

# Implementation and Early Outcomes of the City of Seattle Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance

## Final Report Summary

**Most employers know about the Ordinance.** One year after the Ordinance took effect, more than eight of ten (83%) surveyed employers were aware of it. Initial difficulties in understanding the requirements of the Ordinance subsided over time.

**The majority of employers are offering paid leave to full- and part-time employees.** Almost all employers (96%) offer some paid leave to their full-time employees. Among employers with part-time employees, 62% cover their part-timers. Employers in the food and accommodation sector posted the greatest increase, with 78% of employers now providing paid leave coverage, up from 14% a year prior.

**Gaps still remain.** Nearly four in ten employers (39%) report that they either do not cover part- and full-time workers or fail to provide the minimum required hours of leave to their full-time workers (hours of leave provided to part-time workers were not tracked). Employees of some larger employers (those with 250 or more full-time equivalents) as well as some temporary and seasonal workers are particularly likely to lack leave.

**Implementation was easy for some employers and caused temporary hassles for others.** Many employers had no trouble changing their policies and practices to comply with the Ordinance. About a third of employers (32%) had difficulties with the required administrative tasks, such as working with payroll vendors. These challenges were frustrating but transient.

**Costs to employers and impact on businesses have been modest and smaller than anticipated.** The majority of employers have seen no effect of the Ordinance on customer service, employee morale, predictability of employee absenteeism, or profitability. Anecdotal cost information puts the cost of providing leave at about four tenths of one percent of total revenue. There is no evidence that the Ordinance caused employers to go out of business or leave Seattle.

**Many employers support the Ordinance.** Overall 70% of employers support the Ordinance. These business owners, managers, and human resources professionals view paid leave as a valuable and important benefit for their workers.

**Workers view the Ordinance as helpful.** Newly eligible workers – those who did not have paid leave prior to the Ordinance but now do – appreciate having a “safety net” that allows them to take time off to care for themselves or their sick family members.

**Safe leave was expanded.** One third of employers (33.5%) expanded their policies to include safe leave, and presumably many of the 13.4% of employers who implemented new leave policies included safe time.

*The evaluation study of the City of Seattle Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance was conducted by Jennifer Romich, PhD, of the University of Washington with Wes Bignell, Tracy Brazg, Chantel Johnson, Cori Mar, PhD, Jennifer Morton, and Chiho Song. Findings are based on two surveys of more than 300 randomly-sampled employers, over 80 in-depth interviews of employers and workers, and an analysis of confidential employment data from the State of Washington Employment Security Department.*

*The full report is available by request from [romich@uw.edu](mailto:romich@uw.edu) or the City of Seattle Office of City Auditor at [CityAuditor@seattle.gov](mailto:CityAuditor@seattle.gov) or 206-233-3801.*

