



Administrative Policy
PRENATAL, PARENTAL AND INFANT WELLNESS LEAVES

A.P. No.	A.P. 3-16
Effective Date:	May 14, 2022

1. AUTHORITY

Article VI, Section 7a, of the City Charter of the City of Houston and the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14 and Chapter 34, serves as the governing authority for employee paid leaves.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Houston recognizes the growing needs of its employees to balance work and their home life. In keeping with our goal of being a workplace of choice, this policy shall provide eligible City employees with (1) paid prenatal leave for prenatal wellness healthcare appointments and other absences related to the pregnancy; (2) paid parental leave to bond and care for a child after the birth or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care to be used within the first year after childbirth or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; and (3) infant wellness leave following the birth of a child or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care to be used during the infant's first year after birth.

3. POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform procedures for administering paid prenatal, paid parental, and infant wellness leaves in compliance with the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14, Section 14-169 and Chapter 34, Sections 34-35 and 34-59.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all full-time City employees in all departments.

5. DEFINITIONS

Child: a biological, adopted, foster child, a stepchild, or a legal ward of an employee, or a child of an employee standing in loco parentis.

Healthcare Provider: A Doctor of Medicine or osteopathy who is authorized to practice medicine or surgery by the state in which the doctor practices, or any other person determined by the Human Resources Department Director (HR Director) to be capable of providing health-care services.

Human Resources Department Director (HR Director): The director of the Human Resources Department or designee.

Infant Wellness Leave: Leave to take infant to a healthcare provider for examinations and physicals, immunizations, checkups and prospective health screening/testing of any kind during the infant's first year after birth.

Placement: A new placement of a child with an employee for adoption or foster care. For example, this excludes the adoption of a stepchild or a foster child who has already been a member of the employee's

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household and has an existing parent-child relationship with an adopting parent.

PPI Coordinator: A person designated by the HR Director to assist in administering, coordinating and facilitating paid leaves for prenatal, parental and infant wellness.

Work week: For the purposes of this policy, the work week is defined as Saturday through Friday.

6. POLICY DETAILS

6.1. General

- 6.1.1. Leaves for Prenatal, Parental and Infant Wellness is available to eligible employees irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status or whether both employees are employed by the City.
- 6.1.2. Eligible employees shall receive a maximum of 160 hours for prenatal wellness healthcare appointments. Paid prenatal leave is in addition to and separate from any paid leaves under Administrative Procedure 3-2: Family and Medical Leave.
- 6.1.3. Paid prenatal leave shall be used to cover an employee's absence away from work on a scheduled workday.
- 6.1.4. Multiple births do not increase the length of paid prenatal leave.
- 6.1.5. Paid prenatal leave shall be requested with as much notice to the supervisor as feasible.
- 6.1.6. An employee requesting to use paid prenatal leave shall be required to provide sufficient supporting documentation from a healthcare provider to support the need to use paid prenatal leave, as well as provide documentation for each occurrence in which paid prenatal leave is used, to the PPI Coordinator.
- 6.1.7. An employee will not receive more than the maximum allotted amount of paid prenatal leave from the first date the paid prenatal leave is used in a 12-month period, regardless of whether more than one birth occurs within that 12-month period.
- 6.1.8. Paid prenatal leave is a supplement to the employee's existing sick and other leave at the time of the qualifying event (birth, adoption, or foster-to-adopt placement).
- 6.1.9. An employee is not required to use paid prenatal leave concurrently with Family and Medical Leave (FML) as defined in Administrative Procedure 3-2: Family and Medical Leave (AP 3-2).
- 6.1.10. Any unused paid prenatal leave shall not be compensable and shall be forfeited (1) on the date the pregnancy ends; (2) when an employee separates from employment with the City of Houston; or (3) moves to part-time, PT30 or temporary position, whichever comes first.
- 6.1.11. Eligible employees shall receive a maximum 320 hours of paid parental leave to bond and care for a child after the birth or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care from the first date the paid parental leave is used in a 12-month period, regardless of whether more than one birth or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care occurs within that 12-month period. Beginning September 1, 2023, eligible employees shall receive a maximum of 480 hours of paid parental leave.
- 6.1.12. Paid parental leave shall run concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) as defined in AP 3-2; if the employee is eligible for FMLA.
- 6.1.13. Paid parental leave may be taken intermittently provided the leave is taken in one (1) work week

increments for each instance of leave. When an eligible employee would like to take paid parental leave intermittently, the eligible employee shall consult with the department and make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as not to unduly disrupt the department's operations.

- 6.1.14. An employee requesting to use paid parental leave shall be required to provide sufficient supporting documentation to the PPI Coordinator.
- 6.1.15. All rules governing compliance with FMLA established by AP 3-2 shall be adhered to when paid parental leave is taken.
- 6.1.16. Any unused paid parental leave shall not be compensable and shall be forfeited (1) on the date after the child's first birthday; (2) on the date after one (1) year since the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; (3) when an employee separates from employment with the City of Houston; or (4) when an employee moves to part-time, PT30 or temporary position, whichever comes first.
- 6.1.17. Eligible employees shall receive a maximum of forty (40) hours of infant wellness leave to seek medical care for their infants during the infant's first year after birth.
- 6.1.18. An employee will not receive more than the maximum allotted amount of infant wellness leave, regardless of whether more than one (1) birth or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care occurs within that 12-month period.
- 6.1.19. An employee requesting to use infant wellness leave shall be required to provide sufficient supporting documentation from a healthcare provider to support the need to use infant wellness leave, as well as provide documentation for each occurrence in which infant wellness leave is used, to the PPI Coordinator.
- 6.1.20. Infant wellness leave shall be requested with as much notice to the supervisor as feasible.
- 6.1.21. If both parents work for the City of Houston, both parents, subject to the eligibility requirements in 6.2 below, may use paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leaves.
- 6.1.22. This policy does not preclude an employee from using their own available accrued leave to cover absences covered by paid prenatal, paid parental or infant wellness leaves.
- 6.1.23. Paid prenatal, paid parental and infant wellness leaves shall be compensated at the employee's regular rate of pay plus any longevity or supplemental pays.
- 6.1.24. An eligible employee may not use paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leaves in excess of the employee's normally scheduled workweek.
- 6.1.25. Employees who use paid prenatal, paid parental an/or infant wellness leaves for purposes other than those described in this policy may be subjected to corrective action up to and including an indefinite suspension or termination.

6.2. Eligibility

- 6.2.1. To be eligible for paid prenatal, paid parental and infant wellness leaves, an employee shall meet the following criteria:
 - 6.2.1.1. Be a full-time employee (part-time and temporary employees are not eligible); and
 - 6.2.1.2. Been employed by the City of Houston as a full-time employee for at least six (6) continuous months prior to the initial use of paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant

wellness leaves.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1. Eligible employees are responsible for:

- 7.1.1. Providing any supporting documentation to support the use of paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leaves;
- 7.1.2. Providing as much notice as feasible for each occurrence of use for paid prenatal, paid parental, and/or infant wellness leaves; and
- 7.1.3. If the application for paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leave is approved, providing a copy of the approval to the immediate supervisor.

7.2. Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- 7.2.1. Approving timecards for paid prenatal, paid prenatal and infant wellness leave (PPI Coordinator may approve the timecard, if necessary); and
- 7.2.2. When the use of intermittent paid parental leave will not unduly disrupt the department's operations, authorize intermittent use of paid parental leave by completing the immediate supervisor/manager section of the Authorization to use Parental Leave Intermittently Form.

7.3. The PPI Coordinator(s) is (are) responsible for administering paid parental leave in compliance with this policy and accurately recording leave on the employee timecard and time records.

7.4. The HR Director or designee is responsible for resolving any eligibility concerns, creating any forms, and guidelines for administering this policy.

8. PROCEDURES

8.1. Eligible employees shall inform their immediate supervisor of their intent to submit an application to use paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leaves.

8.2. Eligible employees shall submit application and certification form for paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leave, along with supporting documentation through the PPI Portal ([PPI Application Requests](#)) for review and approval.

8.3. The PPI Coordinator shall review the application and certification form(s) for paid prenatal, paid prenatal and/or infant wellness leave, along with supporting documentation to determine approval status.

8.3.1. If the application for paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leave is approved, the PPI Coordinator shall notify the employee of the approval of eligibility in writing and the employee shall provide a copy of the approval to the immediate supervisor.

8.3.2. If the application for paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leave is disapproved, the PPI Coordinator shall notify the employee of the reason(s) for the disapproval of eligibility in writing.

8.4. Eligible employees shall report absences related to this policy to their immediate supervisor in accordance with the employee's department policy and submit their request to use leave for paid prenatal, paid parental and infant wellness leave, along with the required supporting documentation through the PPI Portal ([PPI Leave Request](#)).

8.4.1. For those departments without a formal leave policy the employee shall provide at least 14

calendar days' notice of the need to use paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leave.

8.5. When parental leave is used intermittently, the eligible employee shall also submit a completed Authorization to Use Parental Leave Intermittently Form for each occurrence use of intermittent paid parental leave thru the PPI Portal ([PPI Leave Request](#)).

8.5.1. Employees who fail to submit a completed Authorization to Use Parental Leave Intermittently Form shall have their leave request submitted through the portal denied.

8.6. Regardless of if the leave request for paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leave is approved or denied, the PPI Coordinator shall notify the employee in writing.

8.7. Eligible employee may request to use appropriate accrued personal, sick, compensatory and/or vacation leave pending approval of paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leave; however, in the event the request to use paid prenatal, paid parental and/or infant wellness leave is approved, edits to the eligible employee's time records will be submitted by the PPI Coordinator.

8.8. Employees who fail to provide supporting documentation or supporting documentation is deemed insufficient by the PPI Coordinator and/or the HR Director for an occurrence use of paid prenatal leave and/or infant wellness leave, may request to use their own appropriate accrued leave or may request to be carried in an unpaid status.

8.9. Any employee who has been determined by the City (i.e. the employee's Department Director, the Human Resources Director or designee, or the Office of Inspector General) to have received Paid Prenatal, Paid Parental and/or Infant Wellness Leave fraudulently shall be subject to corrective action up to and including an indefinite suspension or termination and will be responsible for repaying the City for any fraudulent leave payments received, which may include the use any of appropriate accrued leave during the time the employee used leaves established by the policy and/or a repayment plan.

9. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION

- Administrative Procedure 3-2: Family and Medical Leave
- City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14, Section 14-169
- City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 34, Sections 34-35 and 34-59
- Paid Prenatal Leave Application and Certification Form
- Paid Parental Leave and/or Infant Wellness Application and Certification Form
- Paid Prenatal, Parental, and Infant Wellness Statement of Relationship
- Authorization to use Parental Leave Intermittently Form

10. POLICY SPONSOR

Department: Human Resources Department