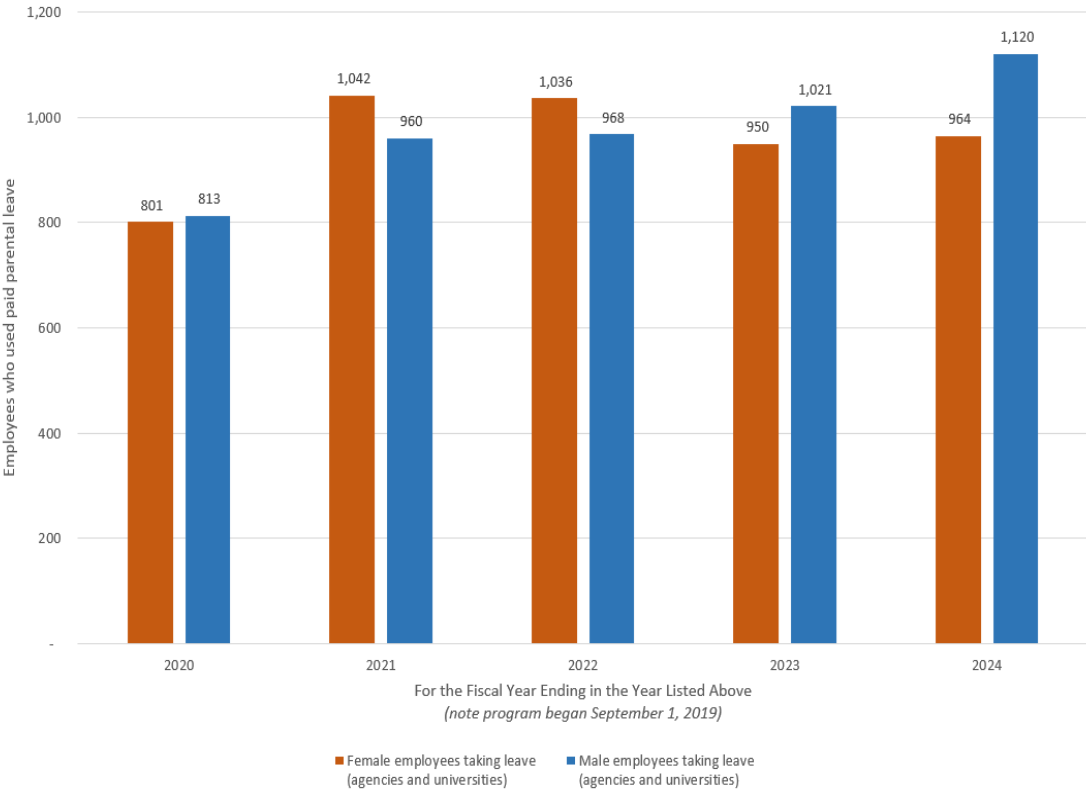
Cumulative Ethnicity by Age Group						
Ethnicity	Ethnicity by Age					Number of Employees
	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	19	24	6	0	0	49
Asian	1	49	9	1	0	60
Black or African American	74	254	72	15	1	416
Hispanic or Latino	23	54	3	1	0	81
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	3	0	0	0	3
Not Specified	25	57	7	2	1	92
Two or More Races	10	17	4	0	0	31
White	288	901	144	18	1	1352
Totals	440	1359	245	37	3	2084

	9/1/2019-6/30/2020	7/1/2020-6/30/2021	7/1/2021-6/30/2022	7/1/2022-6/30/2023	7/1/2023-6/30/2024	9/1/2019-6/30/2024
Report year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
<i>Number of employees using leave:</i>						
Employees who used paid parental leave (executive branch state agencies only)	1,006	1,154	1,247	1,264	1,284	5,955
Employees who used paid parental leave (executive branch state agency and university employees)	1,614	2,002	2,004	1,971	2,084	9,675

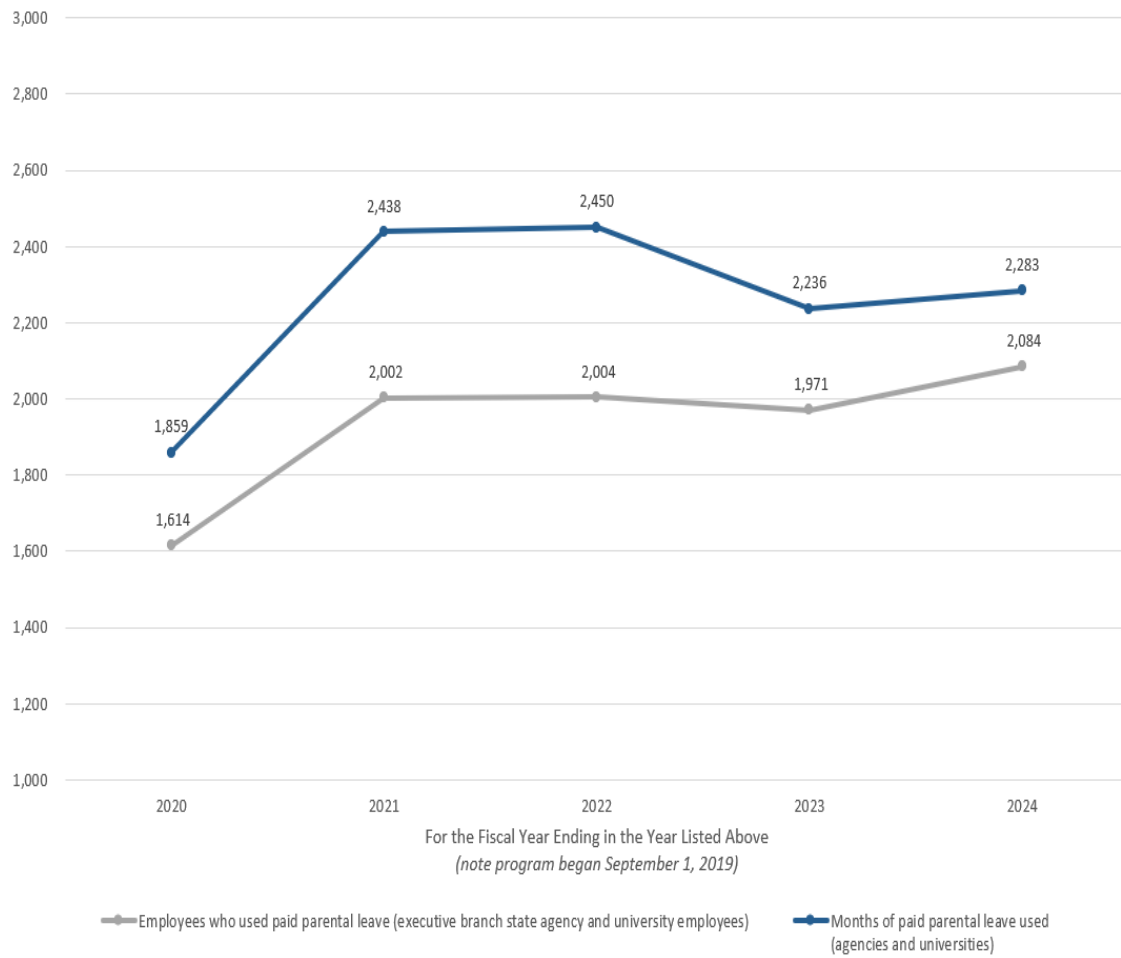
Employees who used paid parental leave, 2019-2024



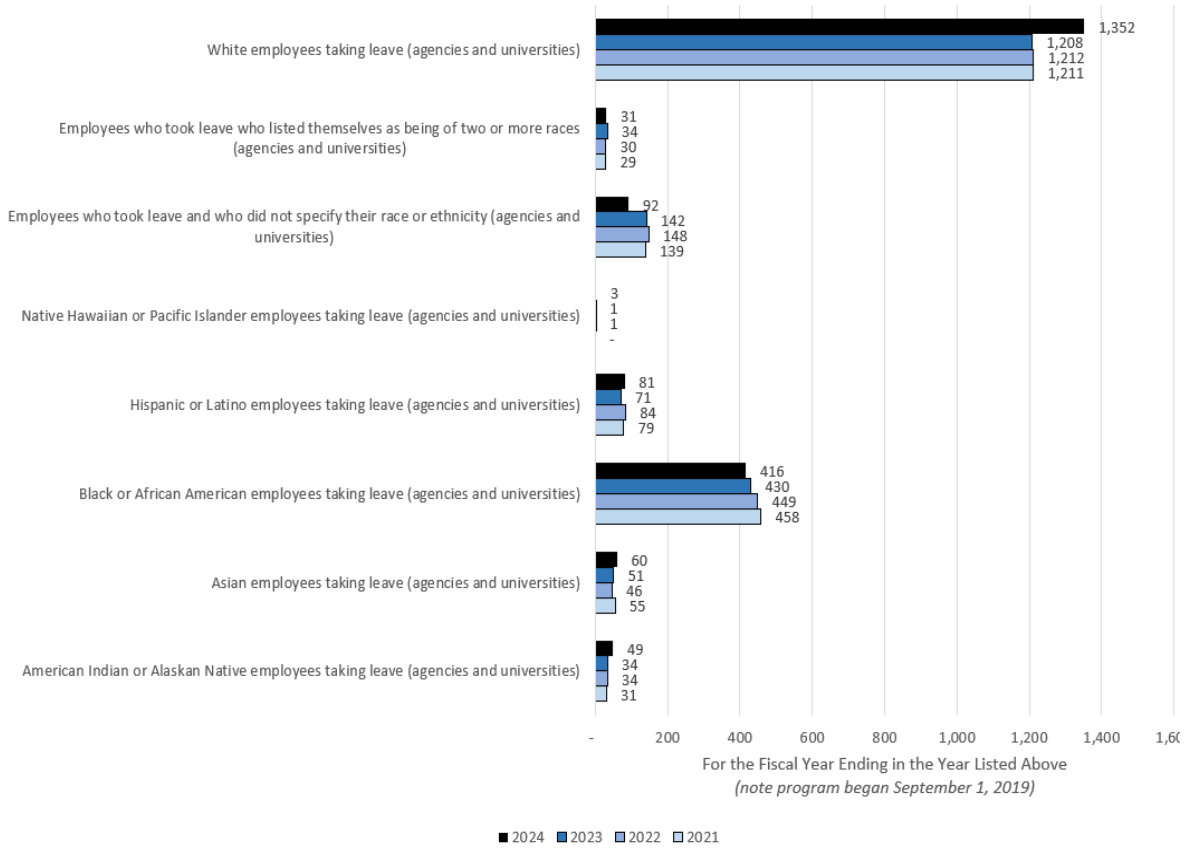
Comparison of Female Employees Taking Paid Parental Leave
to Male Employees Taking Paid Parental Leave, 2019-2024



Number of Employees Using Paid Parental Leave and Total Months of Paid Parental Leave Used,
2019-2024



Comparison by Race/Ethnicity of Employees Taking Paid Parental Leave, 2019-2024



Employee Testimonials:

OSHR asked employees from across state government and the UNC System to share how the Paid Parental Leave benefit impacted them.

“My wife and I had our first child, Charlie, on April 6, 2023, and I exhausted 80 hours of PPL the first two weeks after his birth to care for him. By being there to care for Charlie, it allowed my wife more time to focus on her recovery than perhaps she otherwise would. My wife is a teacher with the Wake County Public School System, and after Charlie’s birth, she was off for the remainder of the 2022 – 2023 school year, plus summer break. It was nice for her to have those four months off to be with Charlie; however, we had to plan for Charlie’s care after her return to work in August 2023. Fortunately, both her parents and mine agreed to care for Charlie two days per week each as they are all retired and live within 15 minutes of our house.

Additionally, I had 80 hours of Paid Parental Leave remaining that could be used intermittently. Having the option to exhaust the remaining 80 hours of PPL intermittently one day per week secured Charlie’s care through the first six months of his life. That one additional day per week allowed me to bond with Charlie more than I otherwise would have.”

***-Sam Stephenson, Human Resources Consultant,
N.C. Department of Information Technology***


“I had used a lot of my sick time while I was pregnant as I had suffered from migraines and being pregnant. The migraines intensified, and sadly I had to use more time than I would have liked. Also, I was a high-risk pregnancy, so I went to the doctor more than normal, I used a substantial amount of sick time. At one appointment, I was told I was going to be induced three weeks early, which affected my leave accrual. I would have earned at least eight more sick hours and 11.33 more vacation hours, which I desperately would have needed.

The Paid Parental Leave allowed me to be home with my child. Without it, I would have only had what leave I had accrued before having to go on leave without pay, and having had such a difficult pregnancy I did not have a lot of leave left to work with. This was a wonderful policy to enact because it helps mothers, but fathers as well to not feel like they will not have enough time when the baby comes. There is enough stress around giving birth that having to worry about receiving a paycheck should not be one of them.”

***-Ashley Branks, Fiscal Analyst,
NC Department of Adult Correction***

“This past Spring, I was able to take my second round of paid maternity leave with the State of North Carolina. This is one of the greatest benefits as many businesses, both private and public, do not offer paid leave and if they do, don't provide 8 weeks. Those first two months are critical for mom to bond with her baby as well as rest and recover from a major hospital stay. You need that extra time to figure out this new life, for them and for you, and I am so grateful that this is available through the State.”

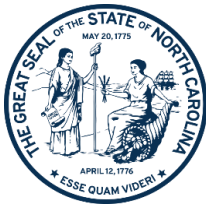
***-Caroline Goodwin, Brownfields Project Manager, Brownfields Redevelopment Section,
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality***



“When my wife and I married in March 2020, I already had two sons and she had one. In January 2021, our blended family welcomed another boy, Holden, who was born premature. PPL allowed us to not only care for our baby, but also to give our new immediate family a chance to bond and our extended family time to visit and celebrate with us.

In September 2022, I was grateful to be eligible for PPL a second time when our daughter, Sutton, was born. She was also premature and spent about a week in the NICU. I used my PPL to get to the hospital early and stay late each day, soaking up every minute of my newly acquired girl dad status. PPL also made it easier for me to pick up and take family members to visit Sutton and make time to visit with doctors and nurses when they came by to check in on my daughter.”

***-Joseph Gilroy, Temporary Solutions Manager, Temporary Solutions,
NC Office of State Human Resources***



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