

District of Columbia

District of Columbia Reduces Paid Leave, Effective Oct. 1

The District of Columbia (D.C.) has amended its [Universal Paid Leave Act](#) to reduce both the length of leave for which benefits apply and the maximum cash benefit, effective Oct. 1, 2026.

The changes were contained in the D.C. [Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Support Act of 2026](#) and are summarized on the D.C. Paid Family Leave [website](#).

Universal Paid Leave

The Universal Paid Leave Act provides wage replacement benefits for D.C. employees who take leave from work for prenatal, parental, family and medical purposes. The Act requires virtually all employers to fund the benefit through employer-paid payroll taxes.

The program does not provide a right to job-protected leave, although workers receiving paid leave benefits may qualify for job protection under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act or the District of Columbia Family and Medical Leave Act.

Leave Duration

Currently, the program provides compensation for the following lengths of leave, limited by a maximum yearly cap:

- Two weeks of prenatal leave;
- Twelve weeks of parental leave to care for a newborn, adopted or foster child;
- Twelve weeks of family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition; and
- Twelve weeks of medical leave for an employee's own serious health condition.

Effective Oct. 1, employees may receive only **six weeks** of family leave benefits and **10 weeks** of medical leave benefits. The permitted duration of parental and prenatal leave remains the same.

Benefit Amount

The amount of compensation employees receive from universal paid leave is based on a formula in the law and varies according to the employee's income. Currently, the maximum weekly benefit under the program is \$1,190. Effective

Highlights

As of Oct. 1, 2026, benefits under the D.C. Universal Paid Leave Act will be reduced in the following ways:

- Family leave benefits will be limited to six weeks, reduced from 12 weeks;
- Medical leave benefits will be limited to 10 weeks, reduced from 12 weeks; and
- The weekly maximum cash benefit will be reduced to \$1,100 from \$1,190.

Employers must post and distribute a new notice for the program.

Oct. 1, 2026, the maximum weekly benefit is **reduced** to **\$1,100**, subject thereafter to yearly increases for inflation. The employer contribution rate of 0.75% of employee wages remains unchanged.

New Employee Notice

Covered employers must post a workplace notice about the Universal Paid Leave Act, and they must provide the notice to employees at the time of hiring, annually thereafter, and any time the employer is aware that the leave is needed. The D.C. Office of Paid Family Leave has published a [new notice](#) for employers to use to satisfy this requirement.

Next Steps for Employers

Employers should apprise themselves of the changes to the paid leave program and make sure they post the new notice in the workplace and provide it to their employees.

Employers should also monitor the D.C. Paid Family Leave website for guidance on changes to the program.
