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Paid leave program marks one year with big impact [1]



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It's been just over a year since the University of Colorado's self-funded and self-administered Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) [3]program took effect. Its biggest impact is on the lives of CU's employees.

CU faculty and staff can use FAMLI leave to take time away from work to:

- care for a new child, including adopted and fostered children.
- care for themselves, or a family member, if they have a serious health condition.
- arrange for a family member's military deployment.
- obtain safe housing, care or legal assistance in response to intimate partner violence, stalking, sexual assault, or sexual abuse.

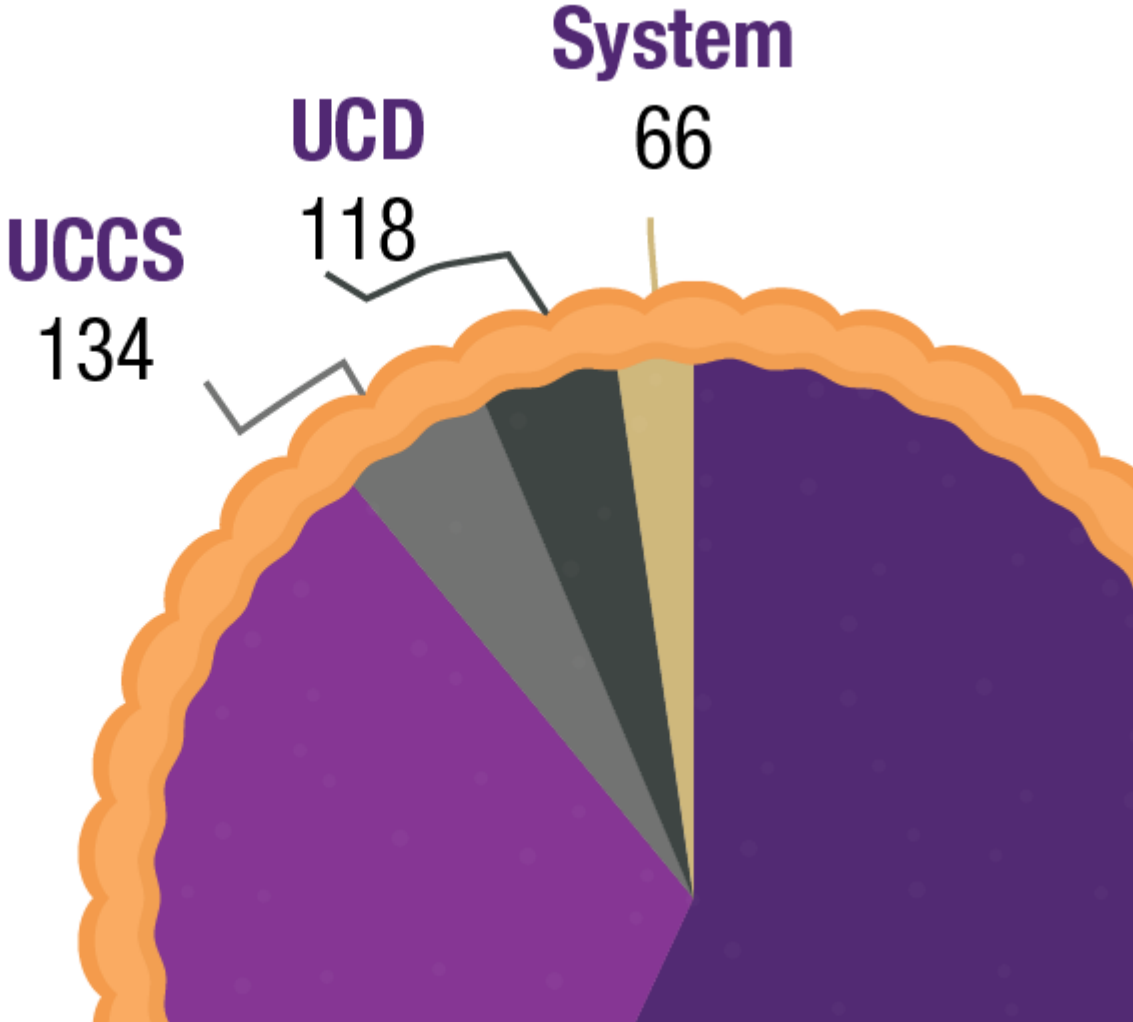
CU FAMLI works in tandem with other CU paid leave options to give employees more time and greater flexibility in taking care of themselves or family members. The program replaces a portion of the employee's wages for up to 12 weeks, and the employee can supplement this benefit with paid sick, vacation or paid parental leave to make their paycheck whole.

In 2025, the maximum weekly FAMLI benefit [4]has increased from $1,100 to $1,324.21.

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Who used the benefit in 2



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Accessible PDF: Read the accessible PDF version of the infographic. [5]

CU FAMLI’s positive impact on faculty and staff

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2024, 2,900 employees used FAMLI leave. These are just a few of their stories.

Alicen Spale: Time off to care for new twins

When Alicen Spale gave birth to twins in late 2023, she had a 1-year-old at home. At first, caring for three very young children was “absolutely crazy” and required a long adjustment period.

“For that beginning portion of my maternity leave, I was just trying to keep my head above water,” said Spale, business services manager for Internal Medicine at CU Anschutz. “When I was able to take that additional time, I was able to find a groove and actually enjoy some of that time off and just try to get my little family into a new rhythm that was going to work for us.”

FAMLI provided a huge helping hand when it took effect in 2024. While eligible CU employees have always been able to take parental leave, using FAMLI benefits in tandem with sick and vacation leave gave Spale full pay during her parental leave.

Spale was able to return with vacation and sick time left over – critical when she needs to care for a sick child – and she was able to prioritize her family and her health before returning to work.

Spale worked with her department’s HR Business partner for direction on applying for FAMLI leave with Employee Services. “This is a benefit that you’re paying into and will only have a handful of times in your life to use it,” she said. “The time spent applying for it will be well worth it to not deplete your vacation and sick time.”

Liz Fagerness: Time off for her infant’s surgery

Liz Fagerness’s 10-month-old son needed surgery in April 2024.

“I don’t think anyone ever wants their kid to have surgery — especially at such a young age,” said Fagerness, a campus program manager for Central Annual Giving at CU System Administration’s Advancement division.

FAMLI leave gave her additional time off without worrying about negotiating other time off or using all her vacation and sick time — which allowed her to spend with her baby for special moments.

“I was able to take some extra days off, and I had some time right before his birthday, which was really special. We went to the zoo — it was May, so it was nice to get outside and have fun,” she said.

Fagerness felt supported by her team during her maternity and surgery leave, and said it demonstrated a very positive work culture.

Mike Ravare: Paternity leave's impact

Before coming to CU, Mike Ravare lost his previous job after being promised he'd be able to stay home with his new daughter for the remainder of the year. When this changed, he was without childcare and needed to stay home.

When he started working at CU, he realized that FAMLI allowed for time off to care for a new baby, and he applied for paternity leave giving him extra time before his daughter's first birthday.

"I was with my daughter 24/7 and then I went back to work and — it's my first daughter, so it was super hard to leave her. So then having that full week to just be dad again was just amazing," said Ravare, an administrative assistant in oncology at CU Anschutz.

Ravare's manager was supportive of him applying for FAMLI. "I didn't have to worry that I'm bailing on the team. People picked up my work and as soon as I came back everyone was just happy to have me, happy that I got to spend time with her and with the family," he said.

Apply for and use FAMLI leave

Over the course of the year, the Employee Services Leave Team has worked hard to simplify and streamline the process to request and use FAMLI leave.

Visit the FAMLI & Leave website [3] for full details resources to help you understand, apply for and use this important benefit.

FAMLI [6], leave [7], Sick Leave [8], Parental Leave [9]
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