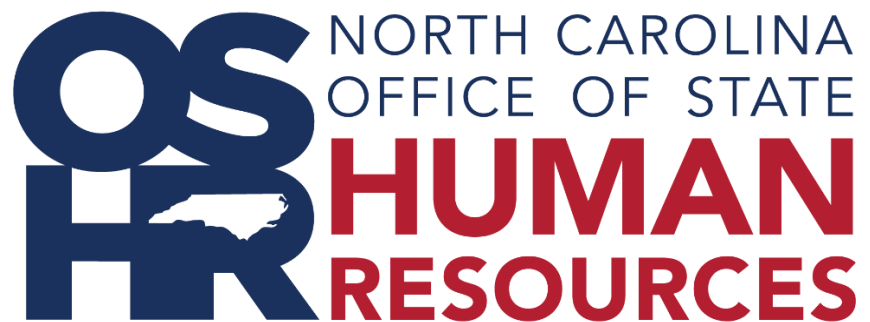


OCTOBER 1, 2026



2026 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE REPORT

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

Staci Meyer | State Human Resources Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Policy Details	3
Source and Type of Policy	3
Effective Date	3
Applicability and Eligibility.....	3
Use of Bereavement Leave	3
Participating Agencies	4
Reporting Responsibility.....	5
Data and Metrics	6
Utilization By State Agency Employees.....	6
Utilization By University Employees	10
Conclusion	13



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bereavement Leave Policy provides eligible State employees 40 hours of paid leave for the death of an immediate family member and up to eight hours for the death of a colleague within the same agency. These provisions apply to full-time employees; for part-time employees, the allowable hours are prorated in accordance with their established work hours. The policy came into effect on November 1, 2024. Under Executive Order 325, a total of 5,812 State agency and university employees have used Bereavement Leave to grieve, recover, and support their well-being.

A wide range of agencies have adopted the Bereavement Leave Policy, including all Cabinet agencies, nearly all non-Cabinet agencies, and institutions across the University of North Carolina system.

The report below provides policy details, the set of agencies that have chosen to opt into the policy, and information about how Bereavement Leave has been used.

POLICY DETAILS

SOURCE AND TYPE OF POLICY

Executive Order 325, *Providing Enhanced Leave Options for Eligible State Employees*, was signed by Governor Roy Cooper on November 1, 2024, to provide Bereavement Leave for eligible state employees. Section 1 of Executive Order 325 directed and authorized the State Human Resources Director to develop a Bereavement Leave Policy. The Executive Order also identified key details of the policy and ordered Cabinet agencies to provide bereavement leave in accordance with the policy.

The [Bereavement Leave Policy](#) was issued on November 1, 2024, immediately after Executive Order 325 was signed. The Bereavement Leave Policy is not yet a State Human Resources Commission policy that applies to all agencies. Instead, it is an “opt in” policy under the state statutes authorizing agency heads and the Director of the N.C. Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) to issue policies for their agencies. As shown in Tables 1-3, many agencies have opted into the Bereavement Leave Policy.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The policy became effective November 1, 2024; however, employees who experienced a loss due to Hurricane Helene were authorized to use Bereavement Leave retroactively for the period of September 27, 2024, through October 31, 2024. As provided in Section 4 of the Executive Order, the Bereavement Leave Policy may continue even if the Executive Order sunsets in the future.

APPLICABILITY AND ELIGIBILITY

Executive Order 325 and the Bereavement Leave Policy apply to Cabinet agencies and any other state agency or university that voluntarily adopts the Executive Order’s measures. Eligibility for Bereavement Leave requires employees to be in a permanent, probationary, or time-limited appointment in a participating agency or university and to work full-time or part-time (half-time or more).

USE OF BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

From July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, more than 9,629 employees used the Bereavement Leave benefit. This includes 5,649 employees from state agencies and 2,980 employees from universities. For context, approximately 78,000 state agency and university employees are covered by the State Human Resources Act. The rate of utilization shows that Bereavement Leave remains a meaningful and valued benefit for employees across the state.

The total salary of these employees while on Bereavement Leave for this partial year is \$8,313,617.81. All references to “cost” in this report indicates the salary of employees while on Bereavement Leave.

Paid leave is now a cross-generational “must have,” and leave benefits consistently rank among the top priorities shaping competitive employment packages: these findings are substantiated by MetLife’s [2026 US Employee Benefit Trends Study](#). Research shows that when grief goes unsupported, employees experience months of reduced productivity and engagement, while employers who provide bereavement leave and flexible return-to-work options see stronger loyalty and better overall workforce outcomes.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

As shown in Tables 1-3 below, 15 Cabinet agencies and 15 non-Cabinet agencies have opted into the Bereavement Leave Policy.

Table 1: List of Cabinet Agencies Included in this Report

Department of Administration	Department of Transportation
Department of Adult Correction	Eastern NC School for the Deaf
Department of Administrative Hearings	Governor Morehead School for the Blind
Department of Commerce	Judicial Branch
Department of Environmental Quality	NC Highway Patrol
Department of Health and Human Services	NC School for the Deaf
Department of Information Technology	Office of State Budget and Management
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs	Office of State Human Resources
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources	Office of the Governor
Department of Public Safety	School of Science and Math
Department of Revenue	State Bureau of Investigation

Table 2: List of Non-Cabinet Agencies Included in this Report

Community College System	Office of Administrative Hearings
Cosmetic Arts	Office of the Commissioner of Banks
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	Office of the State Controller
Department of Insurance	Secretary of State
Department of Justice	State Auditor
Department of Labor	State Board of Elections
Department of Public Instruction	State Ethics Commission
Department of State Treasurer	Wildlife Resources Commission

Table 3: List of Universities Included in this Report

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

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY

Participating agencies who opt-in but are not in the Integrated HR-Payroll System are responsible for monitoring and reporting both types of Bereavement Leave to OSHR by September 1 each year. The Bereavement Leave Policy states that OSHR shall submit a report to the Governor's Office on the use of Bereavement Leave on October 1st of each year.

DATA AND METRICS

The tables and charts listed below reflect the details of Bereavement Leave usage by agency and university employees.

UTILIZATION BY STATE AGENCY EMPLOYEES

Table 4: Use of Bereavement Leave by State Agency Employees

Agency	Number of Employees	Bereavement Leave Colleague Hours	Bereavement Leave Family Hours	Total Hours	Salary Cost
Community College System	20	8	580	588	\$28,251.66
Cosmetic Arts	2	0	51	51	\$1,330.44
Department of Administration	56	83	1,373.25	1,456.25	\$43,250.91
Department of Administrative Hearings	2		80	80	\$4,332.40
Department of Adult Correction	1,247	405.89	40,896.70	41,302.59	\$1,137,529.16
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	145	73	4,253.54	4,326.54	\$117,472.50
Department of Commerce	127	75	3,930.25	4,005.25	\$131,826.76
Department of Environmental Quality	197	263.50	4,355.70	4,619.20	\$153,703.81
Department of Health and Human Services	1,502	796.05	46,562.04	47,358.09	\$1,349,750
Department of Information Technology	109	29	3,271.75	3,300.75	\$176,204.65
Department of Insurance	54	21	1,450.50	1,471.50	\$51,199.59
Department of Justice	54	20.50	1,518.50	1,539	\$56,437.29
Department of Labor	34	0	917	917	\$33,252.10
Department of Military and Veteran Affairs	12	0	464.50	464.50	\$11,605.37

Agency	Number of Employees	Bereavement Leave Colleague Hours	Bereavement Leave Family Hours	Total Hours	Salary Cost
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources	163	123.59	4,759	4,882.59	\$123,654.68
Department of Public Instruction	51	24	1,406.50	1,430.50	\$62,118.55
Department of Public Safety	264	137.08	7,784.92	7,922	\$234,601.69
Department of Revenue	158	145	4,924.66	5,069.66	\$150,327.56
Department of State Treasurer	45	8	1,307.33	1,315.33	\$48,618.87
Department of Transportation	1,020	511.92	30,791.52	31,303.44	\$1,001,584.88
Easter NC School for the Deaf	7	32	192.50	224.50	\$5,426.16
Gov Morehead School for the Blind	6	56	192	248	\$4,495.44
Judicial Branch	10	24	128	152	\$5,406.16
NC School for the Deaf	11		329	329	\$8,147.44
NC State Highway Patrol	165	36	4,662.50	4,698.50	\$164,584.44
Office of State Budget and Management	10	0	142	142	\$7,190.66
Office of State Human Resources	11	0	408.50	408.50	\$18,420.74
Office of the Commissioner of Banks	0	0	0	0	0
Office of the Governor	1	0	40	40	\$1,228
Office of the State Controller	17	8	511.50	519.50	\$18,610.62
School of Science & Math	27	38.50	527.50	566	\$17,864.46
Secretary of State	20	0	558	558	\$15,003.89
State Auditor	14	0	357.50	357.50	\$18,502.01
State Board of Elections	1	0	40	40	\$2,912
State Bureau of Investigation	29	0	800.50	800.50	\$27,816.96
State Ethics	2		64	64	\$2,099.04

Agency	Number of Employees	Bereavement Leave Colleague Hours	Bereavement Leave Family Hours	Total Hours	Salary Cost
Wildlife Resource Commission	56	28.50	1,223.50	1,252	\$37,997.91
Totals	5,679	2,947.53	170,815.66	173,763.19	\$5,272,730.80

Table 5: Average Salary Cost per State Agency Employees

Number of Employees	Total Cost	Average Cost
5,679	\$5,272,730.80	\$928.46

Table 6: State Agency Usage by Job Title (Top 10)

Job Title	Number of Hours Used
Administrative Specialist I	1,706.57
Correctional Officer II	1,337.17
Health Care Tech I	1,235.00
Probation/Parole Officer	1045.00
Correctional Officer III	927.00
Correctional Officer I	675.75
Transportation Worker III	583.50
Transportation Worker I	556.50
Transportation Worker II	528.50
Administrative Associate II	487.25
Totals	9,082.24

Table 7: State Agency Employee Bereavement Leave Usage by Age

Age	Number of Employees	Salary Cost
18-29	609	\$115,753.19
30-39	4,366	\$248,066.16
40-49	1,331	\$314,160.65
50-59	1,622	\$394,887.13
60-69	840	\$207,384.84
70+	65	\$17,092.18
Totals	5,679	\$5,272,730.80

Table 8: State Agency Employee Bereavement Leave Usage by Type of Leave and by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Bereavement Leave Colleague	Bereavement Leave Family	Total
African American	42	1919	1961
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	77	78
Asian	3	89	92
Hispanic or Latino	0	125	125
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	3	3
Not Specified	1	7	8
Two or More Races	1	91	92
White	80	3,240	3,320
Totals	128	5,551	5,679

UTILIZATION BY UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES

Table 10: Use of Bereavement Leave by University Employees

University	Number of Employees	Bereavement Leave Colleague Hours	Bereavement Leave Family Hours	Total Hours	Salary Cost
Appalachian State University	153	0	4,742.75	4,742.75	\$143,487.03
East Carolina University	385	56.75	11,561	11,617.75	\$369,929.47
Elizabeth City State University	19		480	480	\$15,512.09
Fayetteville State University	45	24	1,426	1,450	\$41,750.65
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University	132	20	4,525.50	4,545.50	\$158,084.35
North Carolina Central University	68	0	1,926.50	1,926.50	\$65,578.34
North Carolina School of Science and Math	27	38.50	487.50	526	\$16,334.52
North Carolina State University	677	42.75	19,523.47	19,566.22	\$717,938.67
University of North Carolina Asheville	39	4	1,040.25	1,044.25	\$34,508.63
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	742	209	21,849.37	22,059.27	\$846,517.12
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	197	34.25	6,279.50	6,313.75	\$211,538.09
University of North Carolina Greensboro	99	299.25	2,160	2,459.25	\$68,000.62
University of North Carolina at Pembroke	65		2,366.25	2,366.25	\$71,841.72
University North Carolina School of the Arts	19	0	760	760	\$22,894.80
University of North Carolina System Office	2		45	45	\$1,280.48

University	Number of Employees	Bereavement Leave Colleague Hours	Bereavement Leave Family Hours	Total Hours	Salary Cost
University of North Carolina Wilmington	145	8	4,163.25	4,171.25	\$126,260.35
Western Carolina University	139	155.25	3,315.50	3,470.75	\$105,920.29
Winston Salem State University	27	0	886	886	\$23,509.79
Totals	2,980	892.65	87,537.84	88,430.49	\$3,040,887.01

Table 11: Average Salary Cost per University Employee

Number of Employees	Total Cost	Average Cost
2,980	\$ 3,040,887.01	\$ 1,020.43

Table 12: University Usage by Job Title (Top 10)

Job Title	Number of Hours Used
University Program Specialist	2,295.45
Administrative Support Specialist	1,671.35
Building & Env Service Technician	1,406.90
Administrative Support Specialist	1,327.50
Accounting Technician	1,308.76
Business Services Coordinator	1,255
Executive Assistant	1,091.25
Social/Clinical Research Specialist	1,027
Ext. / Engagement Prof	1,024.25
Academic Advisor	963.50
Human Resources Consultant	959.50
Totals	14,068

Table 13: University Employee Bereavement Leave Usage by Age

Age	Number of Employees	Salary Cost
20-29	364	\$266,965.29
30-39	638	\$580,021.70
40-49	694	\$726,069.56
50-59	754	\$890,517.47
60-69	490	\$542,330.37
70-79	39	\$32,228.40

Age	Number of Employees	Salary Cost
80+	1	\$2,763.20
Totals	2,980	\$3,040,887.01

Table 14: University Employee Bereavement Leave Usage by Type of Leave and by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Bereavement Leave Colleague	Bereavement Leave Family	Total
African American	47	680	727
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	52	53
Asian	4	82	86
Hispanic or Latino	12	122	134
Not Specified	1	90	91
Two or More Races	1	73	74
White	93	1,719	1,812
Totals	159	2,821	2,980

Table 15: Cumulative Use of Bereavement Leave by State Agency and University Employees

Cumulative	Number of Employees	Total Cost	Average Cost
State Agency Employees	5,649	\$5,272,730.80	\$933.39
University Employees	2,980	\$3,040,887.01	\$1,020.43
Total	8,629	\$8,313,617.81	\$1,953.82

CONCLUSION

In closing, this report provides a comprehensive overview of Bereavement Leave utilization across state government from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. The findings show that employees consistently rely on this benefit during times of personal loss, underscoring its role in supporting a stable, resilient, and productive workforce. Ensuring access to adequate paid time to grieve and recover reflects the state's commitment to fostering a supportive workplace culture that promotes employee well-being and continuity of public service.