

UNEQUAL FAMILY LEAVE

Are working parents eligible and can they afford it?

A diversitydatakids.org Data-For-Action Fact Sheet | OCTOBER 2015

Family leave is a valuable prescription for child health

Family leave plays a vital role in children's healthy development by allowing parents who work (about 75% of all parents) to take time off to provide care after the birth or adoption of a child and when a child is sick. Research shows that when parents are present to provide care, children (1) recover faster from illnesses and injuries, (2) have shorter hospital stays, and (3) are more likely to receive preventive care.

The FMLA is landmark legislation that guarantees unpaid leave

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) guarantees eligible workers the right to 12 weeks of job-protected, unpaid leave to care for themselves or their family members in case of serious illness, or after childbirth or adoption. Eligibility is determined by several factors including employer firm size and number of hours worked.

diversitydatakids.org
data for a diverse and equitable future

Visit diversitydatakids.org to explore data on working parents and children by race/ethnicity across states.

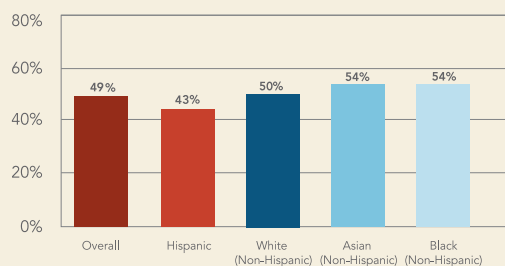
New data highlight working parents' limited eligibility for FMLA leave by race/ethnicity...

New diversitydatakids.org indicators for working parents with children under 18 (who constitute over one third of the workforce) provide the first national and state-level estimates of FMLA eligibility among parents by race and ethnicity. These data show that FMLA eligibility criteria exclude just over half of working parents.



Only about half of working parents are eligible for FMLA leave

Percent of working parents who are eligible under the FMLA



Across racial/ethnic groups, just under 50% of working parents are eligible for FMLA leave. Hispanic parents have the lowest eligibility rate.

Source: diversitydatakids.org calculations of Current Population Survey, 2011-2014 March Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Public Use Microdata Files.

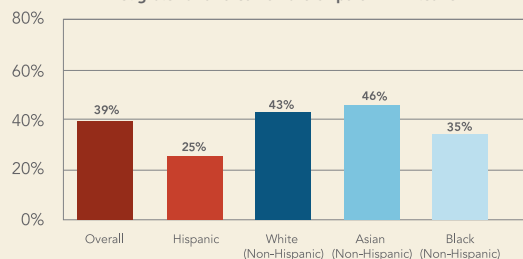
...And show that *unpaid* leave granted under the FMLA is unaffordable, especially for Hispanic parents.

Not only are less than half of working parents eligible for FMLA unpaid leave, but even fewer can actually afford to take it. This 'affordability gap' is especially pronounced for Hispanic and black parents. In response, states such as California, Rhode Island and New Jersey have passed paid leave legislation to make family leave more affordable. Go to diversitydatakids.org to explore indicators of state FMLA eligibility and affordability gaps that may inform data-driven efforts to expand equitable access to paid leave.



Fewer than 40% of working parents are eligible under the FMLA and can afford to take unpaid leave

Percent of working parents who are eligible for and can afford unpaid FMLA leave



Hispanic and black parents are the least able to afford unpaid leave to care for their children.

Source: diversitydatakids.org calculations of Current Population Survey, 2011-2014 March Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Public Use Microdata Files.