



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Text

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR BOARD MEETING OF MAY 3, 2018

COMMITTEE ON PENSION, HUMAN RESOURCES AND CIVIL SERVICE

Mr. David St. Pierre, Executive Director

Authority to amend employee leave benefits for non-represented employees to include paid parental leave

Dear Sir:

At the request of the Board of Commissioners, the Human Resources Department researched the addition of a paid parental leave policy to the District benefit program. According to a study conducted in 2017 by WorldatWork and Mercer, 38% of U.S. organizations now offer a paid parental leave benefit to full-time employees. The average length of the paid parental leave benefit for organizations surveyed is 4.1 weeks. In addition, several states including California, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island have enacted laws that require employers to provide a paid parental leave benefit.

Several public agencies in the Chicago area offer a paid parental leave policy. The City of Chicago and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) both offer a paid parental leave benefit to full time employees. The City of Chicago policy provides 4 weeks paid leave to the birth mother (6 weeks for a surgical delivery) and 2 weeks paid leave to a spouse or domestic partner of the birth mother. The CTA provides 6 weeks paid leave to the birth mother (up to 2 additional weeks for a cesarean delivery) and 2 weeks to the birth father, spouse or domestic partner. Both plans also provide 2 weeks paid leave to an adoptive parent.

Based on the information collected in its review, the Human Resources Department recommends the addition of a paid parental leave policy. The goal of this policy is two-fold: 1) provide employees with time to recover from childbirth; and 2) provide employees time to care for and bond with their newborn or adopted child. The policy would provide non-represented, full-time employees with the following paid parental leave benefits:

Recovery Time

- Up to four (4) weeks paid parental leave to a birth mother after delivery to recover from childbirth.

Care and Bonding Time

- Up to two (2) weeks paid parental leave to a birth mother or birth father; or
- Up to two (2) weeks paid parental leave to a spouse, domestic partner or civil union partner of the birth mother; or
- Up to two (2) weeks paid parental leave to an adoptive parent for the birth or placement of an adopted child.

Paid parental leave for recovery time and paid parental leave for care and bonding time are two separate and distinct elements of the program. As such, a birth mother may receive paid parental leave for recovery time and also receive paid parental leave for care and bonding time.

The policy would require that an employee be eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to receive paid parental leave under this policy. Paid parental leave would be paid at 100% of the employee's regular pay for any time approved under this policy. A paid parental leave policy is not currently

included in the collective bargaining agreements for represented employees. Implementation of such a policy would be subject to negotiation.

A review of the medical claim data shows that the District receives approximately 44 child birth claims each year. On average, 10 of these claims are related to an employee giving birth to a child, 29 of these claims are related to an employee's spouse giving birth to a child and the remaining 5 claims are related to a dependent giving birth to a child. Based on this data and the average annual salary at the District, the projected cost for the recommended paid leave policy would be approximately \$230,000.00 per year. It should be noted that a significant portion of this expense would come in the form of lost productivity and not in additional salary expense.

Authorization is requested to add a paid parental leave policy as described above to the District benefits program for non-represented employees effective June 1, 2018.

Requested, Beverly K. Sanders, Director of Human Resources

Respectfully Submitted, Mariyana T. Spyropoulos, Chairman, Committee on Pension, Human Resources & Civil Service

Disposition of this agenda item will be documented in the official Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners for May 3, 2018