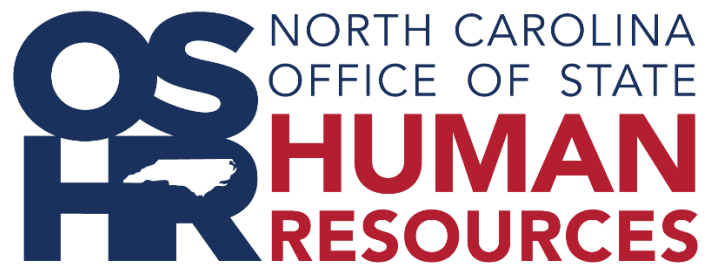


SEPTEMBER 1, 2026



2026 PAID PARENTAL LEAVE REPORT

Report to the Governor's Office on Providing Paid Parental Leave
to Eligible State Employees July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Section 4 of the Paid Parental Leave Policy established by the State Human Resources Commission, the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) provides this annual report to the Office of the Governor on usage of Paid Parental Leave (PPL). This report provides an overview of statewide PPL utilization, highlights trends in employee behavior, and identifies areas of strength and opportunities for continued improvement in supporting North Carolina's workforce. The data reflects ongoing efforts to ensure that employees have access to equitable, supportive leave options that promote family well-being, employee retention, and workplace stability.

LAW ON PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

Session Law 2023-14 established PPL for state employees effective July 1, 2023. The law, which added section 126-8.6 of the North Carolina General Statutes, continues to provide PPL to eligible state employees using the same framework originally created by Executive Order 95, signed by Governor Roy Cooper on May 23, 2019.

Effective October 1, 2026, updates to G.S. 126 enacted through Senate Bill 1041, the Public Workforce Modernization Act, were signed into law by Governor Josh Stein on July 6, 2026. These updates expand PPL to 12 weeks for both birthing and non-birthing parents.

STRUCTURE OF PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

The current law provides eight weeks of Paid Parental Leave to eligible state employees who have given birth to a child and four weeks of Paid Parental Leave to eligible state employees who are non-birthing parents which includes adoption, foster care, or another legal placement.¹ While on PPL employees receive 100% of their straight time pay. PPL runs concurrently with Family and Medical Leave (FML), which provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year. PPL is prorated for part-time employees.

For purposes of the PPL law and policy, employment is aggregated between North Carolina state agencies, universities, community colleges, and public-school units. An employee could qualify if the employee worked for one of these participating employers without a break in service within the immediate 12 months preceding a qualifying event. Employees have the option to take PPL for one continuous period or to use PPL intermittently. Employees may use Paid Parental Leave at any time during the 12 months following their eligibility date.

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.

USE OF PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

Paid Parental Leave usage increased slightly, rising from 2,066 employees in FY 2024–25 to 2,168 employees in FY 2025–26. Each person using PPL took an average of 4.7 weeks of leave. Usage among male employees continues to outpace that of female employees, with 11.4% more males using PPL in FY 2025-26. The tables following this executive summary provide further statistics about the use of PPL in the 2025-26 fiscal year.

As of June 30, 2026, 13,909 eligible employees have used PPL since the benefit became available on September 1, 2019. The total salary paid to employees taking PPL since September 2019 is \$79,856,010.56.

PPL is utilized across all ages, ranging from 19 to 69 years. Employees in the 30-39 age range continue to have the highest utilization of PPL, reflecting common childbearing and caregiving patterns in the workforce. We also continue to see a steady increase in PPL usage from 2023 through the present, demonstrating growing awareness of the benefit and consistent reliance on the program. This upward trend aligns with broader workforce retention efforts, as access to PPL supports employee stability, reduces turnover, and strengthens the State’s ability to retain experienced talent

PROGRAM COMPARISONS

On August 6, 2025, OSHR surveyed the National Compensation Association of State Governments (NCASG) to measure the competitiveness of North Carolina’s state government’s PPL program. The results reveal that out of 25 states that completed the survey, 17 offer PPL in some capacity. Of the states that offer PPL, the average leave benefit is 8.66 weeks for birth parents and 8 weeks for non-birth parents. This is greater than North Carolina’s benefit program, which is 8 weeks for birth parents and 4 weeks for non-birth parents.

WHY PAID PARENTAL LEAVE MATTERS

PPL is a critical tool for recruiting and retaining state employees who provide essential services across North Carolina. The 2026 U.S. Leave Management and HR Trend Report by NFP, an AON company, shows that 59% of employers offer parental leave, yet 27% still distinguish between birthing and non-birthing parents, creating inequity in the amount of leave provided.

North Carolina's current policy aligns with these national trends by providing:

- 4 weeks of PPL for eligible non-birth parents
- 8 weeks for birth parents, including 4 weeks for bonding

Beginning October 1, 2026, the State will expand this benefit to 12 weeks of PPL. This enhancement removes previous differences in the amount of leave available to birth and non-birth parents and helps strengthen families, supports employee well-being, and improves workforce stability.



Tables 1 and 2: List of State Agencies Included in this Report

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

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

*The N.C. Education Lottery, an independent part of state government, also offers PPL to eligible employees.

Table 3: List of Universities Included in this Report

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
University of North Carolina Asheville	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	University of North Carolina Greensboro
University of North Carolina at Pembroke	University of North Carolina School of the Arts
University of North Carolina System Office	University of North Carolina Wilmington
Western Carolina University	Winston Salem State University

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY

The PPL Policy requires OSHR to report implementation and usage of PPL to the Office of the Governor by September 1 of each year. The reporting period for this report is July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

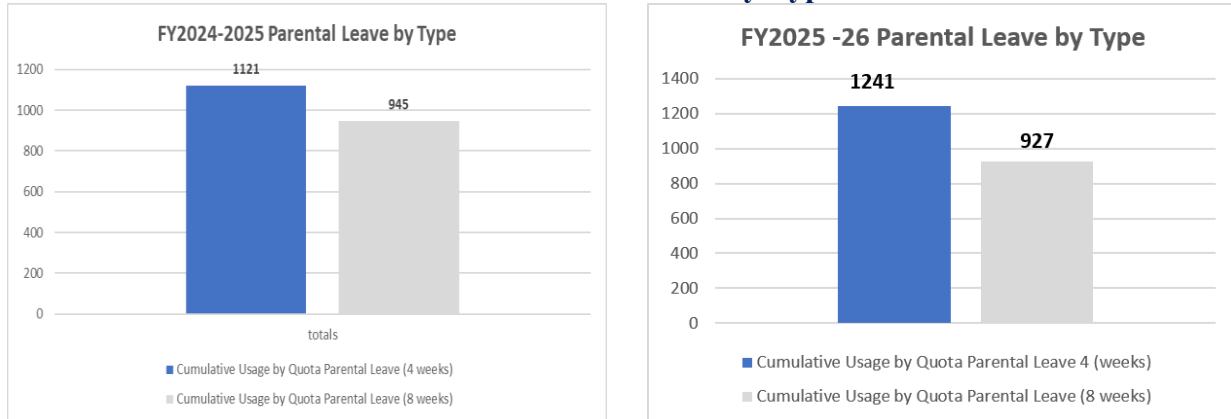
The previous year's report can be found on the OSHR's website by clicking [here](#).

CONCLUSION

Since the inception of the PPL Program, more than 13,909 state employees have utilized this benefit, demonstrating its significant value to North Carolina's workforce. OSHR, in partnership with state agencies and universities, continues to promote and communicate the advantages of PPL, which strengthens recruitment and retention efforts by signaling a family-supportive culture and commitment to work-life balance. Maintaining a competitive benefit structure, including PPL, is essential to ensuring the State of North Carolina remains an employer of choice.

DATA AND METRICS

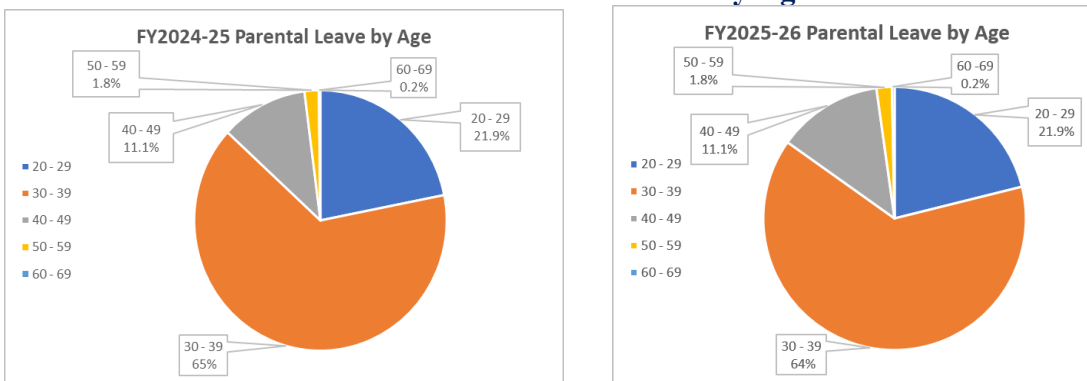
Charts 1 and 2: PPL by Type



The data and metrics listed below summarize PPL by usage by employees in state agencies and universities. All data for FY 2024-25 is presented in tables, along with comparisons to FY 2025-26 represented in charts and graphs.

All references to cost in the tables below list the salary of employees while they are on PPL. Note that PPL 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.

Charts 3 and 4: PPL by Age



PPL UTILIZATION BY AGENCY

Table 4: Employee Usage by Agency

Agency	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
Community Colleges System	3	3	6
Cosmetic Arts	0	0	0
Dept of Administration	7	1	8
Dept of Adult Correction	219	111	330
Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services	22	11	33
Dept of Commerce	8	4	12
Dept of Environmental Quality	25	7	32
Dept of Health and Human Services	71	171	242
Dept of Information Technology	5	2	11
Dept of Insurance	6	4	10
Dept of Justice	9	8	17
Dept of Labor	3	5	8
Dept of Military & Veterans Affairs	3	0	3
Dept of Public Instruction	3	9	12
Dept of Public Safety	35	16	51
Dept of Revenue	127	13	25
Dept of State Treasurer	7	1	8
Dept of Transportation	243	30	273
Education Lottery	6	0	6
Natural and Cultural Resources	24	31	55
Office of Administrative Hearings	0	0	0
Office of State Budget & Management	2	3	5
Office of State Human Resources	0	2	2
Office of the Commissioner of Banks	0	0	0
Office of the Governor	0	1	1
Office of the State Controller	2	2	4
Psychology Board	0	0	0
Secretary of State	5	0	5
State Auditor	6	3	9
State Board of Elections	0	0	0
State Bureau of Investigation	14	9	23
Wildlife Resources Commission	38	4	42
Totals	922	464	1386

Table 5: Agency Totals by Gender

Gender	Number of Employees	Salary Cost
Female	520	\$3,980,775.99
Male	866	\$3,524,123.96
Totals	1386	\$7,504,899.95

Table 6: Agency Average Salary Cost Per Employee

Number of Employees	Total Cost	Average Cost
1386	7,504,899.95	5,418.70

Table 7: Total Hours Used by Agency

Agency	Total Hours Used	Salary Cost
Community Colleges System	1,080	46,077.44
Cosmetic Arts	0.00	\$0.00
Dept of Administration	1,223.50	\$25,269.42
Dept of Adult Correction	62,448.22	\$1,708,837.33
Dept of Agriculture Consumer Services	5,630	\$138,884.70
Dept of Commerce	2,512	\$80,168.80
Dept of Environmental Quality	4,999	\$15,507.11
Dept of Health Human Services	62,346.06	\$1,614,440.50
Dept of Information Technology	1,301.75	\$56,338.89
Dept of Insurance	1,877	\$68,030.20
Dept of Justice	3,615	\$125,099.28
Dept of Labor	1,816	\$57,166.16
Dept of Military & Veterans Affairs	480	10,793.60
Dept of Public Instruction	2,896	\$113,000.08
Dept of Public Safety	9,153.25	\$267,432.62
Dept of Revenue	4,703	\$135,739.56
Dept of State Treasurer	1,141.50	\$85,368.61
Dept of Transportation	37,716	\$1,304,044.32
Education Lottery	480	\$14,425.60
Natural and Cultural Resources	11,272	\$311,022.08
Office of Administrative Hearing	0	0
Office of State Budget & Management	1,183	\$56,294.74
Office of State Human Resources	640	\$22,416
Office of the Commissioner of Banks	0	0
Office of the Governor	320	\$12,988.80
Office of the State Controller	432	\$15,561.36
Psychology Board	0.00	\$0.00
Secretary of State	672	\$19,761.28
State Auditor	1504	\$87,124.56

State Board of Elections	0.00	\$0.00
State Bureau of Investigation	3706	\$118,487.72
Wildlife Resources Commission	5,817.50	\$168,690.57
Totals	254,824.28	\$7,504.899.95

Table 8: Agency Totals by Age

Age	Count by Age	Salary Cost
19 - 29	328	\$1,468,939.08
30 - 39	826	\$4,786,053.93
40 - 49	189	\$1,090,796.94
50 - 59	36	\$138,046.87
60 - 69	7	\$21,063.13
Totals	1386	\$7,504,899.95

Table 9: Agency Employee Usage by Ethnicity

Agency	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	24	5	29
Asian	14	15	29
Black or African American	170	156	326
Hispanic or Latino	35	19	54
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	1	1
Not Specified	0	0	0
Two or More Races	7	11	18
White	672	257	929
Totals	922	464	1386

PPL UTILIZATION BY UNIVERSITY

Table 10: Employee Usage by University

University	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
Appalachian State University	15	20	35
East Carolina University	18	38	56
Elizabeth City State University	0	1	1
Fayetteville State University	3	12	15
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University	6	13	19
North Carolina Central University	2	6	8
North Carolina School of Science and Math	4	7	11
North Carolina State University	94	94	188
UNC Chapel Hill	90	141	231
UNC Charlotte	18	32	50
UNC Greensboro	16	29	45
UNC School of the Arts	0	4	4
UNC System Office	1	8	9
UNC Wilmington	19	18	37
UNC at Asheville	2	5	7
UNC at Pembroke	11	14	25
Western Carolina University	17	16	33
Winston-Salem State University	3	5	8
Totals	319	463	782

Table 11: University Totals by Gender

Gender	Number of Employees	Salary Cost
Female	502	\$4,608,887.22
Male	280	\$1,384,889.50
Totals	782	\$5,993,776.72

Table 12: University Average Salary Cost Per Employee

Number of Employees	Total Coast	Average Cost
782	\$5,993,776.72	\$7,664.68

Table 13: Total Hours Used by University

University	Total Hours Used	Salary Cost
Appalachian State University	8,048	\$235,076.35
East Carolina University	13,743.5	\$403,862.33
Elizabeth City State University	160	\$4,034.39
Fayetteville State University	3,560	\$97,415.71
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University	4,176	\$139,631.80
North Carolina Central University	2,240	\$80,345.85
North Carolina School of Science and Math	2,116	\$80,0008.56
North Carolina State University	41,892	\$1,459,035.32
UNC Chapel Hill	52,328.80	\$1,996,501.78
UNC Charlotte	12,268.25	\$387,479.84
UNC Greensboro	10,012	\$287,0009.56
UNC School of the Arts	1,262.89	\$43,406.57
UNC System Office	2,280	\$90,612.56
UNC Wilmington	7,758	\$250,478.93
University of North Carolina Asheville	1,752	\$63,383.52
University of North Carolina Pembroke	5,460	\$143,639.20
Western Carolina University	6,828	\$177,927.56
Winston-Salem State University	1,945	\$53,926.89
Totals	177,830.44	\$5,993,776.72

Table 14: University Totals by Age

Age	Counts by Age	Salary Cost
20 - 29	130	\$756,597.69
30 - 39	545	\$4,323,820.82
40 - 49	91	\$814,076.12
50 - 59	5	\$19,273.53
60 - 69	0	0
Totals	782	5,993,776.72

Table 15: University Employee Usage by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3	9	12
Asian	11	20	31
Black or African American	40	69	109
Hispanic or Latino	14	34	48
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Not Specified	28	43	71
Two or More Races	6	17	23
White	217	271	488
Totals	319	463	782

CUMULATIVE PPL UTILIZATION (AGENCY AND UNIVERSITY, FY 2025-2026)

Table 16: Cumulative Usage by Quota

Agency/University	Parental Leave (4 Weeks)	Parental Leave (8 Weeks)	Total
Agency	922	464	1386
University	319	463	782
Totals	1,241	927	2,168

Table 17: Cumulative Total by Gender

Gender	Number of Employees	Salary Cost
Female	1,022	\$8,589,663.21
Male	1,146	\$4,909,013.46
Totals	2,168	\$13,498,676.67

Table 18: Cumulative Salary Cost Per Employee

Number of Employees	Salary Cost	Average Salary Cost
2,168	13,498,676.67	6,226.32

Table 19: Cumulative Usage by Quota

Agency/University	Total Hours Used	Salary Cost
Agency	254,824.28	\$7,504,899.95
University	177,830.44	\$5,993,776.72
Totals	432,654.72	\$13,498,676.67

Table 20: Cumulative Totals by Age

Age	Count by Age	Salary Cost
20 – 29	458	\$2,225,536.77
30 - 39	1381	\$9,114,874.75
40 - 49	281	\$1,904,873.06
50 - 59	41	\$157,320.40
60 - 69	7	\$21,063.13
Totals	2,168	\$13,498,676.67

Table 21: Cumulative Ethnicity by Age

Ethnicity	Ethnicity by Age					Number of Employees
	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	14	20	6	1	0	41
Asian	4	46	8	1	1	60
Black or African American	70	250	90	20	5	435
Hispanic or Latino	24	61	16	1	0	102
Not Specified	14	49	7	1	0	71
Two or More Races	10	26	4	1	0	41
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	1	0	0	0	1
White	322	928	150	16	1	1417
Totals	458	1381	281	41	7	2168

CUMULATIVE STATISTICS OVER THE PROGRAM'S FIRST SEVEN YEARS

Table 22: Cumulative Statistics Over the Program's First Seven Years

Time period covered in report	9/1/19 - 6/30/20	7/1/20 - 6/30/21	7/1/21- 6/30/22	7/1/22- 6/30/23	7/1/23- 6/30/24	7/1/24- 6/30/25	7/1/25- 6/30/26	9/1/19- 6/30/26
Report year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Number of employees using leave:								
Employees who used PPL (executive branch state agencies only)	1,006	1,154	1,247	1,264	1,284	1,288	1,386	8,629
Employees who used PPL (executive branch state agency and university employees combined)	1,614	2,002	2,004	1,971	2,084	2,066	2,168	13,909

Chart 5: Employees Who Used PPL, 2019-2026

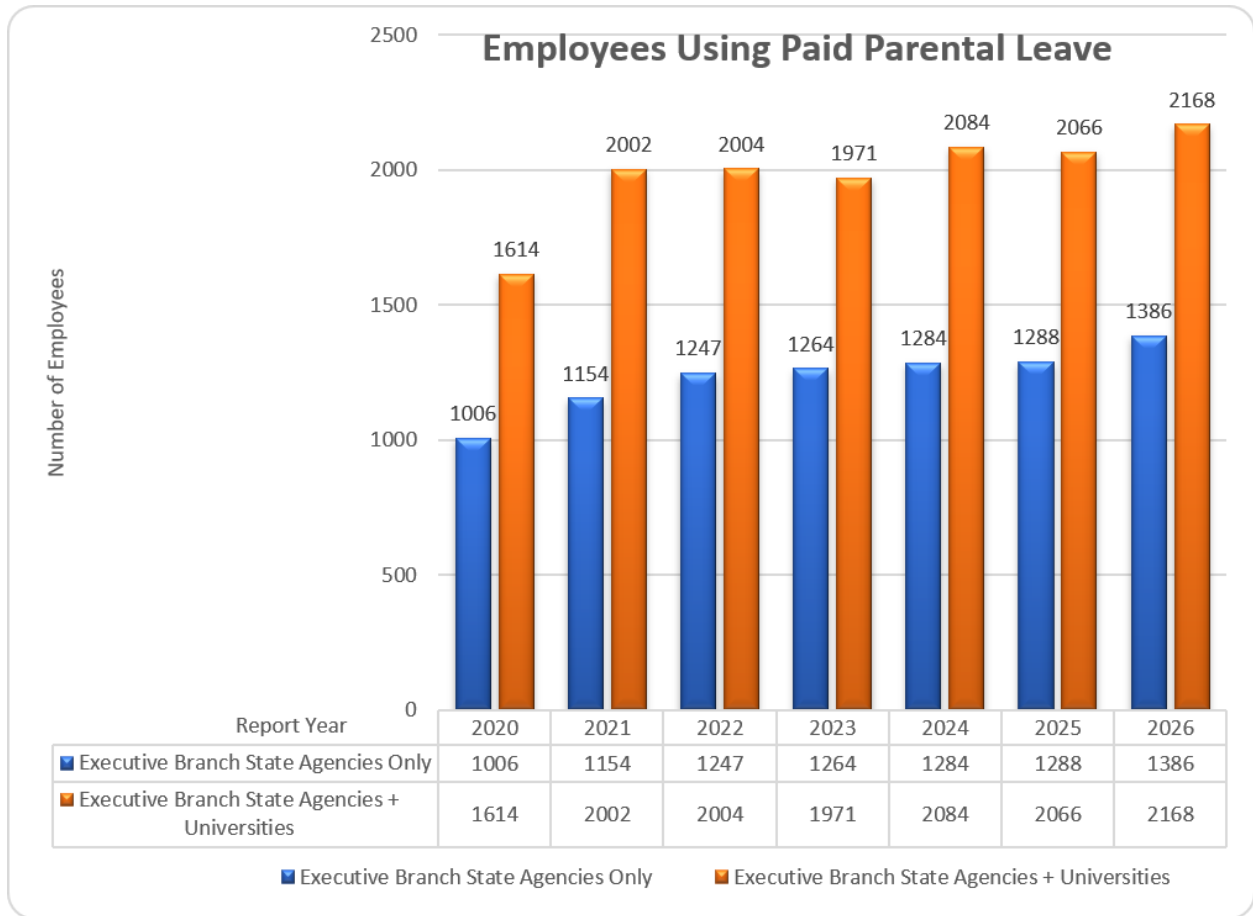
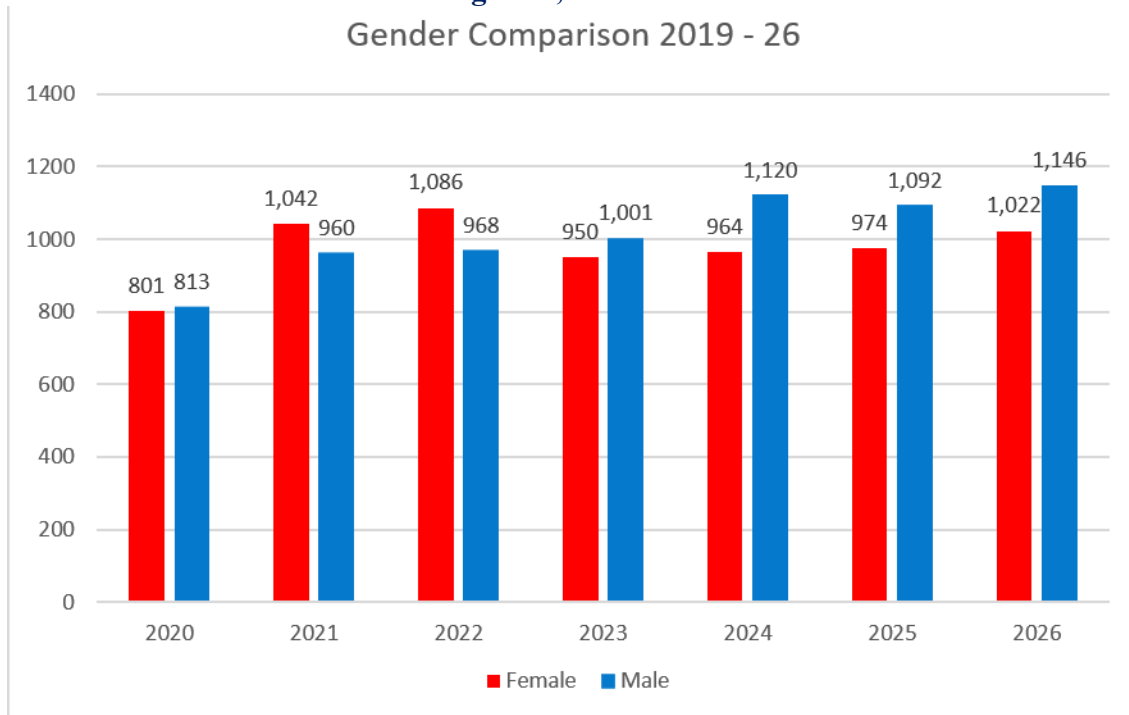


Chart 6: Comparison of Female and Male Employees

Taking PPL, 2019-2025

Gender Comparison 2019 - 26



**Chart 8: Comparison by Race/Ethnicity of Employees
Taking PPL, 2019-2026**

