

Prepare for Maine's Paid Family and Medical Leave Program: Employer Contributions Begin January 2025



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Maine's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program, effective May 2026, offers up to 12 weeks of paid, job-protected leave annually for family, medical, military exigency, and abuse or violence-related reasons. Payments from employers to fund this program will begin effective January 2025. We understand that this is a complex regulation and want to provide you with an understanding of what the law requires of you as an employer.

- **All employers** must register in the Maine Paid Leave Portal by early 2025. □
- Contributions start in January 2025, split between employees and employers with 15+ employees. Employers with

fewer than 15 employees are not required to share in the cost and can require full payment by their employees. □

- Eligible employees must have earned wages in Maine during the prior four quarters before the benefit period begins of at least six times the state average weekly wage. □
- Self-employed individuals can opt-in for at least three years. □
- Public employees under existing collective bargaining agreements as of October 25, 2023, are exempt until the agreement expires.
- Leave reasons include serious health conditions, bonding with a new child, caring for a family member, military exigency, and safe leave for victims of violence.
- □ Employees receive partial wage replacement after a seven-day waiting period, with compensation rates of 90% for wages up to 50% of the state average weekly wage and 66% for wages above that. □
- Employers must provide notice of PFML benefits to employees and restore them to their positions after leave.
- □ Private plans can be used if they offer equivalent benefits. □
- PFML runs concurrently with federal FMLA and Maine family and medical leave. □

[This PDF](#) provides links and resources to assist you with administration and understanding of your responsibilities as an employer.

As this law evolves, we will endeavor to keep you updated. If you have questions, please contact your benefits account team at Allen.

Maine's New Paid Family and Medical Leave Program: A Closer Look for Employers

The Allen Benefits Team

As Maine gears up to implement its Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (MPFML), there are important details for employers to consider. While the 1% state premium tax takes effect on January 1, 2025, the first paid benefits won't begin until May 1, 2026. This long lead time allows the state to pre-fund the program, but it also creates a unique window for employers to explore alternatives.

The Benefits Team at Allen Insurance and Financial is recommending that employers seek quotes for private replacement plans. Starting April 1, 2025, the state will begin accepting applications for private insurance plans that can substitute for the state-run program. If approved, employers would be excused from paying the state's 1% premium after the first quarter of 2025. With private plans commencing coverage on May 1, 2026, this strategy could create significant cost savings for businesses during the interim, without any loss in benefit coverage.

Why Consider a Private Plan?

Private insurers have extensive experience managing PFML programs in other states and offer plans that fully comply with Maine's requirements. In contrast, the state's 1% tax is based on preliminary estimates and may not reflect actual costs. Private insurers have more accurate data on pricing and also offer fully trained staff, ensuring smoother administration.

Employers could save significantly by adopting a private plan. For one of our customers, an 80-employee group could save more than \$14,000 annually in PFML premium cost and avoid more than \$88,000 in state tax pre-funding over 13 months.

For employers with existing short-term disability (STD) plans, it's worth noting that private insurers we work with plan to re-price STD policies to reflect the introduction of PFML coverage. In other words, since mandated PFML coverage will pay many of the benefits currently covered by an STD plan, the cost of STD will come down.

Why would an employer continue to have both PFML and STD? PFML pays 12 weeks of benefits compared to 26 weeks for typical STD plans, and the PFML benefit is capped at the State Average Weekly Wage. An STD policy would fill those gaps, ensuring that employees are not having their benefits reduced. This would also remove any gap in coverage for those with Long Term Disability coverage.

By exploring these private options, Maine employers can optimize their benefits strategy while controlling costs.

Questions? Contact a member of the Allen benefits team. We're here to help.



Maine’s Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (MPFML) is designed to provide workers up to 12 weeks of paid, job-protected leave per year, starting in May 2026. Leave will be permitted for family and medical reasons, military exigency and reasons resulting from abuse or violence. While the 1% state premium tax took effect on January 1, 2025, the first paid benefits won’t begin until May 1, 2026. This long lead time allows the state to pre-fund the program, and it gives businesses time to prepare for possible alternatives.

Insurance companies should be ready soon to provide quotes for private replacement plans. **If your business has 15 or more employees and you would like us to contact you when quoting is available, please fill out the form below.**

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[This PDF has additional information](#), including a handy chart to help determine whether an employee is eligible for this program.

Name of Business

Contact Name

Contact Email

Contact Phone Number

Number of W2 employees

Name of ancillary insurance carrier (dental, vision, life, accident)

Additional notes/comments

Submit

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