



INCREASING CITY OF SEATTLE WORKFORCE EQUITY

Offices of the Mayor & City Council // July 2016

FAQ

STRATEGIC PLAN

1. **What are the overall results of the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan?**

Fully promoting greater workforce equity requires dismantling years of historical and ingrained barriers to an inclusive workplace. This effort will require time, resources and commitment - and will be measured incrementally not dramatically. The Workforce Equity Strategic Plan has set forth recommendations for both platform and workforce investment strategies to reduce barriers and increase opportunities for all employees.

- **Platform Strategies:** Workforce equity strategies that catalyze organizational culture change through communication,

leadership and accountability in order to decrease barriers to an inclusive workplace. Platform strategies are foundational to dismantling workplace barriers.

- **Workforce Investment Strategies:** Strategies that provide benefits and/or support career development for all employees while dismantling barriers to full engagement (including access to training, benefits and career growth) for targeted employees.

2. **What methods were used in developing the Strategic Plan?**

This Strategic Plan involved extensive data collection including:

1. A review of the literature on the benefits of workforce equity strategies
2. A benchmark review of 11 employers that lead on workforce equity
3. 18 employee listening sessions reaching 253 City of Seattle employees
4. An employee survey with 4,454 employee responses
5. 27 leadership interviews—including elected officials, department leaders and representatives from the Labor Unions who represent City workers—which guided the vision for workforce equity at the City of Seattle

ACTION PLAN

3. What are the Mayor’s and City Councilmember’s recommendations as a result of the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan and what are the associated 2017 costs?

The Mayor and City Councilmembers believe

that we should begin our investment with Platform Strategies that offer the most potential for impact, and combine these with Workforce Investment Strategies that will benefit a broad range of City employees.

Platform Strategies

Training to Promote Unbiased Employment Decisions	\$130,000
Adopted, Citywide Performance Management	\$130,000
Consolidated Human Resources	\$255,000
Workforce Equity Project Manager	\$130,000

Investment Strategies

Extend Paid Parental Leave from 4 to 8 weeks	\$1.7 million
4 weeks Paid Family Care Leave	\$600,000

Total 2017 Costs	\$2.945 million
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4. Why were these workforce equity strategies chosen?

Recognizing that resources are limited, the

Mayor and City Councilmembers prioritized platform strategies that will promote a culture that values workplace diversity, accountability

and equality of access to resources, as well as the expansion of paid family leave, which is a more inclusive benefit that supports employees who are welcoming a child and those caring for an ill family member.

5. When will these policies be implemented?

Policies related to leave and other benefits must be negotiated with our Labor partners. Enacting legislation is under development and will be finalized after the City has had the opportunity to engage its represented employees.

PROPOSED EMPLOYEE PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Details of proposed leave benefits:

1. 2015: Added a 4 week supplement to parental leave
2. 2016: Add a 4 week supplement to parental leave
3. 2016: Add a 4 week supplement to existing family care leave
 - a. This is in addition to the current existing paid leave available to employees who must care for an ill family member (the average city employee has 10 weeks of leave already accrued)

How will the City administer these proposed benefits?

1. All employees experiencing a qualifying parental event will receive 8 weeks of paid parental leave, triggered by the event. Additional weeks can be added using accrued leave.
2. All employees experiencing a qualifying family care event will receive 4 weeks of paid family care leave, to be available to any employee with accumulated leave at or below 3 weeks of sick leave and 1 week of vacation leave. These 3 weeks of sick leave and 1 week of vacation will be held aside for the employee accessing the family care supplement unless they choose to use them to add on to their family care leave.

How is this policy predicted to affect employees?

1. Based on our analysis, we believe that 96% of employees welcoming a new child are projected to have at least 12 weeks of paid leave available for parental leave.
 - a. New parent employees who have been with the City for one year or more are projected to have an average of at least 12 weeks of paid parental leave: 8 week PPL benefit + at least 4 weeks accrued leave.
 - b. The average new parent employee would have 16 weeks of paid parental leave available: 8 week PPL benefit + 8 weeks accrued leave.

- c. New parent employees who have been with the City less than a year (just 4% of new parents on average) are projected to have an average of 10 weeks paid leave available: 8 week PPL benefit + 2 weeks accrued leave.
2. 99% of City employees would have their paid family care needs met in the event of a qualifying condition.
 - a. All employees will have guaranteed access to 4 weeks of paid family care.
 - b. The average employee will have up to 14 weeks of paid time off to care for an ill family member: 10 weeks of their own leave and 4 weeks of the supplement.

- a. Prior to the implementation of 2015's paid parental leave benefit, the average female new parent was able to take 10 weeks of paid leave to welcome a new child. When factoring in men, that average taken was 8 weeks.
- b. Adding another 4 weeks to the existing 4 week benefit, for a total of 8 weeks (the proposed policy), means that, on average, 98% of female new parents would have access to 12 weeks of paid parental leave. Adding in men, on average, 96% of all employees would have access to 12 weeks of paid parental leave.
- c. Under the proposed policy, the average new parent employee could take 16 weeks of paid parental leave.

What is the objective of each proposed leave benefit?

1. Parental Leave Objective: Achieve 12 weeks of paid leave for new parents.
2. Family Care Objective: Satisfy the anticipated need for our workforce to care for loved ones.
 - a. Federal data indicates that roughly 8%*



of our workforce may be expected to take family care leave each year, or +/- 900 employees.

- b. Of those 900 employees, the majority (63.4% or 571 total), will need at most 2 weeks of supplemental leave.
- c. The average employee has accrued 10 weeks of paid leave (counting only sick and vacation leave). This leave is extremely flexible: accruals can be rolled over every year and it can be used for any illness or emergency for oneself, spouse/domestic partner, child, parent, grandparent, or sibling of the employee or of the spouse/domestic partner.
 - i. For the average employee (who has 10 weeks of accrued leave), the City will ask them to use 6 weeks of their accrued leave (saving 3 weeks of sick leave and 1 week of vacation) before triggering the benefit. The 4 week supplement fulfills the vast majority of employees likely to need this type of leave. However, some employees will have more need than this benefit supplies.
- d. For example, of the 900 employees, 2.4% (21) are projected to need 24 or more weeks of leave, a level of need which the City is unlikely to meet. However, if the average employee chose to use all their accumulated leave and the benefit, the City would be able to meet about 14 weeks of the needed leave at full pay.
- e. Under the proposed policy, the City will meet the needs of 92% of those employees needing family care leave in a year. In other terms, over 99% of the City workforce's potential needs would be met.

*Specific and robust data on family care leave usage by our workforce has not historically been collected by the City Seattle. As such, the City Economists whom conducted this analysis relied upon Federal Department of Labor statistics. Thus, all of these numbers are approximations.