

The City's Parental Leave policy has been updated to include two distinct leave opportunities; Recovery Leave and Bonding Leave. Each form of leave is designed to meet specific needs of an eligible employee. In addition to new leave options, SDI (Short-term Disability Insurance) will no longer be required as part of the parental leave process. Consideration was given to the impact and benefit for both the employee and the employer in the final policy changes.

Key points of the new policy:

- What previously was known as parental leave is now Recovery Leave and is made available only to a birthing parent who may take up to six (6) consecutive weeks and begins at the birth of their child.
- (New) Bonding Leave may now be taken on an intermittent basis. Coordination with an employee's department will be needed to ensure operational needs are met. Bonding Leave is addressed in hours because of the new way in which it may be utilized.
 - A birthing parent may take an additional 240 hours (336 hours for Fire Operations employees) of Bonding Leave per rolling 12-month period in addition to Recovery Leave.
 - Non-birthing parents (including employees who become parents through legal adoption, court-ordered foster care or court-ordered guardianship) may take up to 240 hours (336 for Fire Operations employees) of Bonding Leave per rolling 12-month period.
- (New) Bonding leave may be taken any time but must be completed by the first anniversary of the child's birth or date of placement in the employee's home.
- The effective date of the new policy will be July 7, 2024.

Considerations:

- The new extended leave for a birthing parent allows a longer period to recover and bond with a child and is competitive with other organizations. Because only a birthing parent is eligible for the full 12 weeks of leave, the financial impact on departments will be minimal. Financial impact is further mitigated by the ability to use the benefit on an intermittent basis.
- The ability to take Bonding Leave on an intermittent basis for both a birthing parent and a non-birthing parent, introduces flexibility and convenience. Birthing parents expressed a desire to return to work part-time which is now possible. Additionally, both birthing and non-birthing parents are now able to use flexible hours however best meets their needs.
- Bonding Leave does not need to be taken immediately upon a child's birth or placement in an employee's home. This allows greater flexibility and individuality in how and when an employee uses their leave.
- (Retroactive benefit) a birthing parent who gave birth after July 7, 2024, will be allowed to utilize six (6) weeks of Bonding Leave. Bonding Leave will not be retroactively provided to non-birthing parents since the allowed leave time is the same, has already been used, and cannot be altered to accommodate an intermittent schedule.
- A birthing and/or non-birthing Parent currently out on Parental Leave can contact the Benefit's Department to discuss options.