

	Responsible Executive: Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer	
	Responsible Office: Human Resources	
	Effective Date: 04/01/2018	Last Revised: 02/19/2026
	Policy Title: Parental Leave of Absence	

Definitions

Foster Placement: The placement of a child by a state agency with an individual who is not the child’s parent or legal guardian and who seeks the opportunity to adopt the child.

Legal Guardianship Placement: A court-ordered relationship in which a person is assigned the responsibility and authority to provide physical care and supervision for a child.

Miscarriage: The spontaneous loss of a pregnancy before the 20th week.

Regular Benefit Eligible Position: A position expected to work consistently at least 50% of a full-time position for ninety days or more and is subject to the Arizona Board of Regents terms and conditions for Academic Professionals, Administrators, Administrative Faculty, Classified Staff, University Staff, Faculty, or Service Professionals.

Regular Employee: An employee working in a Regular Benefit Eligible Position.

Stillbirth: The death or loss of a child before or during delivery at or after 20 weeks of pregnancy.

Policy

This policy supports employees with approved time away from work (paid or unpaid) for birth, adoption, Foster Placement, Legal Guardianship Placement, Stillbirth, or Miscarriage.

Section I: Qualifying for Parental Leave

A. Eligibility

Regular Employees are eligible for either approved paid or unpaid parental leave for an eligible event.

1. Regular Employees with one year of service and who have worked at least 1,250 hours in in the last twelve months are eligible for **paid time off**.
2. Regular Employees who have worked less than one year and/or have worked less than 1,250 hours in the last 12 months are eligible for **unpaid time off**.

B. Eligible Events

Parental leave may be used for the following:

1. Birth,
2. Adoption,
3. Foster Placement,
4. Legal Guardianship Placement,
5. Stillbirth, or
6. Miscarriage.

C. Duration

1. An eligible employee may request up to 12 weeks of parental leave for birth, adoption, Foster Placement, Legal Guardianship Placement, or Stillbirth.
2. In the event of a Miscarriage, an eligible employee may request up to two weeks of parental leave.
3. Parental leave runs concurrently with family and medical leave (FMLA) and does not extend the FMLA leave period.
4. If both parents work for NAU, each parent is eligible to request parental leave.
5. Parental leave must be taken as a continuous block of leave unless the supervisor agrees to allow intermittent or reduced schedule leave based on business need.
6. Parental leave is limited to 12 weeks in a 12-month period which begins on the eligible event date.

7. Eligibility for a parental leave expires at the end of a 12-month period beginning on the eligible event date.
8. An employee may be approved for, and begin taking, Parental Leave up to two weeks before the anticipated eligible event. Starting parental leave before the eligible event does not extend the parental leave period.
9. Parental Leave can only be use once for the same child.
10. For Foster Placement or Legal Guardianship Placement, parental leave is only available for the period the child is placed with the employee.

Section II: Pay Status and Benefits

A. Paid Parental Leave

The paid parental leave benefit will be based on the employee's base salary.

1. Employees on paid parental leave are not eligible to receive supplemental pay in addition to their parental leave benefit payments.
2. Paid parental leave will be paid from the same funding source as the employee's regular pay.

B. Pay Status

Employees on parental leave remain in a paid status by using paid parental leave, sick time, and/or vacation time.

1. An employee eligible for **paid** parental leave is required to report all time away from work following Human Resources procedures to stay in a paid status.
2. An employee eligible for **unpaid** parental leave, must report all time away from work following Human Resources procedures. The University requires the employee to use any accrued paid time off including sick and/or vacation time.
 - a. Use of paid time off will occur in the order of all available sick time and then vacation time and then accumulated compensatory time .
 - b. An employee will remain in a paid status until all accrued paid time off balances are depleted after which they will be placed in an unpaid status.

C. Effect on Benefits

The University will continue to pay the employer's portion of **voluntary benefits** premiums including medical and dental insurances during parental leave whether the employee is in a paid or unpaid status.

1. While in a paid status, premiums will continue to be collected through payroll deductions.
2. If the employee is in an unpaid status, premiums will be collected through personal payments. If the employee's portion of the premium payment is more than 30 days late, the University may discontinue coverage.
3. **Vacation** and **sick** time will accrue while an employee is in a paid status.
4. No refund of any retirement contribution is made upon commencement of parental leave since the employee is expected to return to work.
5. Service credits do not accrue during any period of unpaid leave, but will resume upon the employee's return to work.
6. The **educational aid** benefit remains in effect for employees during parental leave as does the use of University facilities.
7. Computation of **service dates** for continuous service, vacation accrual rates, seniority, and general pay adjustments will include this leave as creditable service providing the employee returns to work on the first workday following the termination of the authorized leave.

Section III: Employees Responsibilities

A. Requesting Parental Leave

Requests for parental leave must be submitted following Human Resources procedures.

1. Employees should notify their department that they will be requesting parental leave before submitting the request to Human Resources.
2. Unless the leave is unplanned, requests should be made at least thirty days in advance of the need for leave.
3. Failure to follow procedures or timelines may result in the denial or delay of parental leave and paid time off if eligible.

B. Responsibilities During Parental Leave

1. Employees who have requested parental leave must provide Human Resources and their department with up-to-date contact information (e-mail, phone, and home address) for the duration of their leave of absence.
2. While on parental leave, the employee must respond to inquiries from Human Resources and their department about their leave in a timely manner.
3. It is the employee's responsibility to notify Human Resources and their supervisor of their intent to return to work at least two weeks prior to reporting back to work to facilitate planning and completion of paperwork.
4. If an employee does not return to work on the expected return date, any additional time away may be considered an unauthorized absence.

C. Return to Work

In most circumstances the use of parental leave will be followed by the employee's return to their former or essentially equal position. The department head should hold the employee's regular position anticipating the employee's return from parental leave. The department head can hire a temporary replacement for the duration of the leave.

1. If the employee was pregnant, the employee is responsible for providing adequate documentation to support a return to work.
2. Employees with disabilities are encouraged to consult with the Disability Resources Office regarding possible reasonable accommodations which may provide additional leave options and/or assistance in returning to work.
3. Employees who need access to a lactation room when the return to work should contact the Equity and Access Office (EAO) at EquityandAccess@nau.edu.

D. Failure to Return or Accept Employment

1. Voluntary Termination

An employee will be considered to have voluntarily terminated employment if they:

- a. Fail to return to work upon the expiration of the approved parental leave or any extension thereof;
 - b. Fail to contact their department head at least two weeks prior to the end of the approved parental leave to request an extension (if applicable);
 - c. Advise the University of their intention not to return to work; or
 - d. Refuse comparable reemployment.
2. An employee who voluntarily terminates employment and fails to return to work for at least 30 calendar days agrees to reimburse the University for the salary and benefits paid on their behalf during the parental leave period.
 3. An employee must return to a Regular Benefit Eligible Position. If the department approves, the employee may return to a position with fewer standard hours or at a reduced FTE if the position remains a Regular Benefit Eligible Position.
 4. The University may excuse reimbursement where the failure to return is due to the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition of the employee or the child which would otherwise entitle the employee to leave under the Family Medical Leave of Absence policy, or other circumstances beyond the employee's control.

Section V: Retaliation or Interference

NAU prohibits adverse action or retaliation against an employee who elects to take parental leave. Supervisors are prohibited from interfering with an employee's ability to take parental leave. Employees who are concerned about retaliation or interference are encouraged to contact Human Resources.

Related Information*

Forms

- [Parental Leave Request Form](#)

Related University Policies

- [Family Medical Leave of Absence](#)
- [Lactation Accommodation](#)
- [Sick Time](#)

- [Vacation](#)
- [Unauthorized Absence](#)

Department of Labor

- [Family Medical Leave Website](#)

Policy History*

02/19/2026: Policy revised.

01/01/2023: Policy revised.

04/01/2018: Origination date.

* Related Information and Policy History are solely for the user's convenience and are not part of the official university policy.