

# FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE USE AND NEED AMONG CITY OF MADISON EMPLOYEES



# **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE USE AND NEED AMONG CITY OF MADISON EMPLOYEES**

**A Research Report  
for the City of Madison, Wisconsin  
By**

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# **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE USE AND NEED AMONG CITY OF MADISON EMPLOYEES**

## **Executive Summary**

**Family and Medical Leave in the United States.** Nearly everyone will need to take some time off work to take care of one's own or a family member's serious illness or to care for a new child at some point in his or her career. However, unlike workers in every other developed nation, workers in the United States are not guaranteed paid time off work for family and medical reasons.

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible employees job protection for up to 12 weeks of leave for qualifying family and medical reasons. While the number of companies providing paid leave is increasing, the majority of workers in the US do not have access to paid family and medical leave.<sup>i</sup> As a result, most employees must use accumulated sick leave and paid vacation and holidays to cover their pay while on leave. Employees with leave balances from those sources can cover some of the costs of their FMLA leaves, but differences in accrued time off, job flexibility, and individual circumstances create disparities in ability to take the desired amount of family and medical leave. In addition, differences in caregiving responsibilities lead to differences in leave-taking that have financial implications during work and retirement. Thus, the FMLA leaves some workers economically vulnerable and disadvantages those who have higher caregiving demands.

In the absence of a federal policy, a growing number of employers are instating paid family leave policies for their employees and reaping benefits such as higher productivity and greater worker loyalty. These policies also benefit workers, who are able to take time off work for family and medical reasons without sacrificing pay. Prior research on family and medical leave demonstrates clear benefits to employees who take longer leaves: they are healthier and happier. Paid leave policies tend to produce more equality in earnings and in family responsibilities between women and men.

**Leave Policy in the City of Madison.** The City of Madison complies with all applicable federal and state laws concerning unpaid family or medical leave. In addition, the City offers generous and flexible benefits including paid sick leave, paid vacation and personal time, and a wage insurance benefit covering 65% of salary for disability leave. Those opting to take up to 12 weeks family leave must first take sick leave, then vacation and personal time, and then may qualify for wage insurance. Finally, they may take leave without pay if they have exhausted their sick leave and vacation balances.

**City of Madison's Paid Leave Study.** With funding from the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, the City of Madison partnered with researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison to study the use of and need for family and medical leave among the City's workforce. Over the summer of 2017, a survey was distributed to all City of Madison permanent employees. The survey gathered information on employees' use of family and medical leave and attitudes towards leave-taking. The findings from the study are presented in this report.

**Summary of Research Findings.** The survey of City employees asked specifically about experiences with three types of leave: parental, caregiving, and personal medical. Because persistent gender differences in caregiving affect gender equality in the workplace, this report pays special attention to gender disparities in leave taking.

Almost all City of Madison employees take at least some time off work following the birth or adoption of a child (94% of those with a child age 10 or younger). While women and men are almost equally likely to take a parental leave, women take more than twice as much time off work as men (10.5 weeks vs. 4 weeks). The fact that neither men nor women average the full 12 weeks of job-protected leave granted by FMLA suggests barriers to longer parental leaves. Indeed, most parents said the amount of time they were able to take off was too little, with mothers especially likely to wish for more time off to spend with their new child (70% vs. 54% for fathers).

Over one-third of City employees have taken time off work in the past five years to care for the serious or chronic illness of a family member, most often a parent. Caregiving leave is especially common among older employees. Women took twice as much time off for caregiving leave as men (9 days vs. 4.5 days). Workers with higher earnings also took longer caregiving leaves than did lower-earners across all departments.

In the past five years, one-third of City employees have taken medical leave for their own serious or chronic illness. For their most recent medical leave, workers took an average of 4 weeks off work. Lower earners were more likely to have taken medical leave across all departments. Differences in rates and lengths of medical leave between departments suggest the importance of workplace accommodations, job flexibility, and the demands of the work on health. Among departments, Metro (transit) employees had particularly high rates of medical leave and took the longest leaves. Police Department employees returned to work the quickest, perhaps because the Police Department offers some flexibility in job responsibilities, such as doing temporary light duty work, when there is a physical limitation.

Although most leave-takers said they returned to work when they did because the leave was no longer needed, many thought that more time off was needed. Among parents, 60 percent wanted more time at home with their new child. Over half of those who took

time off to care for others and two-thirds of those who took medical leave for themselves said their leaves were too short. When asked why they returned to work when they did, leave-takers identified several push factors – financial considerations were especially important. Women experienced additional barriers to longer leave: they were less likely to say they no longer needed leave and more likely to report feeling pressure to return to work from bosses or co-workers. In general, women were more likely to hear negative comments about the leave-taking of co-workers and themselves.

These workplace and financial barriers also result in employees not taking leave when they need one. Over a third of City employees have experienced at least one instance in which they felt they were unable to take time off work for their own serious illness, to care for a family member with a serious illness, or for a newborn or adopted child. For the majority of those who experienced an unmet need for leave, financial concerns, such as not having enough paid time off, and fears of workplace repercussions influenced their decision to forgo leave.

In addition to these structural barriers to leave taking, men face specific attitudinal barriers regarding parental leave. When asked about some hypothetical situations, City employees indicated that men should take shorter parental leaves than women, even for adoption. Whether fathers' parental leave is paid also affects the support for their leave use – employees are more likely to approve of paternity leave when that leave is paid and men's approval is particularly dependent on the leave being paid.

**Conclusions.** The majority of City employees have taken family or medical leave in the past five years. Over half of those who took leave reported that they were not able to take enough time off and many cited financial constraints, such as running out of paid time off, as one of main factors influencing their return to work. This study revealed a number of differences in experience and expressed need for leave within the City of Madison workforce. These differences reflect life and work experiences that vary by gender, age, race, and earnings, as well as the demands or conditions within various City departments. As researchers, we have analyzed the data from survey respondents and combined it with insights from interviews with supervisors and administrative professionals. We used this information to develop a more complete understanding of the importance of family and medical leave to a wide range of City workers. We encourage the City to review these data and consider whether and what additional steps to take to provide paid leave for its employees. A paid family and medical leave policy would remove many of the barriers employees face in taking time off work for family and medical leave. Such a policy could help overcome barriers expressed in the study by women, racial and ethnic minorities, and low earners.

## Background on This Study

Employer-backed paid family and medical leave provides critical support to working families in the absence of a federal policy. Funded by a grant from the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, the City of Madison partnered with researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison to assess the need for an expanded paid leave policy. Toward that end, researchers conducted a study of family and medical leave use and experiences among the City's employees.<sup>1</sup> The research team was headed by Professor Leann Tigges and included graduate students Miriam Barcus and Jungmyung Kim.

The United States stands alone among developed countries in not mandating any paid time off for employees' family and medical needs. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave for an employees' own serious medical condition, to care for an immediate family member with a serious medical condition, or for the birth or adoption of a child. Because pay is not mandated by the law, it is up to individual employers to provide their employees with the pay they need. Many large employers have some policies or programs to at least partially cover the wages of workers who take FMLA leaves.

The City of Madison offers its employees a relatively generous package of paid sick leave and paid vacation and personal time. Employees who become seriously ill or suffer from chronic illness may also qualify for wage insurance, which can be used to cover 65 percent of salary after all sick leave has been exhausted. For the birth or adoption of a child or to care for a seriously or chronically ill family member, employees must first draw on their sick leave and vacation balances. Once these are exhausted, they may take unpaid time off work. However, employees have an incentive to save sick leave, because accumulated sick leave can be used to pay insurance premiums in retirement.

A large and diverse organization, the City of Madison has approximately 2,800 permanent employees across 26 departments that range from transit ("Metro"), water utility, police, and fire, to human resources and attorneys. Historically, municipal workers were represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). However, with the State of Wisconsin's passage of Act 10 in 2011, these bargaining rights were eliminated. Transit workers maintained full bargaining rights through the Teamster Union, and Police Department and Fire Department employees have modified bargaining rights through their respective unions. While the majority of City employees are no longer represented by unions, the

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term "City employees" to refer to those who work for the City of Madison.

legacy of unionism has contributed to the current job protections and benefits, and the City has sought to equalize benefits across units to the extent possible.

The City's workforce is predominantly male (68%). Close to one-third of City employees are in their prime childbearing years (between 26 and 40 years old). The 59 percent of workers between the ages of 41 and 70 are especially vulnerable to the demands of caring for ailing family members. Thus, City workers are likely to need not just medical leave, but parental and caregiving leaves.

## The Benefits of Paid Leave

### For Employees

Almost all workers need to take time off work during their careers to take care of themselves or their family members. Our survey results show that leave for family and medical reasons is widely used and needed by City of Madison employees. In the past five years, slightly more than half of City employees have taken time off work for their own serious or chronic illness or to care for a family member with a serious or chronic illness. Among City employees with a child age 10 or younger, nearly all (94%) took time off work for the birth or adoption of their youngest child.

Although City employees receive a relatively generous package of paid sick and vacation days and wage insurance, they lack an additional source of paid leave dedicated to parental or caregiving leaves. Thus, employees who have a baby or a family member with a serious illness must draw on their sick and vacation days in order to take paid time off to care for them. While some employees have accumulated enough leave to take as much time as they need to care for a new child or ill family member, others are faced with the difficult choice of foregoing time off or taking unpaid leave.

In addition, City employees who have to use more of their sick leave face long-term financial consequences. Unused sick leave balances can be applied to health insurance premiums during retirement. As a result, retirees who use more of their sick leave for family reasons during their careers face financial costs not borne by those who did not take time off for caregiving. The disparities are especially sharp by gender, as women take more time off work than men for caregiving purposes. In addition to taking longer parental leaves, women may spend as much as 50 percent more time than men providing care to adults.<sup>ii</sup>

As shown in extensive research, paid leave has many benefits beyond the financial. Paid family leave enhances the health and well-being of individuals and the family overall. New mothers are more likely to breastfeed when they take maternity leave; paid family leave is associated with lower rates of infant mortality; and mothers who take longer maternity leaves have lower levels of post-partum depression.<sup>iii</sup> Men who

take longer parental leaves are more involved in child care.<sup>iv</sup> Fathers' use of parental leave may be particularly important for reducing workplace gender inequality. While childless women's earnings are roughly equal to those of their male counterparts (96 cents to a man's dollar), mothers face a "motherhood wage penalty." Among full-time workers, the average mother earns only 71 cents to a father's dollar.<sup>v</sup> Encouraging men to share in caregiving and reducing the cost of caregiving by providing paid family leave may help diminish this persistent inequality.

## For Employers

One of the biggest concerns surrounding the implementation of paid family leave policies has to do with how such a policy will affect the organization. Some businesses have expressed concern over the cost and potential employee abuse of the policy. However, empirical studies have consistently found that paid family leave does not negatively affect businesses. Indeed, employers often report positive impacts. Of 250 companies reviewed by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), all believed that paid family leave is good for their workers and has clear business benefits.<sup>vi</sup> These companies report that the payoff from offering paid family leave exceeds its cost. Rather than having a negative financial impact, most employers in another study reported that offering a paid family and medical leave policy had either a positive effect (63%) or no effect (22%) on their profitability, and either a positive effect (71%) or no effect (22%) on employee productivity.<sup>vii</sup>

Paid family leave can increase workforce retention, which reduces costs associated with turnover. Seventy-one percent of employers with a paid family leave program reported that having the policy reduced turnover.<sup>viii</sup> Replacing an employee generally costs around 21 percent of the employee's salary.<sup>ix</sup> Concerns about employee abuse of a paid leave policy have little basis in available data. Only 9 percent of employers report being aware of an instance in which an employee abused the policy.<sup>x</sup> As a result, providing access to paid family leave has the potential to save employers money with little risk of employee abuse.

## The City of Madison Paid Leave Study – Methods

This study is designed to explore how past leave-taking behaviors and current attitudes toward leave-taking differ by gender, age, race/ethnicity, and department. It also seeks to document areas of unmet need for family and medical leave and the reasons for that need being unmet.

The main component of the study is a survey of all 2,825 permanent employees of the City in June 2017, the start of the survey. The survey continued through the end of September 2017. It was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center on behalf of Professor Tigges. A link to a web survey was sent by email to all employees

who have City (i.e., work) email addresses. Employees without City email addresses (primarily those in field positions), as well as web non-responders, received paper copies of the survey at their home addresses. The response rate for the survey was 63 percent, a total of 1,773 responses. The characteristics of respondents are shown in Appendix A. The survey, which is provided in Appendix B, asked about work and family situations, leave-taking experiences as well as unmet need for leave. Administrative records provided additional information, as did semi-structured interviews with 17 individuals in key positions within the City. Those interviewed primarily administered leave programs or supervised employees.

## Findings: Leave Use and Experiences of City Employees

### Parental Leave

Although the City of Madison does not have a separate paid leave program for parental leave, new parents are able to use their paid sick and vacation days to cover time they take off work after the birth or adoption of a child. Birth mothers can use wage insurance to partially cover their pay during the six weeks immediately following the birth. However, they must use all of their accumulated sick leave before wage insurance payments begin. If a birth mother's sick leave balance is less than six weeks, wage insurance will cover the remainder of the six-week period post-birth. If her sick leave balance exceeds six weeks, however, she is not eligible for wage insurance payments. For men and for women after six weeks, parental leave is either paid through sick leave, vacation days, or floating holidays or taken as unpaid, job-protected leave through FMLA for up to 12 weeks.

Among City employees with a child age 10 or younger, nearly all (94%) took time off work for the birth or adoption of their youngest child.<sup>2</sup> The average length of parental leave was a little more than 5 weeks (28 work days).

Mothers and fathers were almost equally likely to take at least some parental leave (96% vs. 93%), but mothers took almost twice as much time off work as fathers for the birth

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<sup>2</sup> This does not include employees of the Fire Department. The Fire Department is unique in two important ways. First, full-time work for firefighters consists of two 24-hour shifts per week. Thus, they can continue to work full-time and still be home five days of the week. Additionally, they have a formalized system for trading work days. This swapping system allows Fire Department employees to swap days with their coworkers, with the assumption that they will cover for their coworker in the future. As a result, many firefighters may not have the same need to take official leave as other employees. Only 59% of Fire Department employees with a child 10 years-old or younger took parental leave (compared to over 90% in all other departments). When Fire Department employees are included in the statistics, 87 percent of parents of young children took parental leave.

or adoption of a child. Mothers took off an average of 10.5 weeks compared to fathers 4 weeks of parental leave. Mothers employed by the City took about the same amount of parental leave as the national average. Fathers employed by the City took longer paternity leaves than the national average.<sup>xi</sup> However, neither fathers nor mothers averaged the full 12 weeks of job-protected leave offered by FMLA for the birth or adoption of a child. (See Table 1.)

Racial and ethnic differences also mark parental leave use and length. More whites than racial and ethnic minorities took parental leave (95% vs. 86%). This disparity remains even when controlling for factors such as education, department, sex, and income. Additionally, on average, whites took almost a week longer parental leave than racial and ethnic minorities. (See Table 1.)

**Table 1: Parental Leave Use and Satisfaction**

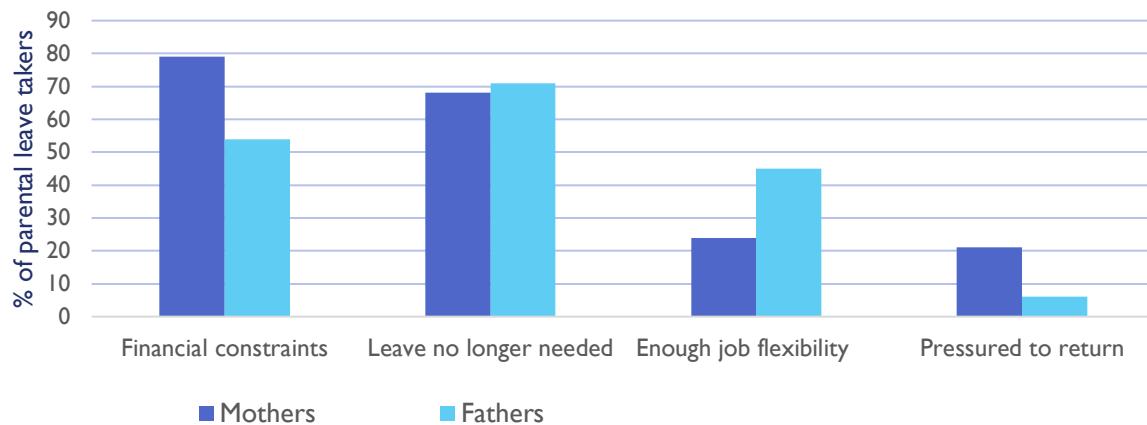
|                          | Took leave (%) | Avg. days off | Leave too short (%) |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Men                      | 93             | 19            | 54                  |
| Women                    | 96             | 52            | 73                  |
| Whites                   | 95             | 28            | 57                  |
| Racial/Ethnic minorities | 86             | 23            | 67                  |

The majority (58%) of parents felt that the amount of time they took off for the birth or adoption of their child was too short. As shown in Table 1, mothers were less satisfied with the length of their leave than were fathers. Racial and ethnic minorities seem to face more barriers to parental leave than do their white counterparts: they are less likely to take leave, their leaves are shorter, and more of them wished for longer parental leave. (See Table 1.)

While many parents reported that they returned to work in part because they no longer needed to be on leave, they gave a number of other reasons for returning to work. The reasons most often given indicate that parents may face significant barriers to taking longer parental leaves. Financial considerations were the most common reasons why parents ended parental leave, with 6 in 10 parents saying these figured in their decision about when to return to work.

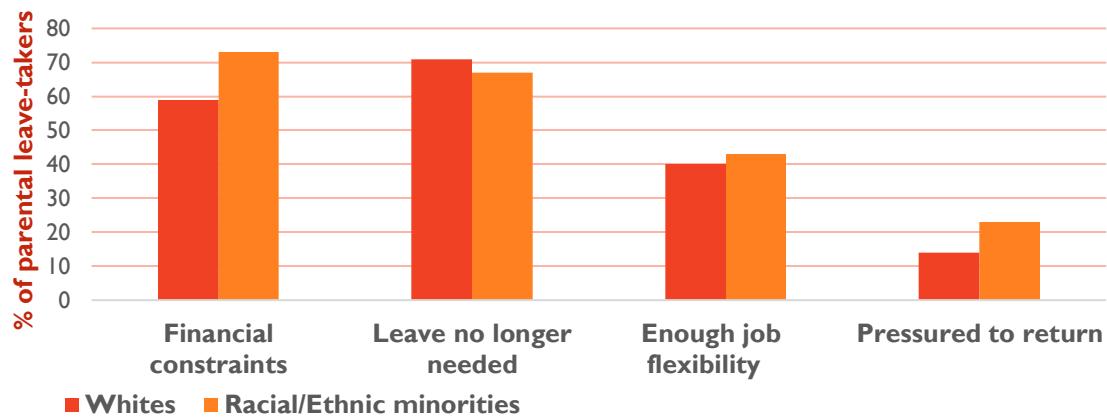
However, this average hides a big gender difference. Only 54 percent of fathers listed financial limitations, compared to 79 percent of mothers. This difference is likely related to women's longer parental leaves and suggests that lacking paid parental leave is a major factor preventing women from taking the full 12 weeks of job-protected leave under FMLA. Additionally, more than three times as many mothers as fathers (21% vs. 6%) said they felt pressured by their boss or co-workers to return to work. However, mothers were only about half as likely as fathers to say they returned to work when they did because they had enough job flexibility to work and provide the necessary care to their child. (See Figure 1.)

**Figure 1: Reasons for Returning to Work from Parental Leave, by Gender**



Racial and ethnic minorities faced more barriers to taking longer leaves. They were more likely to cite financial concerns and fear of workplace repercussions than were whites. (See Figure 2.)

**Figure 2: Reasons for Returning to Work from Parental Leave, by Race**



## Caregiving Leave

Thirty-six percent of City employees have taken time off work to care for a family member with a serious or chronic illness in the past five years. Older employees are more likely than their younger counterparts to take leave to care for others.

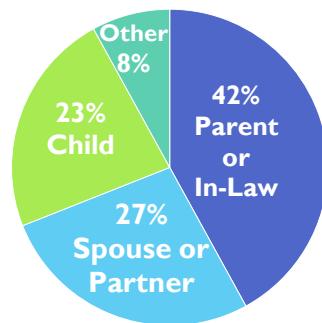
Respondents who indicated they took any family or medical leave within the past five years were asked a series of follow-up questions regarding their most recent leave-taking experience. The following results are from the respondents who said their most recent leave was to care for a family member with a serious or chronic illness.

The most common reason for taking caregiving leave was to care for a parent or parent-in-law, followed by a spouse or partner, and child. (See Figure 3.)

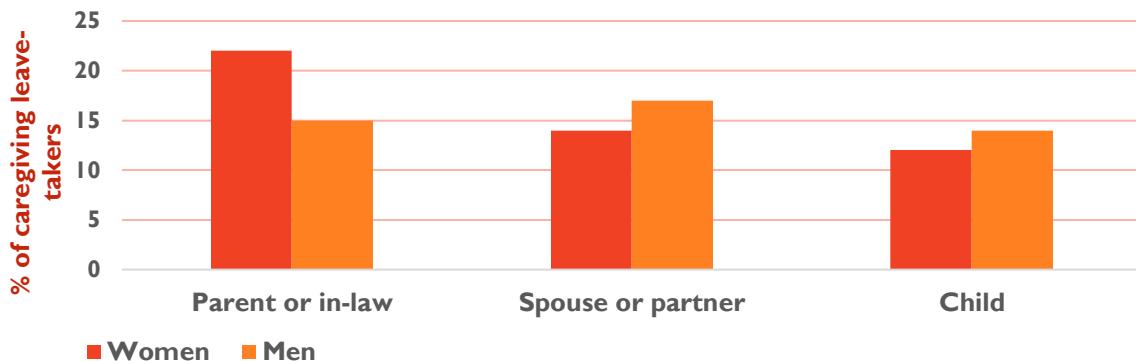
Similar proportions of men and women took time off to care for children and spouses or partners. However, women were more likely to take leave to care for a parent or parent-in-law (24% vs. 15%). (See Figure 4.)

City employees averaged 6 days off work for caregiving, but here too, the overall average masks large gender disparities. Women take twice as much time off as men (9 vs. 4.5 days). Additionally, employees with higher earnings take more time off to provide care to others than do those with lower earnings.

**Figure 3: Care Recipient During Caregiving Leave**



**Figure 4: Care Recipient During Caregiving Leave, by Respondent's Gender**



Over half (56%) of City employees who took caregiving leave felt that their leave was too short. Older workers, Metro employees, and racial and ethnic minorities were especially likely to report dissatisfaction with the length of their leaves. (See Table 2.) Those who were dissatisfied thought they needed an additional 22 days off work, on average.

As was the case for medical leave, the most common reason City employees returned to work from caregiving leave was because they no longer needed the leave. Job flexibility allowed some workers to return to work earlier than other workers. Men and high earners were especially likely to say that they could return to work because their jobs allowed them to balance caregiving and work responsibilities. Financial considerations were important for women and those with

**Table 2: Caregiving Leave Too Short**

| Gender                   | %  |
|--------------------------|----|
| Men                      | 43 |
| Women                    | 46 |
| Race                     |    |
| White                    | 43 |
| Racial/Ethnic Minorities | 52 |
| Age                      |    |
| 18-44                    | 32 |
| 45+                      | 60 |
| Department               |    |
| Professional             | 46 |
| Field                    | 55 |
| Police                   | 60 |
| Fire                     | 60 |
| Metro                    | 68 |

lower earnings. Women again were more than twice as likely as men to report feeling pressured to return to work by their bosses or co-workers. (See Table 3.)

**Table 3: Reasons for Returning to Work from Caregiving Leave, by Gender and Earnings (%)**

|              | Financial constraints | Enough job flexibility | Pressured to return |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Men          | 32                    | 44                     | 6                   |
| Women        | 38                    | 31                     | 15                  |
| High earners | 27                    | 50                     | 6                   |
| Low earners  | 46                    | 25                     | 10                  |

## Medical Leave

Overall, one third of City employees have taken medical leave (leave for their own serious or chronic illness or ongoing medical care) in the past five years, but some groups are particularly likely to have taken leave for this reason. City employees in the bottom earnings quartile are one-third more likely to have taken medical leave than those in the top earnings quartile (37% vs. 28%), regardless of departmental category.

Some differences in medical leave taking emerge by department. Metro employees are the most likely to have used medical leave, with half reporting leave use for this reason in the past five years. Metro's high rates of medical leave are likely related to the physical demands of bus driving (remaining seated for extended periods of time in restrictive positions) and the lack of job flexibility (they cannot work from home and have demanding work hours).

Respondents who indicated they took any family or medical leave within the past five years were asked a series of questions regarding their most recent leave-taking experience. The following results are from those whose most recent leave was for their own serious or chronic illness or ongoing medical care.

Among City employees who took medical leave, the average time off was 22 work days. Among departments, Metro employees took the longest leaves, and Police Department employees took the shortest medical leaves. Professional, field, and Fire Department employees all took about the average length of leave.<sup>3</sup> (See Table 4.) The differences in leave length among departments reflect the kinds of accommodations available. For example, the Police Department provides light duty work for some employees who are unable to work in their patrol jobs immediately after an injury or illness. Metro employees, however, do not necessarily have a similar option. These accommodations are reflected in the responses of Police Department and Metro employees regarding

<sup>3</sup> "Professional" refers to departments such as Human Resources, the City Attorney's Office, and the Clerk's Office, while "field" refers departments such as Parks and Streets & Recycling.

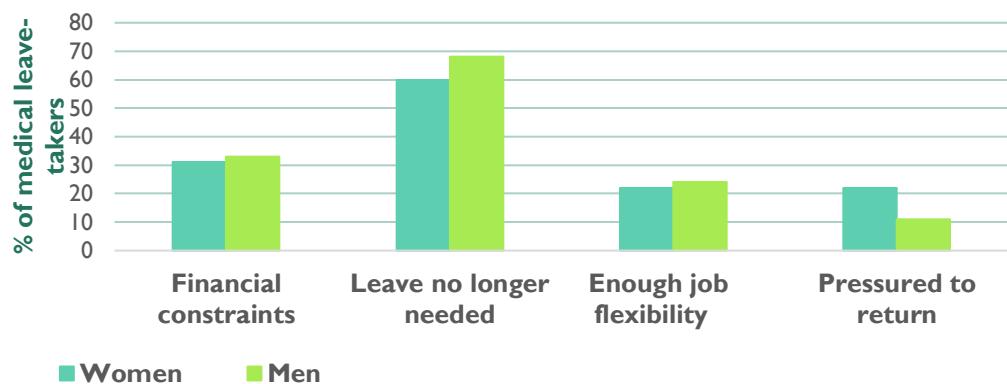
why they returned to work when they did after medical leave. About a third of Police Department employees who had been on medical leave said they returned because they had enough job flexibility to care for their condition while working, compared to only 6 percent of Metro employees.

**Table 4: Medical Leave Use and Satisfaction, by Department**

|              | Took leave (%) | Avg. days off | Leave too short (%) |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Professional | 34             | 23            | 55                  |
| Field        | 35             | 22            | 65                  |
| Police       | 26             | 13            | 61                  |
| Fire         | 26             | 21            | 76                  |
| Metro        | 48             | 30            | 60                  |

Among all those who took medical leave, almost two-thirds said their leave was too short. Medical leave-takers wanted an additional 15 work days (3 weeks) off work for their illness or medical care. While the majority said they returned to work when they did because they no longer needed to be on leave, clear barriers to longer leaves exist. These barriers often are financial. One-third of medical leave-takers said that financial concerns influenced their decision to return to work when they did. Women experience additional barriers: they are less likely to say they no longer needed leave and more likely to report feeling pressure to return to work from bosses or co-workers. (See Figure 5.)

**Figure 5: Reasons for Returning to Work from Medical Leave, by Gender**



## Unmet Need for Leave

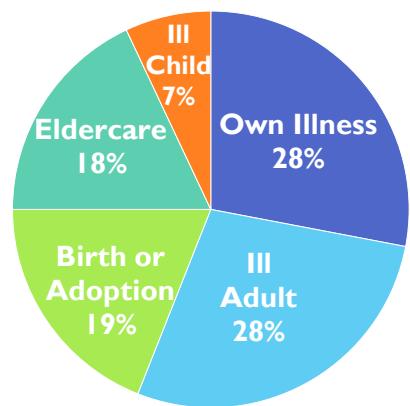
It is not uncommon for employees to want to take time off work for their own serious illness, to care for a family member with a serious illness, or a newborn or adopted child, but not take that leave. Over a third of respondents have experienced an unmet need for leave while working for the City. Overall, women are more likely than men

(39% vs. 33%) and racial and ethnic minorities are more likely than whites (41% vs. 34%) to have found themselves in this situation.

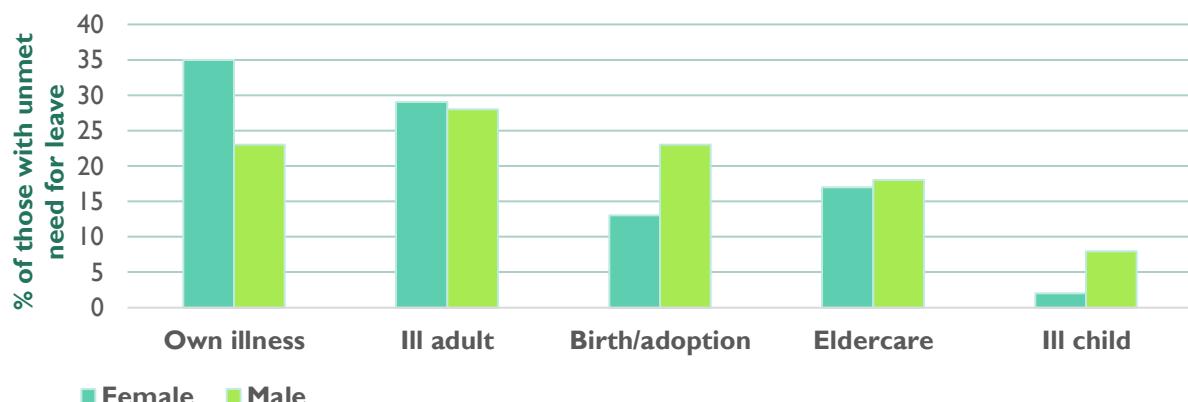
Among those who felt unable to take leave when they needed it, the most commonly cited reasons were for their own illness or medical condition and to care for an ill adult family member, followed by birth or adoption of a child, and eldercare. (See Figure 6.)

Men and women differed in their reasons for wanting to take leave that they ultimately did not take. Men were much more likely than women to have experienced an unmet need for parental leave and to care for an ill child. In contrast, women were more likely to have wanted leave for their own illness or medical care. (See Figure 7.) The longer lengths of women's leave for the care of others may be coming at the expense of time to care for their own health.

**Figure 6: Reasons for Wanting Leave That Was Ultimately Not Taken**



**Figure 7: Reasons for Wanting Leave that was Ultimately Not Taken, by Gender**



The biggest barrier to leave use was financial, with 86 percent of those who reported an unmet need for leave stating that this was one of the reasons they did not take time off work. Concern about workplace repercussions was the second most common reason. Over half of those who have experienced an unmet need for leave said concerns such as losing out on a potential promotion or being treated differently were factors in their decision not to take time off work. These workplace concerns were especially common among low earners and women. (See Figure 8.)

**Figure 8: Reasons for Not Taking Leave, by Gender**



## Findings: Cultural Barriers to Leave Use

It is clear that City employees are facing barriers to taking the leave they feel they need for family and medical reasons. Some of these barriers clearly have to do with the availability of paid time off work, as indicated above. However, City employees also reported fear of workplace repercussions, which either encouraged them to return to work before they wanted or deterred them from taking leave at all.

### Negative Comments about Leave Use

Almost 4 in 10 employees reported hearing negative comments from a City employee about someone taking off work for a family or medical reason.

Women were more likely than men to report hearing negative comments (45% vs. 34%). Negative comments were most commonly heard by Metro and Police Department employees (56% and 54%, respectively), nearly double the rate of field workers and Fire Department employees. (See Table 5.)

Employees were much more likely to have heard negative comments about their coworkers than about themselves. However, among employees who reported hearing negative comments, a higher percentage of women than men heard negative comments about themselves.

**Table 5: Heard Negative Comments about Leave Use (%)**

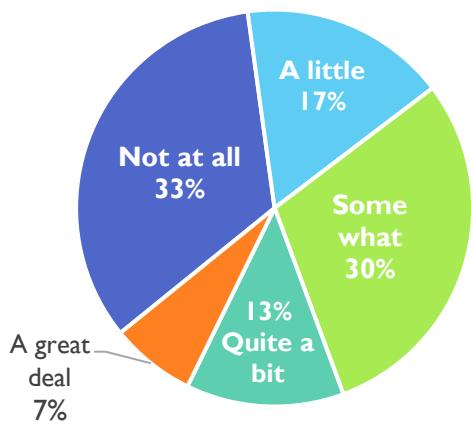
| Gender          |    |
|-----------------|----|
| Male            | 34 |
| Female          | 45 |
| Salary quartile |    |
| 0-24%           | 36 |
| 25-49%          | 30 |
| 50-74%          | 38 |
| 75-100%         | 46 |
| Department      |    |
| Metro           | 56 |
| Police          | 54 |
| Professional    | 24 |
| Field           | 29 |
| Fire            | 22 |

## Attitudes about Gender and Parental Leave

Given that parental leave may be a particularly important aspect in gender equality in the workplace and at home, attitudes surrounding parental leave are important to understand. While men employed by the City take less than half the amount of parental leave that women do, and they are slightly less likely than women to take any parental leave, many men want to take more time to help care for their children. One reason for gender disparities in parental leave use may be traditional cultural understandings about men's role as the primary breadwinner and women's role as the primary caregiver. Whether fathers themselves hold these beliefs or not, the attitudes of their supervisors and co-workers may affect their parental leave decisions.

City of Madison employees as a whole do not think that a traditional family structure is significantly better for families than alternative family structures. One third of City employees do not believe at all that a family structure in which the man is the primary achiever outside of the home and the woman is primarily responsible for taking care of home and family is the best for all family members. Almost half of City employees think this traditional family structure is somewhat or a little better and one fifth think it is quite a bit or a great deal better. (See Figure 9.) But there are large gender differences in beliefs regarding the best family structure. Women are almost twice as likely as men to say that a traditional family structure is not necessarily the best, while men are twice as likely as women to say that they believe traditional family structure is better for all family members.

**Figure 9. Responses to the Question: How Much Do You Believe a Traditional Family Structure Is Best for All Family Members?**



These gender role attitudes may translate to attitudes regarding parental leave. To assess this connection, survey respondents were given two different scenarios. Each scenario had two different versions which were presented randomly to respondents.

The first scenario asked respondents to think about Steve (version 1) or Susan (version 2), who was adopting an infant with his/her spouse. Steve/Susan's company offers 12 weeks of paid parental leave for new parents. Because this scenario focused on adoption, it provides insight into how City employees think about mothers' and fathers' roles in the absence of any physical differences such as breastfeeding or recovery from childbirth.

Respondents were asked how many weeks of paid parental leave Steve/Susan should take. Those who had the scenario with Steve thought he should take 9.5 weeks of parental leave. In contrast, respondents said Susan should take 11 weeks. But women respondents thought that, in either case, the parent should have a week longer leave than did male respondents. There are significant differences among male respondents based on age. Men 44 years old and younger thought Steve should take about 10 weeks of parental leave, while those age 45 and older thought Steve should only take 8 weeks off.

In addition to thinking Steve should take less time off for the adoption of his child than Susan, City employees also thought it was more likely Steve would be considered less serious about work by his supervisor if he took the full 12 weeks of parental than if Susan did the same. One fourth thought Steve would be considered less serious by his supervisor, compared to 18 percent for Susan, with men and women responding similarly.

The responses to these scenarios show that fathers face significant expectations, from men and women alike, to return to work sooner than mothers. Men are less supportive than women of long paternal leaves, and older men are the least supportive.

Given men's expected role as breadwinners, it is also important to understand whether having paid versus unpaid paternity leave affects approval. The second scenario also had two versions, which were presented randomly. Respondents were asked to think about John, whose wife is pregnant and whose company does not have paid parental leave. John is considering using his paid sick and vacation days (version 1) or unpaid job-protected family leave (version 2) to take 4 weeks off after the birth of his child.

Respondents were more likely to say John should take time off work for the birth of his child if that time off was made up of paid sick and vacation days than if the time off was without pay (90% vs. 75%). Men were less likely than women to approve of John's time off, whether or not that time is paid. Additionally, whether the leave was paid seems to have a larger effect on men's than women's approval of John's leave-taking. When the leave was unpaid, 71 percent of men said John should take time off, compared to 86 percent of women. When the leave was paid, 81 percent of men said John should take time off, compared to 92 percent of women.

Compared to Steve's 12 weeks of parental leave, John's 4 weeks were seen as less likely to diminish his supervisor's opinion of him. Whether the leave was paid or unpaid did not change women's perception of what John's supervisor would think about him. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to say that John would be seen as less serious about work by his supervisor if the leave was unpaid than if it were paid.

Attitudes about gender roles seem to influence approval of men's parental leave. City employees with more traditional view on men and women's roles in the family thought Steve should take about 2 fewer weeks off work than the average. Whether John's leave was paid made a big difference for those who think it is best when the man is the primary achiever outside of the home. While 4 in 10 people with these views thought John should not take 4 weeks of unpaid leave, only 2 in 10 thought John should forgo time off if it was paid. These differences suggest that approval for men's parental leave is in part influenced by attitudes regarding men's breadwinner role. Providing paid parental leave may help increase approval of men's leave use.

## Summary

Through this study of City employees, we sought answers to questions about who uses family and medical leave, why they use it, and how adequately they have been served by current leave policies. Looking at leave for family reasons, we find that while almost all parents take at least some time off work following the birth or adoption of a child, women take more than twice as much time off work as men. However, mothers fall short of the 12 weeks of job-protected leave granted by FMLA. Over one-third of City employees have taken time off work in the past five years to care for the serious or chronic illness of a family member, most often their parent. Here too, women took twice as much time off as men. Workers also need leave for their own serious or chronic illness. One-third of City employees have taken medical leave in the past five years. Differences in rates and lengths of medical leave between departments suggest the importance of the work demands on health, workplace accommodations, and job flexibility.

Many who took leave thought that more time off was needed. Among parents, 60 percent wanted more time with their child. Over half of those who took time off to care for others and two-thirds of those who took medical leave for themselves said their leaves were too short. When asked why they returned to work when they did, leave-takers identified several push factors. Financial considerations were especially important. Women experience additional barriers: they are less likely to say they no longer needed leave and are more likely to report feeling pressure to return to work from bosses or co-workers. In general, women were more likely to hear negative comments about the leave-taking of co-workers and themselves.

These workplace and financial barriers may also result in employees not taking leave that they need. Over a third of City employees have experienced an unmet need for leave: a time when they wanted, but did not take, time off work for their own serious illness, to care for a family member with a serious illness, or to care for a newborn or adopted child. The majority of these employees said that financial concerns, such as not

having enough paid time off, and fears of workplace repercussions influenced their decision to forgo leave.

In addition to these structural barriers to leave taking, men face specific attitudinal barriers regarding parental leave. When presented with hypothetical situations, City employees said that men should take shorter parental leaves than women, even for adoption. Employees, especially men, are more likely to approve of paternity leave when that leave is paid than unpaid.

## Conclusions

This study is designed to explore how past leave-taking behaviors and current attitudes toward leave-taking differ by gender, age, race/ethnicity, and department. It also seeks to document areas of unmet need for family and medical leave and the reasons for that need being unmet.

The survey results reveal significant disparities in the use of leave between men and women, whites and racial-ethnic minorities, and high- and low-earners. These findings may point toward the need for a guaranteed paid leave policy within the City. They may also indicate a need for other measures, such as training of supervisory staff and the City workforce in general, to overcome bias that undermines equal use of leave. The longer-term effect of these changes could help reduce gender inequalities in pay and tenure. These changes also might help put spouses on more equal footing within the home while increasing fathers' involvement in their children's lives.

These changes within the City could also provide an example to other employers of the benefits of a paid leave program. As research shows, paid leave programs are good for businesses, increasing worker retention and productivity. In today's competitive economy, an increasing number of employers are developing paid leave programs.<sup>xii</sup> These programs come at a financial cost, of course. However, one national study of 250 companies found paid family leave has clear business benefits.<sup>xiii</sup> Instating a family and medical leave policy is therefore not only good for workers, doing so has the potential to benefit the City of Madison as an organization and position the City as a leader in providing vital worker supports.

This study revealed a number of differences in experience and expressed need for leave within the City of Madison workforce. These differences reflect life and work experiences that vary by gender, age, race, and earnings, as well as the demands or conditions within various City departments. As researchers, we have analyzed the data from survey respondents and combined it with insights from interviews with supervisors and administrative professionals. We used this information to develop a more complete understanding of the importance of family and medical leave to a wide range of City workers. We encourage the City to review these data and consider whether and what additional steps to take to provide paid leave for its employees.

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## Appendix A – Survey Respondent Characteristics

**Table 1: Survey Respondent Characteristics (%)**

|                       | Total | Men | Women |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|-------|
| <b>Gender</b>         |       |     |       |
| Male                  | 63    |     |       |
| Female                | 37    |     |       |
| <b>Race</b>           |       |     |       |
| White                 | 87    | 86  | 88    |
| Non-white             | 13    | 14  | 12    |
| <b>Age</b>            |       |     |       |
| 18-34                 | 17    | 14  | 20    |
| 35-44                 | 28    | 28  | 29    |
| 45-54                 | 31    | 33  | 28    |
| 55 or older           | 24    | 24  | 24    |
| <b>Education</b>      |       |     |       |
| Less than a B.A.      | 40    | 45  | 30    |
| B.A.                  | 43    | 41  | 45    |
| More than a B.A.      | 18    | 14  | 25    |
| <b>Tenure at City</b> |       |     |       |
| 0-5 years             | 26    | 25  | 30    |
| 5-10 years            | 18    | 19  | 17    |
| 10-20 years           | 33    | 34  | 30    |
| 20+ years             | 23    | 23  | 23    |
| <b>Department</b>     |       |     |       |
| Professional          | 22    | 12  | 39    |
| Field                 | 31    | 38  | 20    |
| Police                | 24    | 22  | 28    |
| Fire                  | 12    | 16  | 6     |
| Metro                 | 10    | 11  | 8     |
| <b>Supervisor</b>     | 5     | 7   | 3     |

**Table 2: Characteristics of Survey Respondents Compared to All City Employees (%)**

|                       | <b>Survey Respondents</b> | <b>All City Employees</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>         |                           |                           |
| Male                  | 63                        | 70                        |
| Female                | 37                        | 30                        |
| <b>Race</b>           |                           |                           |
| White                 | 87                        | 82                        |
| Non-white             | 13                        | 18                        |
| <b>Age</b>            |                           |                           |
| 18-34                 | 17                        | 18                        |
| 35-44                 | 28                        | 28                        |
| 45-54                 | 31                        | 31                        |
| 55 or older           | 24                        | 23                        |
| <b>Tenure at City</b> |                           |                           |
| 0-5 years             | 26                        | 28                        |
| 5-10 years            | 18                        | 19                        |
| 10-20 years           | 33                        | 32                        |
| 20+ years             | 23                        | 21                        |
| <b>Department</b>     |                           |                           |
| Professional          | 22                        | 18                        |
| Field                 | 31                        | 32                        |
| Police                | 24                        | 19                        |
| Fire                  | 12                        | 14                        |
| Metro                 | 10                        | 17                        |
| <b>Supervisor</b>     | 5                         | 4                         |

## Appendix B – Survey Questionnaire



## City of Madison Paid Family and Medical Leave Study

**1. Paid family and medical leave programs often provide employees with up to 12 weeks of paid leave from work to provide care for a new child, for their own serious illness, or to care for a family member with a serious illness.**

**If such a program was available for City of Madison employees that would allow them to take family or medical leave without having to use accumulated sick leave or vacation time, would you be willing to pay a small payroll deduction (1% to 2% of earnings) from each paycheck to make the program a reality?**

- Yes
- No

**2. Typically, these family and medical leave programs pay a portion of your salary while you are on leave.**

**If such a program was available, still thinking of taking up to 12 weeks of leave, about what proportion of your normal salary would you need to be paid for you to be able to take the full amount of time off?**

- A quarter of your normal salary
- A third of your normal salary
- Half of your normal salary
- Two thirds of your normal salary
- Three quarters of your normal salary
- Almost all of your normal salary
- All of your normal salary
- Don't know

**3. Paid family and medical leave programs often include the ability to take time off to care for yourself, as well as family members such as your spouse or partner, children, grandchildren, parents, or grandparents.**

**Thinking about your family, how many people might you take time off work to care for if such a program were instituted?**

Number of people, including yourself

**4. Have you ever heard any negative comments from any employee at the City of Madison about someone taking off work for a family or medical reason?**

Yes

No → **Go to question 6**

**5. Who were these comments made about?**

a. You

Yes

No

b. A coworker

Yes

No

c. Someone else → Please tell us:

**6. The next questions ask you to think about some hypothetical situations about people taking time off work for family reasons. Please read the descriptions, and answer the follow-up questions.**

John's wife is pregnant. His company does not have paid parental leave. John is considering using his paid sick and vacation days to take 4 weeks of paid leave time off of work after the birth of his child.

**Should John take 4 weeks of paid leave for this reason?**

Yes

No

**7. If John did take this time off work, do you think he would be considered less serious about work by his supervisor?**

Yes

No

**8. Next think about Susan and her husband, who are adopting an infant. Susan's company offers 12 weeks of paid parental leave for new parents following the birth or adoption of a child.**

**How many weeks should Susan take off work following the adoption of her child?**

Weeks

**9. If Susan took the maximum 12 weeks of paid parental leave, do you think she would be considered less serious about work by her supervisor?**

Yes

No

**10. The next questions are regarding your current feelings about working for the City of Madison:**

|   | Not at all            | A little              | Somewhat              | Very                  | Extremely             |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. How <u>loyal</u> would you say you feel to the City of Madison as a workplace?   | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. How <u>willing</u> are you to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected to help your organization succeed?                                    | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. If you were offered a comparable position with similar pay and benefits for a different employer, how <u>seriously</u> would you consider taking the new position? | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. How <u>likely</u> would you be to recommend the City of Madison as a good employer?  | <input type="radio"/> |

**11. Over the past year, how satisfied have you been with your work-life balance?**

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very
- Extremely

**12. The next question asks you to think of a family where the man is the primary achiever outside the home, and the woman is primarily responsible for taking care of the home and family.**

**How much do you believe that this family structure is the best for all family members?**

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

**13. Compared to a mother who does not work outside the home, how easy or difficult is it for a mother who works outside the home to establish a warm and secure relationship with her children?**

- Much harder for a working mother
- Somewhat harder for a working mother
- A little harder for a working mother
- About the same for a working mother as a non-working mother
- A little easier for a working mother
- Somewhat easier for a working mother
- Much easier for a working mother

14. In your career with the City or any other employer, have you ever wanted to take time off work for your own serious illness, to care for a family member with a serious illness, or to care for a newborn, adopted, or foster child, but did not take it?

Yes

No → Go to question 19 on page 5

15. Thinking about the most recent time you wanted to take time off work for a family or medical need but did not take it, which of the following best describes your reason for wanting time off?

Birth or adoption of a child

Placement of a foster child

To care for a child with a serious or chronic illness

To care for an adult family member with a serious or chronic illness

To provide care or assistance to a parent or parent-in-law for a condition related to aging

For your own illness

16. In what year did this event occur?

Year

Y Y Y Y

17. Thinking about the most recent time you wanted to take time off work for a family or medical need but did not take it, did each of the following work related reasons contribute to your decision not to take time off?

|  | Yes                   | No                    |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. You believed you were ineligible for leave?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Your employer denied your request?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. You did not have enough accumulated sick leave or vacation time to cover your need? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. You were unaware of the availability of leave?                                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

18. Thinking about the most recent time you wanted to take time off work for a family or medical need but did not take it, did each of the following contribute to your decision not to take time off?

|   | Yes                   | No                    |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. You thought you might lose your job?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. You thought you would lose your seniority or potential advancement?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. You could not financially afford to take unpaid leave?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. You wanted to save your leave time?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Your work seemed or was too important to miss?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. You were worried about revealing personal information about yourself, your care recipient, or your family? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. You thought you might be treated differently because of the reason you needed to take leave?               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

19. **In the past five years**, have you ever taken time off work for a serious or chronic illness or for the ongoing medical care of each of the following people?

|                                  | Yes                   | No                    |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Yourself?                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Your child?                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Your grandchild?              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Your parent or parent-in-law? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Your spouse or partner?       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. Another family member?        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

20. Please think about **the most recent time** you took time off work for your own serious or chronic illness or to care for a seriously or chronically ill family member. Who were you caring for?

Yourself  
 Your child  
 Your grandchild  
 Your parent or parent-in-law  
 Your spouse or partner  
 Another family member  
 Did not take time off work

→ Go to question 35 on page 7

21. Did you take this time off continuously--that is, all in a row without returning to work--or did you take leave on separate occasions?

One continuous block of time  
 Separate occasions, or intermittent leave

22. Still thinking of the most recent time you took time off work for this reason, in what year did you take most of this time off?

Year  
Y Y Y Y

23. In total, how many workdays or weeks did you take off from work that year for this reason?

Workdays **or**  Weeks

24. Thinking back, how do you feel about the amount of time you were able to take off? Was it...

...too much  
 ...too little  
 ...just right

→ Go to question 26 on page 6

25. In total, how many workdays or weeks do you wish you had taken off work that year for this reason?

Workdays **or**  Weeks

**26. How did you find out about your options for taking time off work for this reason? Did you find out about your options from...**

|   | <b>Yes</b>            | <b>No</b>             |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. ...previous experience of using leave?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. ...a flyer or other advertisement?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. ...a company or agency website?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. ...direct contact with the human resources department, either in person, or on the phone or by e-mail? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. ...talking to a colleague?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. ...talking to a supervisor or manager?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. ...another source? → Please tell us:   |                       |                       |

**27. Prior to taking this time off work, how many hours per week did you usually work for your job?**

Hours per week

**28. Still thinking of this most recent time you took leave for your own serious illness, or to care for a seriously ill family member, did you receive any pay from your employer for the time you took off work?**

↙  Yes  
 No → Go to question 32 on page 7

**29. From which sources did you receive pay? Did you receive at least some pay from...**

|   | <b>Yes</b>            | <b>No</b>             |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. ...sick leave?                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. ...vacation pay?                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. ...wage insurance?                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. ...disability or workers compensation? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. ...another source? → Please tell us:   |                       |                       |

**30. Still thinking of this most recent time you took leave for your own illness or to care for an ill family member, was any of your time off work unpaid?**

↙  Yes  
 No → Go to question 32 on page 7

**31. How many workdays or weeks did you take off from work that were unpaid?**

Workdays **or**  Weeks

32. For this most recent time you took time off for your own serious illness or to care for a seriously ill family member, did you fill out a Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) application?

Yes → Go to question 34  
 Not sure → Go to question 34  
 No

33. Which one of the following reasons best describes why you did not fill out an FMLA application?

You did not know about it  
 It was too much of a hassle  
 Your doctor did not return the form  
 It would not have affected your time off or your pay  
 You were not eligible  
 The form was confusing  
 Some other reason? → Please tell us:

34. Below is a list of reasons why someone might decide to return to work after taking time off. Still thinking of the most recent time you took off work, did you decide to return to work because...

|   | Yes                   | No                    |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. ...you no longer needed to be on leave?                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. ...you had enough job flexibility to provide the care needed?        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. ...you could not financially afford to take more time off?           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. ...you had not built up enough leave time to take any more time off? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. ...you wanted to go back to work?                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. ...you felt pressured by your boss or co-workers to return?          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. ...another reason? → Please tell us: <input type="text"/>            |                       |                       |

35. Next we have some questions regarding children and childbirth.

Do you have any children, including biological, adopted, step, or foster children?

Yes  
 No → Go to question 72 on page 14

36. Do you have any biological or adopted children who are 10 years old or younger?

Yes  
 No → Go to question 68 on page 13

37. Thinking about your youngest child born or adopted in the past 10 years, in what year did the birth or adoption occur?

Year  
Y Y Y Y

**38. Were you employed at the time of this child's birth or adoption?**

Yes → **Go to question 40**

No

**39. Were you actively looking for work at the time of this child's birth or adoption, or were you out of the labor market?**

Actively looking for work

Out of the labor market

**40. If you were not employed at the time of your youngest child's birth or adoption, go to question 58 on page 11.**

**Was your main job working for the City of Madison at that time, or did you work for a different employer?**

Worked mainly for the City of Madison

Worked mainly for a different employer

**41. At the time of your youngest child's birth or adoption, how many hours per week did you usually work for your job?**

Hours per week

**42. After the birth or adoption of this child, did you take any time off work?**

Yes

No → **Go to question 52 on page 10**

**43. How did you find out about your options for taking time off work for the birth or adoption of this child? Did you find out about your options from...**

**a. ...previous experience of using leave?**

| Yes                   | No                    |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**b. ...a flyer or other advertisement?**

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|

**c. ...a company or agency website?**

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|

**d. ...direct contact with the human resources department, either in person, or on the phone or by e-mail?**

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|

**e. ...talking to a colleague?**

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|

**f. ...talking to a supervisor or manager?**

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|

**g. ...another source? → Please tell us:**

**44. How many workdays or weeks did you take off from work that year for the birth or adoption of your youngest child?**

Workdays

**or**

Weeks

45. Still thinking of this most recent time you took time off after the birth or adoption of your youngest child, did you receive any pay from your employer for the time you took off work?

Yes  
 No → Go to question 49

46. From which sources did you receive pay? Did you receive at least some pay from...

|   | Yes                   | No                    |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. ...sick leave?                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. ...vacation pay?                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. ...wage insurance?                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. ...disability or workers compensation? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. ...another source? → Please tell us:   | <input type="text"/>  |                       |

47. Still thinking of this most recent time you took time off work after the birth or adoption of your youngest child, was any of your time off work unpaid?

Yes  
 No → Go to question 49

48. How many workdays or weeks did you take off from work that were unpaid?

Workdays **or**  Weeks

49. Thinking back, how do you feel about the amount of time you were able to take off? Was it...

...too much  
 ...too little  
 ...just right

50. For this most recent time you took time off after the birth or adoption of your youngest child, did you fill out a Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) application?

Yes → Go to question 52 on page 10  
 No

51. Which one of the following reasons best describes why you did not fill out an FMLA application?

You did not know about it  
 It was too much of a hassle  
 Your doctor did not return the form  
 It would not have affected your time off or your pay  
 You were not eligible  
 The form was confusing  
 Some other reason? → Please tell us:

**52. Three months after the birth or adoption of your youngest child, were you working?**

- Yes, with the same employer
- Yes, with a different employer
- No, you were still on leave
- No, you had quit your job and were not working

**53. Below is a list of reasons why someone might decide to return to work after taking time off, or decide not to take time off following the birth or adoption of a child.**

**If you did take time off following the birth or adoption of your youngest child, please indicate if each of these were a factor in making your decision about when to return to work.**

**If you did not take time off following the birth or adoption of your youngest child, please indicate if each of these were a factor in making your decision not to take time off.**

**Did you decide to return to work or not take time off at all because.....**

|  | <b>Yes</b>            | <b>No</b>             |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. ...someone else took care of the child?                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. ...you had enough job flexibility to provide the care needed?               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. ...you could not financially afford to take (more) time off?                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. ...you had not built up enough leave time to take (more) time off?          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. ...you wanted to go back to work?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. ...you felt pressured by your boss or co-workers to return or keep working? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. ...some other reason? → Please tell us:                                     |                       |                       |

**54. Thinking about the main job you had at the time of the birth or adoption of your youngest child, did you have a supervisor for that job?**

- Yes
- No → Go to question 57

**55. Was that supervisor male or female?**

- Male
- Female

**56. Was that supervisor a parent?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

57. Thinking about your first month at work after the birth or adoption of your child, or after you returned to work following the birth or adoption of your child, how many hours did you work in a typical week?

Hours per week

58. The next questions are about your co-parent if you had one. For this study, a co-parent is defined as your spouse or partner, or the child's other biological parent. This could be someone living in your household, or somewhere else, but not a family member such as your parent or sibling or someone who received any form of compensation to assist with child care.

Was there a co-parent helping you with your youngest child?

Yes  
 No → Go to question 68 on page 13

59. Is this co-parent your current spouse or partner?

Yes  
 No

60. Did this co-parent live with you when your youngest child was born or adopted?

Yes  
 No

61. Was this co-parent employed at the time of this child's birth or adoption?

Yes → Go to question 63  
 No

62. Was your co-parent actively looking for work at the time of this child's birth or adoption, or were they out of the labor market?

Actively looking for work  
 Out of the labor market

63. If your co-parent was not employed at the time of this child's birth or adoption, go to question 68 on page 13.

Was your co-parent's main job working for the City of Madison at that time, or did they work for a different employer?

Worked mainly for the City of Madison  
 Worked mainly for a different employer

**64. Which one of the following best describes you and your co-parent's earnings the year your youngest child was born or adopted?**

- You earned a lot more per year than your co-parent
- You earned slightly more per year than your co-parent
- You and your co-parent earned about the same amount per year
- Your co-parent earned slightly more per year than you did
- Your co-parent earned a lot more per year than you did
- Don't know

**65. Which one of the following best describes the time your co-parent took off from work because of the birth or adoption of your youngest child?**

- Your co-parent took only paid leave, including sick or vacation time, from their job
- Your co-parent took only unpaid leave from their job
- Your co-parent took both paid and unpaid leave from their job
- Your co-parent did not take any time off work → **Go to question 67**

**66. In total, how many workdays or weeks, either paid or unpaid, did your co-parent take off from work following the birth or adoption of your youngest child?**

Workdays **or**  Weeks

**67. Below is a list of reasons why someone might decide to return to work after taking time off, or decide not to take time off following the birth or adoption of a child.**

**If your co-parent did take time off following the birth or adoption of your youngest child, please indicate if you think each of these were a factor to them in making their decision about when to return to work.**

**If your co-parent did not take time off following the birth or adoption of your youngest child, please indicate if you think each of these were a factor to them in making their decision not to take time off.**

**Did your co-parent decide to return to work or not take time off at all because...**

|   | <b>Yes</b>            | <b>No</b>             | <b>Don't know</b>     |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. ...you were able to stay home to care for the child?                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. ...he or she had enough job flexibility to provide the care needed?            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. ...he or she could not financially afford to take (more) time off?             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. ...he or she had not built up enough leave time to take (more) time off?       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. ...he or she wanted to go back to work?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. ...he or she felt pressured by a boss or co-workers to return or keep working? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. ...someone else took care of the child?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**68. How many children do you have who are...****Number of children**

a. Your biological or adopted children

b. Your step-children

c. Your foster children

**Total of all children**, should equal total of a, b, and c above.

If you have no children, enter 0 and **go to question 72 on page 14**

**69. Below, please indicate if each of your children currently lives with you full-time, part-time, or not at all, and in what year each child was born. We have provided space for up to 8 children, but if you have more children, please add their information on the back page of the survey.****Does this child live with you full-time, part-time, or not at all?**

|            | <b>Full-time</b>      | <b>Part-time</b>      | <b>Not at all</b>     | <b>Year child was born</b> |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Child 1 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |                            |
| b. Child 2 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |                            |
| c. Child 3 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |                            |
| d. Child 4 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |                            |
| e. Child 5 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |                            |
| f. Child 6 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |                            |
| g. Child 7 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |                            |
| h. Child 8 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |                            |

**70. Do you have at least one child living with you who requires adult care when they are sick?**

Yes

No → **Go to question 72 on page 14**

**71. Who usually stays home when one of your children is sick?**

You

Your spouse or partner

Child's other parent if different from your spouse or partner

Paid caregiver

Someone else? → Please tell us:

**72. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- High school diploma or the equivalent
- Trade school such as Beauty School or Electrical School
- Some college
- Associate's degree or a 2-year college degree
- Bachelor's degree or a 4-year college degree
- Master's degree
- Advanced degree such as a Ph.D, a Law degree or a Medical degree

**73. Which one of the following best describes your current relationship status?**

- Married or in a legally recognized domestic partnership
- Living with a partner
- Divorced or separated
- Widowed
- Single, never married

→ Go to question 81 on page 15

**74. How many years have you lived with your current spouse or partner?**

Number of Years

**75. Is your current spouse or partner the parent of all, some, or none of the children who live with you at this time?**

- All
- Some
- None
- Not applicable

**76. Is your current spouse or partner employed either full or part-time outside the home?**

- Yes
- No → Go to question 78 on page 15

**77. Is your current spouse or partner an employee of the City of Madison, or do they work somewhere else?**

- City of Madison
- Somewhere else

**78. What is the highest level of education your current spouse or partner has completed?**

- Some high school
- High school diploma or the equivalent
- Trade school such as Beauty School or Electrical School
- Some college
- Associate's degree or a 2-year college degree
- Bachelor's degree or a 4-year college degree
- Master's degree
- Advanced degree such as a Ph.D, a Law degree or a Medical degree

**79. What is your current spouse or partner's gender?**

- Female
- Male

**80. Typically in your household, would you say you, or your spouse/partner tends to take more of the responsibility for daily or routine household work such as planning meals, shopping, cooking, cleaning up, and laundry?**

- You
- Your spouse or partner

**81. Including all sources, what is your current total annual household income before taxes?**

Household Income

**82. Are you willing to be contacted for a follow up interview about your experiences with family and medical leave? (Please note, not everyone will be interviewed.)**

- Yes
- No → **Thank you for completing this questionnaire!**

**83. Please provide your name and telephone number or email address. This information will only be used to contact you to set up a follow-up interview, and will never be shared for any other purpose.**

Name

Telephone (        )        -

Email

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire!  
Please place it in the postage paid envelope provided and return it today.**

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Please place it in the postage paid envelope provided and return it today.**

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