

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1213

Chapter 304, Laws of 2025

69th Legislature
2025 Regular Session

PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE—EMPLOYERS—VARIOUS PROVISIONS

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2026

Passed by the House April 19, 2025
Yeas 57 Nays 38

LAURIE JINKINS

**Speaker of the House of
Representatives**

Passed by the Senate April 15, 2025
Yeas 28 Nays 20

DENNY HECK

President of the Senate

Approved May 17, 2025 11:31 AM

BOB FERGUSON

Governor of the State of Washington

CERTIFICATE

I, Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1213** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.

BERNARD DEAN

Chief Clerk

FILED

May 19, 2025

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1213

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2025 Regular Session

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Berry, Fosse, Reed, Obras, Fitzgibbon, Alvarado, Mena, Macri, Ryu, Farivar, Doglio, Simmons, Peterson, Street, Wylie, Pollet, Ormsby, Lekanoff, Salahuddin, and Hill)

READ FIRST TIME 02/28/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to expanding protections for workers in the state
2 paid family and medical leave program; amending RCW 50A.05.020,
3 50A.05.050, 50A.10.030, 50A.15.020, 50A.20.010, 50A.20.020,
4 50A.30.010, 50A.24.010, 50A.35.010, and 50A.35.020; adding new
5 sections to chapter 50A.24 RCW; creating a new section; and providing
6 an effective date.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

8 **Sec. 1.** RCW 50A.05.020 and 2019 c 13 s 30 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 (1) The department shall establish and administer the family and
11 medical leave program and pay family and medical leave benefits as
12 specified in this title. The department shall adopt government
13 efficiencies to improve administration and reduce costs. These
14 efficiencies shall include, to the extent feasible, combined
15 reporting and payment, with a single return, of premiums under this
16 title and contributions under chapter 50.24 RCW.

17 (2) The department shall establish procedures and forms for
18 filing applications for benefits under this title. The department
19 shall notify the employer within five business days of an application
20 being filed.

1 (3) The department shall use information sharing and integration
2 technology to facilitate the disclosure of relevant information or
3 records by the department, so long as an employee consents to the
4 disclosure as required under RCW 50A.15.040.

5 (4) Information contained in the files and records pertaining to
6 an employee under this chapter are confidential and not open to
7 public inspection, other than to public employees in the performance
8 of their official duties, except as provided in chapter 50A.25 RCW.

9 (5) The department shall develop and implement an outreach
10 program to ensure that employees who may be qualified to receive
11 family and medical leave benefits under this title are made aware of
12 these benefits. Outreach information shall explain, in an easy to
13 understand format, eligibility requirements, the application process,
14 weekly benefit amounts, maximum benefits payable, notice and
15 certification requirements, reinstatement and nondiscrimination
16 rights, confidentiality, voluntary plans, and the relationship
17 between employment protection, leave from employment, and wage
18 replacement benefits under this title and other laws, collective
19 bargaining agreements, and employer policies. Outreach information
20 shall be available in English and other primary languages as defined
21 in RCW 74.04.025.

22 (6)(a) The department shall conduct regular outreach to employers
23 regarding employer responsibilities under this title, which must
24 include but is not limited to providing information on premium
25 collection under chapter 50A.10 RCW, notice requirements under
26 chapter 50A.20 RCW, employment protection under chapter 50A.35 RCW,
27 and the availability of grants to certain employers under RCW
28 50A.24.010 and section 9 of this act.

29 (b) The department is authorized to inspect and audit employer
30 files and records relating to the family and medical leave program,
31 including employer voluntary plans. The department may conduct
32 periodic audits of employer files and records for the purposes of
33 assisting with and otherwise enforcing compliance with this title.

34 **Sec. 2.** RCW 50A.05.050 and 2022 c 233 s 7 are each amended to
35 read as follows:

36 (1) Beginning December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, the
37 department shall report to the legislature on the entire program,
38 including:

39 (a) Projected and actual program participation;

- 1 (b) Premium rates;
2 (c) Fund balances;
3 (d) Benefits paid;
4 (e) Demographic information on program participants, including
5 income, gender, race, ethnicity, geographic distribution by county
6 and legislative district, and employment sector;
7 (f) Costs of providing benefits;
8 (g) Elective coverage participation;
9 (h) Voluntary plan participation;
10 (i) Outreach efforts; and
11 (j) Small business assistance.

12 (2)(a) Beginning January 1, 2023, the office of actuarial
13 services (~~created~~) in RCW 50A.05.130 must annually report, by
14 November 1st, to the advisory committee in RCW 50A.05.030 on the
15 experience and financial condition of the family and medical leave
16 insurance account, and the lowest future premium rates necessary to
17 maintain solvency of the family and medical leave insurance account
18 in the next four years while limiting fluctuation in premium rates.

19 (b) For calendar years 2023 through 2028, the annual reports in
20 (a) of this subsection must be submitted to the appropriate
21 committees of the legislature in compliance with RCW 43.01.036.

22 (c) Beginning the effective date of this section, the office of
23 actuarial services in RCW 50A.05.130 shall submit a report within 10
24 business days to the advisory committee in RCW 50A.05.030 and the
25 appropriate committees of the legislature in compliance with RCW
26 43.01.036 if the office projects that a deficit in the family and
27 medical leave insurance account will not be recovered through the
28 next quarterly premium collections.

29 (3) Beginning October 1, 2023, the department must report
30 quarterly to the advisory committee in RCW 50A.05.030 on premium
31 collections, benefit payments, the family and medical leave insurance
32 account balance, and other program expenditures.

33 **Sec. 3.** RCW 50A.10.030 and 2023 c 116 s 1 are each amended to
34 read as follows:

35 (1) The department shall assess for each individual in employment
36 with an employer and for each individual electing coverage a premium
37 based on the amount of the individual's wages subject to subsection
38 (4) of this section.

1 (2) The commissioner shall determine the percentage of paid
2 claims related to family leave benefits and the percentage of paid
3 claims related to medical leave benefits and set the family leave
4 premium and the medical leave premium by applying the proportional
5 share of paid claims for each type of leave to the total premium rate
6 set in subsection (6) of this section.

7 (3)(a) For family leave premiums, an employer may deduct from the
8 wages of each employee up to the full amount of the premium required.

9 (b) For medical leave premiums, an employer may deduct from the
10 wages of each employee up to 45 percent of the full amount of the
11 premium required.

12 (c) An employer may elect to pay all or any portion of the
13 employee's share of the premium for family leave or medical leave
14 benefits, or both.

15 (4) The commissioner must annually set a maximum limit on the
16 amount of wages that is subject to a premium assessment under this
17 section that is equal to the maximum wages subject to taxation for
18 social security as determined by the social security administration.

19 (5)(a) Employers with fewer than 50 employees employed in the
20 state are not required to pay the employer portion of premiums for
21 family and medical leave.

22 (b) If an employer with fewer than 50 employees elects to pay the
23 premiums, the employer is then eligible for assistance under ((RCW
24 50A.24.010)) section 9 of this act.

25 (6)(a) On or around October 20th of each year, the commissioner
26 must calculate the total premium rate as follows:

27 (i) Calculate an amount that equals 140 percent of the prior
28 fiscal year's expenses, including the total amount of benefits paid
29 and the department's administrative costs;

30 (ii) Subtract the balance of the family and medical leave
31 insurance account created in RCW 50A.05.070 as of September 30th from
32 the amount determined in (a)(i) of this subsection (6); and

33 (iii) Divide the difference in (a)(ii) of this subsection (6) by
34 the prior fiscal year's taxable wages. The quotient must be carried
35 to the fourth decimal place and then rounded up to the nearest one
36 hundredth of one percent.

37 (b) The commissioner must set the total premium rate at the rate
38 calculated in (a) of this subsection (6) subject to the following
39 conditions:

1 (i) If the commissioner determines the total premium rate
2 calculated in (a) of this subsection exceeds a rate necessary to
3 maintain a three-month reserve at the end of the following rate
4 collection year, the commissioner must set the total premium rate at
5 the minimum rate necessary to close the rate collection year with a
6 three-month reserve; and

7 (ii) The total premium rate must not exceed 1.20 percent.

8 (c) For the purposes of this subsection (6):

9 (i) "Taxable wages" means the total amount of wages subject to a
10 premium assessment under this section for all individuals in
11 employment with an employer and all individuals electing coverage.

12 (ii) "Three-month reserve" means the average monthly expenses,
13 including the total amount of benefits paid and the department's
14 administrative costs, in the prior 12 calendar months from the date
15 of the calculation in this subsection multiplied by three.

16 (7)(a) The employer must collect from the employees the premiums
17 provided under this section through payroll deductions and remit the
18 amounts collected to the department.

19 (b) In collecting employee premiums through payroll deductions,
20 the employer shall act as the agent of the employees and shall remit
21 the amounts to the department as required by this title.

22 (c) On September 30th of each year, the department shall average
23 the number of employees reported by an employer on the last day of
24 each quarter over the last four completed calendar quarters to
25 determine the size of the employer for the next calendar year for the
26 purposes of this section (~~and~~), RCW 50A.24.010, and section 9 of
27 this act.

28 (8) Premiums shall be collected in the manner and at such
29 intervals as provided in this title and directed by the department.

30 (9) Premiums collected under this section are placed in trust for
31 the employees and employers that the program is intended to assist.

32 (10) A city, code city, town, county, or political subdivision
33 may not enact a charter, ordinance, regulation, rule, or resolution:

34 (a) Creating a paid family or medical leave insurance program
35 that alters or amends the requirements of this title for any private
36 employer;

37 (b) Providing for local enforcement of the provisions of this
38 title; or

39 (c) Requiring private employers to supplement duration of leave
40 or amount of wage replacement benefits provided under this title.

Sec. 4. RCW 50A.15.020 and 2022 c 233 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Beginning January 1, 2020, family and medical leave are available and benefits are payable to a qualified employee under this section.

(a) Following a waiting period consisting of the first seven consecutive calendar days, benefits are payable when family or medical leave is required. However, no waiting period is required for leave for the birth or placement of a child, or for leave because of any qualifying exigency as defined under RCW 50A.05.010(10)(c). The waiting period begins the previous Sunday of the week when an otherwise eligible employee takes leave for the minimum claim duration under subsection (2)(c) of this section. Eligible employees may satisfy the waiting period requirement while simultaneously receiving paid time off for any part of the waiting period.

(b) Benefits may continue during the continuance of the need for family or medical leave, subject to the maximum and minimum weekly benefits, duration, and other conditions and limitations established in this title.

(2) The weekly benefit shall be prorated by the percentage of hours on leave compared to the number of hours provided as the typical workweek hours as defined in RCW 50A.05.010.

(a) The benefits in this section, if not a multiple of one dollar, shall be reduced to the next lower multiple of one dollar.

(b) Hours on leave claimed for benefits under this title, if not a multiple of one hour, shall be reduced to the next lower multiple of one hour.

(c) The minimum claim duration payment is for ~~((eight))~~ four consecutive hours of leave.

(3)(a) The maximum duration of paid family leave may not exceed ~~((twelve))~~ 12 times the typical workweek hours during a period of ~~((fifty-two))~~ 52 consecutive calendar weeks.

(b) The maximum duration of paid medical leave may not exceed ~~((twelve))~~ 12 times the typical workweek hours during a period of ~~((fifty-two))~~ 52 consecutive calendar weeks. This leave may be extended an additional two times the typical workweek hours if the employee experiences a serious health condition with a pregnancy that results in incapacity.

(c) An employee is not entitled to paid family and medical leave benefits under this title that exceeds a combined total of

1 ((~~sixteen~~)) 16 times the typical workweek hours. The combined total
2 of family and medical leave may be extended to ((~~eighteen~~)) 18 times
3 the typical workweek hours if the employee experiences a serious
4 health condition with a pregnancy that results in incapacity.

5 (4)(a) Any paid leave benefits under this chapter used in the
6 postnatal period by an employee eligible for benefits under RCW
7 50A.05.010(23)(a)(ii)(B) must be medical leave, subject to the
8 maximum and minimum weekly benefits, duration, and other conditions
9 and limitations established in this title, unless the employee
10 chooses to use family leave during the postnatal period.

11 (b) Certification of a serious health condition is not required
12 for paid leave benefits used in the postnatal period by an employee
13 eligible for benefits under RCW 50A.05.010(23)(a)(ii)(B).

14 (5) The weekly benefit for family and medical leave shall be
15 determined as follows: If the employee's average weekly wage is: (a)
16 Equal to or less than one-half of the state average weekly wage, then
17 the benefit amount is equal to ((~~ninety~~)) 90 percent of the
18 employee's average weekly wage; or (b) greater than one-half of the
19 state average weekly wage, then the benefit amount is the sum of: (i)
20 Ninety percent of one-half of the state average weekly wage; and (ii)
21 ((~~fifty~~)) 50 percent of the difference of the employee's average
22 weekly wage and one-half of the state average weekly wage.

23 (6)(a) The maximum weekly benefit for family and medical leave
24 that occurs on or after January 1, 2020, shall be ((~~one thousand~~
25 ~~dollars~~)) \$1,000. By September 30, 2020, and by each subsequent
26 September 30th, the commissioner shall adjust the maximum weekly
27 benefit amount to ((~~ninety~~)) 90 percent of the state average weekly
28 wage. The adjusted maximum weekly benefit amount takes effect on the
29 following January 1st.

30 (b) The minimum weekly benefit shall not be less than ((~~one~~
31 ~~hundred dollars~~)) \$100 per week except that if the employee's average
32 weekly wage at the time of family or medical leave is less than ((~~one~~
33 ~~hundred dollars~~)) \$100 per week, the weekly benefit shall be the
34 employee's full wage.

35 **Sec. 5.** RCW 50A.20.010 and 2019 c 13 s 12 are each amended to
36 read as follows:

37 (1) Whenever an employee of an employer who is qualified for
38 benefits under this title is absent from work to provide family
39 leave, or take medical leave for more than seven consecutive days,

1 the employer shall provide the employee with a written statement of
2 the employee's rights under this title in a form prescribed by the
3 commissioner. The statement must be provided to the employee within
4 five business days after the employee's seventh consecutive day of
5 absence due to family or medical leave, or within five business days
6 after the employer has received notice that the employee's absence is
7 due to family or medical leave, whichever is later.

8 (2) The commissioner shall develop the written statement of
9 employee rights to be distributed by an employer under this section.
10 At a minimum, the statement must explain, in an easy to understand
11 format, eligibility requirements, possible weekly benefits,
12 application processes, employment protection rights, and
13 nondiscrimination rights, and direct the employee to appropriate
14 contacts and portals for more information.

15 **Sec. 6.** RCW 50A.20.020 and 2019 c 13 s 13 are each amended to
16 read as follows:

17 Each employer shall post and keep posted, in conspicuous places
18 on the premises of the employer where notices to employees and
19 applicants for employment are customarily posted, a notice, to be
20 prepared or approved by the commissioner, setting forth excerpts
21 from, or summaries of, the pertinent provisions of this title,
22 including, but not limited to: Eligibility requirements, possible
23 weekly benefits, application processes, employment protection rights,
24 nondiscrimination rights, and other protections, and information
25 pertaining to the filing of a complaint. Any employer that willfully
26 violates this section may be subject to a civil penalty of not more
27 than ~~((one hundred dollars))~~ \$100 for each separate offense. Any
28 penalties collected by the department under this section shall be
29 deposited into the family and medical leave enforcement account.

30 **Sec. 7.** RCW 50A.30.010 and 2020 c 125 s 9 are each amended to
31 read as follows:

32 (1) An employer may apply to the commissioner for approval of a
33 voluntary plan for the payment of either family leave benefits or
34 medical leave benefits, or both. The application must be submitted on
35 a form and in the manner as prescribed by the commissioner in rule.
36 The fee for the department's review of each application for approval
37 of a voluntary plan is ~~((two hundred fifty dollars))~~ \$250.

1 (2) The benefits payable as indemnification for loss of wages
2 under any voluntary plan must be separately stated and designated
3 separately and distinctly in the plan from other benefits, if any.

4 (3) Neither an employee nor his or her employer are liable for
5 any premiums for benefits covered by an approved voluntary plan.

6 (4) An employee may only receive payment of benefits for family
7 leave, medical leave, or both from one approved plan at a time. An
8 employee who qualifies for benefits and is simultaneously covered by
9 more than one plan under this title will receive benefits under the
10 plan for which the employee has worked the most hours during the
11 employee's qualifying period. The commissioner must adopt rules to
12 allow benefits or prevent duplication of benefits to employees
13 simultaneously covered by one or more approved voluntary plans and
14 the state program.

15 (5) The commissioner must approve any voluntary plan as to which
16 the commissioner finds that there is at least one employee in
17 employment and all of the following exist:

18 (a) The benefits afforded to the employees must be at least
19 equivalent to the benefits the employees are entitled to as part of
20 the state's family and medical leave program, including but not
21 limited to the duration of leave. The employer must offer at least
22 one-half of the length of leave as provided in RCW 50A.15.020(3) with
23 pay and provide a monetary payment in an amount equal to or higher
24 than the total amount of monetary benefits the employee would be
25 entitled to receive as part of the state-run program. The employer
26 may offer the same duration of leave and monetary benefits as offered
27 under the state program.

28 (b) The sick leave an employee is entitled to under RCW 49.46.210
29 is in addition to the employer's provided benefits and is in addition
30 to any family or medical leave benefits.

31 (c) The plan is available to all of the eligible employees of the
32 employer employed in this state, including future employees.

33 (d) The employer has agreed to make all required payroll
34 deductions, including that:

35 (i) In the case of plan termination or withdrawal, the employer
36 must remit to the department all required moneys under RCW 50A.30.045
37 and 50A.30.065(3); and

38 (ii) If the employer has an approved voluntary plan for either
39 medical leave or family leave but not both, the employer is still
40 obligated to remit to the department premiums owed to the state plan

1 for the portions not covered by the employer's approved voluntary
2 plan.

3 (e) The plan will be in effect for a period of not less than one
4 year and, thereafter, continuously unless the commissioner finds that
5 the employer has given notice of withdrawal from the plan in a manner
6 specified by the commissioner in rule. The plan may be withdrawn by
7 the employer on the date of any law increasing the benefit amounts or
8 the date of any change in the rate of employee premiums, if notice of
9 the withdrawal from the plan is transmitted to the commissioner not
10 less than ~~((thirty))~~ 30 days prior to the date of that law or change.
11 If the plan is not withdrawn, it must be amended to conform to
12 provide the increased benefit amount or change in the rate of the
13 employee's premium on the date of the increase or change.

14 (f) The amount of payroll deductions from the wages of an
15 employee in effect for any voluntary plan may not exceed the maximum
16 payroll deduction for that employee as authorized under RCW
17 50A.10.030. The deductions may not be increased on other than an
18 anniversary of the effective date of the plan, except to the extent
19 that any increase in the deductions from the wages of an employee do
20 not exceed the maximum rate authorized under the state program.

21 (g) The voluntary plan provides that an employee of an employer
22 with a voluntary plan for either family leave or medical leave, or
23 both, is eligible for the plan benefits if the employee meets the
24 requirements of RCW 50A.15.010 and has worked at least ~~((three~~
25 ~~hundred forty))~~ 340 hours for the employer during the ~~((twelve))~~ 12
26 months immediately preceding the date leave will commence.

27 (h) The voluntary plan provides that an employee of an employer
28 with a voluntary plan for either family leave or medical leave, or
29 both, who takes leave under the voluntary plan is entitled to ~~((the))~~
30 employment protection ~~((provisions))~~ in accordance with the
31 requirements contained in RCW 50A.35.010 ~~((if the employee has worked~~
32 ~~for the employer for at least nine months and nine hundred sixty-five~~
33 ~~hours during the twelve months immediately preceding the date leave~~
34 ~~will commence))~~.

35 (i) The voluntary plan provides that the employer maintains the
36 employee's existing health benefits as provided under RCW 50A.35.020.

37 (6)(a) The department must conduct a review of the expenses
38 incurred in association with the administration of the voluntary
39 plans during the first three years after implementation and report
40 its findings to the legislature.

(b) The review must include an analysis of the adequacy of the fee in subsection (1) of this section to cover the department's administrative expenses related to reviewing and approving or denying the applications and administering appeals related to voluntary plans. The review must include an estimate of the next year's projected administrative costs related to the voluntary plans. The legislature shall adjust the fee in subsection (1) of this section as needed to ensure the department's administrative expenses related to the voluntary plans are covered by the fee.

(c) If the current receipts from the fee in subsection (1) of this section are inadequate to cover the department's administrative expenses related to the voluntary plans, the department may use funds from the family and medical leave insurance account under RCW 50A.05.070 to pay for these expenses.

Sec. 8. RCW 50A.24.010 and 2019 c 13 s 36 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The legislature recognizes that while family leave and medical leave benefit both employees and employers, there may be costs that disproportionately impact small businesses. To equitably balance the risks among employers, the legislature intends to assist small businesses with the costs of an employee's use of family or medical leave as provided in this chapter.

(2) Employers with ~~((one hundred fifty or fewer))~~ 50 to 150 employees ~~((and employers with fifty or fewer employees who are assessed all premiums under RCW 50A.10.030(5)(b)))~~ may apply to the department for ~~((a grant))~~ grants under this section, subject to the requirements of this section.

(3)(a) An employer may receive a grant of three thousand dollars if the employer hires a temporary worker to replace an employee on family or medical leave for a period of seven days or more.

(b) For an employee's family or medical leave, an employer may receive a grant of up to one thousand dollars as reimbursement for significant additional wage-related costs due to the employee's leave.

(c) An employer may receive a grant under (a) or (b) of this subsection, but not both, except that an employer who received a grant under (b) of this subsection may receive a grant of the difference between the grant awarded under (b) of this subsection and three thousand dollars if the employee on leave extended the leave

beyond the leave initially planned and the employer hired a temporary worker for the employee on leave.

(4) An employer may ~~((apply for))~~ receive a grant under this section no more than ten times per calendar year and no more than once for each employee on leave.

(5) To be eligible for a grant, the employer must provide the department written documentation showing the temporary worker hired or significant wage-related costs incurred are due to an employee's use of family or medical leave.

~~(6) ((The department must assess an employer with fewer than fifty employees who receives a grant under this section for all premiums for three years from the date of receipt of a grant.~~

~~(7) The grants under this section shall be funded from the family and medical leave insurance account.~~

~~(8) The commissioner shall adopt rules as necessary to implement this section.~~

~~(9))~~ For the purposes of this section, the number of employees must be calculated as provided in RCW 50A.10.030.

~~((10))~~ (7) An employer who has an approved voluntary plan is not eligible to receive a grant under this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** A new section is added to chapter 50A.24 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Employers with fewer than 50 employees may apply to the department for grants under this section, subject to the requirements of this section.

(2)(a) An employer may receive a grant of \$3,000 if the employer hires a temporary worker to replace an employee on family or medical leave for a period of seven days or more, or if the employer incurs significant additional wage-related costs due to the employee's leave. To be eligible for a grant, the employer must provide the department a written statement attesting that the employer hired a temporary worker or incurred other significant wage-related costs due to an employee's use of family or medical leave.

(b) An employer may receive a grant under this subsection no more than 10 times per calendar year and no more than once for each employee on leave.

(3) The department must assess any employer who receives a grant under this section for all premiums for three years from the date of receipt of a grant.

(4) For the purposes of this section, the number of employees must be calculated as provided in RCW 50A.10.030.

(5) An employer who has an approved voluntary plan is not eligible to receive a grant under this section.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 10. A new section is added to chapter 50A.24 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The grants under this chapter must be funded from the family and medical leave insurance account.

(2) An application for a grant under this chapter must be submitted no later than 12 months after the employee's first day of leave under this title. A third-party administrator or other agent authorized by the employer may submit an application on the employer's behalf.

(3) The department shall submit payment to the employer within 14 calendar days after the qualifying employer's completed application is received by the department.

(4) The department shall:

(a) Promptly notify an employer with fewer than 50 employees of the grants under this chapter if one or more of its employees receives benefits under this title;

(b) Make available on its website information on the grants under this chapter and include a link to grant applications within the existing website portal; and

(c) Include information on the grants under this chapter when notifying employers and employees of changes to the premium rate under RCW 50A.10.030.

(5) The commissioner shall adopt rules as necessary to implement this chapter.

Sec. 11. RCW 50A.35.010 and 2019 c 13 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) (a) Except as provided in RCW 50A.30.010(5) and subsections (6) and (7) of this section, ((any)) an employee ((who takes family)) is entitled to employment restoration upon returning from:

(i) Family or medical leave under this title, regardless of whether the employee also qualifies for and receives concurrent leave under the federal family and medical leave act of 1993 (Act Feb. 5, 1993, P.L. 103-3, 107 Stat. 6, as it existed on the effective date of this section), as provided under RCW 50A.15.110; or

1 (ii) Unpaid leave protected by the federal family and medical
2 leave act of 1993 (Act Feb. 5, 1993, P.L. 103-3, 107 Stat. 6, as it
3 existed on the effective date of this section) during a period in
4 which the employee was eligible for benefits under this title but did
5 not apply for and receive those benefits, excluding unpaid sick leave
6 or temporary disability taken for pregnancy or childbirth under
7 chapter 49.60 RCW or as an accommodation under RCW 43.10.005, subject
8 to the notice requirements in subsection (8) of this section.

9 (b) For purposes of this section, "employment restoration" and
10 "employment protection" mean that the employee is entitled, on return
11 from the leave:

12 ~~((a))~~ (i) To be restored by the employer to the position of
13 employment held by the employee when the leave commenced; or

14 ~~((b))~~ (ii) To be restored by the employer to an equivalent
15 position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms
16 and conditions of employment.

17 (2) The taking of leave under this title may not result in the
18 loss of any employment benefits accrued before the date on which the
19 leave commenced.

20 (3) Nothing in this section shall be construed to entitle any
21 restored employee to:

22 (a) The accrual of any seniority or employment benefits during
23 any period of leave; or

24 (b) Any right, benefit, or position of employment other than any
25 right, benefit, or position to which the employee would have been
26 entitled had the employee not taken the leave.

27 (4) As a condition of restoration under subsection (1) of this
28 section for an employee who has taken medical leave, the employer may
29 have a uniformly applied practice or policy that requires each such
30 employee to receive certification from the employee's health care
31 provider that the employee is able to resume work.

32 (5) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit an
33 employer from requiring an employee on leave to report periodically
34 to the employer on the status and intention of the employee to return
35 to work.

36 (6) (a) This section does not apply unless the employee:

37 (i) Works for an employer with ~~((fifty or more employees; (ii)~~
38 ~~has been employed by the current employer for twelve months or more;~~
39 ~~and (iii) has worked for the current employer for at least one~~
40 ~~thousand two hundred fifty hours during the twelve months immediately~~

preceding the date on which leave will commence. For the purposes of this subsection, an employer shall be considered to employ fifty or more employees if the employer employs fifty or more employees for each working day during each of twenty or more calendar workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year)) the following number of employees:

(A) 25 or more employees beginning January 1, 2026, until December 31, 2026;

(B) 15 or more employees beginning January 1, 2027, until December 31, 2027; and

(C) Eight or more employees beginning January 1, 2028, and thereafter; and

(ii) Began employment with the current employer at least 180 calendar days before taking the leave.

(b) An employer may deny restoration under this section to any salaried employee who is among the highest paid (~~ten~~) 10 percent of the employees employed by the employer within (~~seventy-five~~) 75 miles of the facility at which the employee is employed if:

(i) Denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the operations of the employer;

(ii) The employer notifies the employee of the intent of the employer to deny restoration on such basis at the time the employer determines that the injury would occur; and

(iii) The leave has commenced and the employee elects not to return to employment after receiving the notice.

(7)(a) Except by written agreement between the employer and employee or between the employer and an employee bargaining unit, the employee forfeits the right to employment restoration under this section if the employee does not exercise it upon the earlier of:

(i) The first scheduled work day following the period of leave under subsection (1)(a) of this section; or

(ii) The first scheduled work day following a continuous period of, or combined intermittent periods of a total of, 16 typical workweeks of leave under subsection (1)(a) of this section taken during a period of 52 consecutive calendar weeks, except this period is extended to 18 typical workweeks of leave under subsection (1)(a) of this section taken during a period of 52 consecutive calendar weeks if any of the leave was taken as a result of a serious health condition with a pregnancy resulting in incapacity.

1 **(b) For any continuous period of leave exceeding two typical**
2 **workweeks or any combined intermittent periods of leave exceeding 14**
3 **typical work days, the employer must provide at least five business**
4 **days advance written notice to the employee, in a language understood**
5 **by the employee and transmitted by a method reasonably certain to be**
6 **received promptly by the employee, regarding the estimated expiration**
7 **of the right of employment restoration and the date of the employee's**
8 **first scheduled work day under this subsection. For combined**
9 **intermittent periods of leave, the employer may estimate the**
10 **expiration of the right of employment restoration based on**
11 **information provided to the employer by the department and employee.**

12 **(c) The expiration of the periods under (a)(ii) of this**
13 **subsection does not affect an employee's eligibility for paid family**
14 **and medical leave benefits under this title.**

15 **(8)(a) In order for unpaid leave under subsection (1)(a)(ii) of**
16 **this section to qualify for employment restoration rights under this**
17 **section and count towards the maximum periods in subsection**
18 **(7)(a)(ii) of this section, the employer must provide written notice**
19 **to the employee, in a language understood by the employee and**
20 **transmitted by a method reasonably certain to be received promptly by**
21 **the employee, of the following:**

22 **(i) That the employer is designating and counting the employee's**
23 **unpaid leave against the employee's entitlement under the federal**
24 **family and medical leave act of 1993 (Act Feb. 5, 1993, P.L. 103-3,**
25 **107 Stat. 6, as it existed on the effective date of this section),**
26 **including specifying the amount of the entitlement used and**
27 **remaining, as estimated by the employer based on information provided**
28 **by the department and employee;**

29 **(ii) The start and end dates of the employer's designated 12-**
30 **month leave year under the federal family and medical leave act of**
31 **1993 (Act Feb. 5, 1993, P.L. 103-3, 107 Stat. 6, as it existed on the**
32 **effective date of this section);**

33 **(iii) Since the employee is eligible for paid family or medical**
34 **leave under this title but is not applying for and receiving**
35 **benefits, that the employer is counting the unpaid leave towards the**
36 **maximum periods in subsection (7)(a)(ii) of this section, including**
37 **specifying the start and end dates of the unpaid leave, and the total**
38 **amount of the unpaid leave counting toward those maximum periods, as**
39 **estimated by the employer based on information provided by the**
40 **department and employee; and**

1 (iv) That the use of unpaid leave counting against the periods in
2 subsection (7)(a)(ii) of this section does not affect the employee's
3 eligibility for paid family or medical leave benefits under this
4 title.

5 (b) The employer must provide the written notice required by this
6 subsection:

7 (i) Within five business days of the earlier of either the
8 employee's initial request for or use of unpaid leave protected by
9 the federal family and medical leave act of 1993 (Act Feb. 5, 1993,
10 P.L. 103-3, 107 Stat. 6, as it existed on the effective date of this
11 section); and

12 (ii) At least monthly for the remainder of the employer's
13 designated 12-month leave year.

14 (9) For purposes of auditing compliance or otherwise enforcing
15 this chapter, the department may require the employer to collect and
16 report information on the exercise of employment restoration rights
17 under this section.

18 (10) This section does not alter or limit the rights and
19 protections available to employees under other state or federal laws,
20 including but not limited to sick leave or temporary disability taken
21 for pregnancy or childbirth under chapter 49.60 RCW or as an
22 accommodation under RCW 43.10.005, sick leave taken under RCW
23 49.46.210, or leave protected by the federal family and medical leave
24 act of 1993 (Act Feb. 5, 1993, P.L. 103-3, 107 Stat. 6, as it existed
25 on the effective date of this section).

26 **Sec. 12.** RCW 50A.35.020 and 2019 c 13 s 39 are each amended to
27 read as follows:

28 ~~((If required by the federal family and medical leave act, as it~~
29 ~~existed on October 19, 2017))~~ (1) Except as provided under subsection
30 (2) of this section, during any period of family or medical leave
31 taken under this title, the employer shall maintain any existing
32 health benefits of the employee in force for the duration of such
33 leave as if the employee had continued to work from the date the
34 employee commenced family or medical leave until the date the
35 employee returns to employment. If the employer and employee share
36 the cost of the existing health benefits, the employee remains
37 responsible for the employee's share of the cost.

38 (2) This section does not apply ((to an)) if:

1 (a) An employee ((who)) is not ((in employment for an)) employed
2 by the employer at the time of filing an application for benefits;
3 (b) An employee is not entitled to employment protection under
4 RCW 50A.35.010; or
5 (c) The employee did not exercise the right to employment
6 protection within the time periods provided under RCW 50A.35.010(7).

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** This act takes effect January 1, 2026.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** If specific funding for the purposes of
9 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not
10 provided by June 30, 2025, in the omnibus appropriations act, this
11 act is null and void.

Passed by the House April 19, 2025.
Passed by the Senate April 15, 2025.
Approved by the Governor May 17, 2025.
Filed in Office of Secretary of State May 19, 2025.

--- END ---