



*2026 NFP U.S.*

# Leave Management Report

Benchmarking and insights into the future of leave policy, administration and employee experience.

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# A Letter From Maria

We all know that time away from work is crucial, whether it's to take care of our health, recharge or handle life's other responsibilities. But as the world changes faster, it's becoming clear that the need for personal time off has grown in ways we didn't expect. For many of us, especially those juggling caregiving duties, that time off isn't just a luxury — it's a necessity.

I estimate that about 55% of my vacation time is used for elder care, which has made me realize just how many people are leaning on vacation days as a substitute for formal caregiving leave. It's a trend that speaks to the need for more comprehensive and flexible leave policies. As employees' lives outside of work get more complex, it's up to employers to design policies that not only keep up but also stay compliant with the rules and regulations, all while meeting the real needs of their workforce.

This report digs into some of the biggest shifts in leave management today, like the rise of family caregiver leave, menopause support and the broader cultural understanding of grief. We'll look at how these changes are affecting policies. More importantly, we'll explore why employers need to adjust their leave offerings to ensure they're supporting their employees in meaningful ways, without losing sight of compliance and administration.

The right leave policies do more than just check a box. They can help improve employee wellbeing, retention and productivity. As you read the insights in this report, I hope you'll find a clearer path to refining your own approach to employee leave and better supporting your organization.

Best regards,

**Maria Trapenasso**

SVP, National Practice Leader, Human Capital Solutions  
NFP, an Aon company

# Key Takeaways

## Parental Leave

59%

of respondents offer parental leave, but 27% still distinguish between primary and secondary caregivers, creating legal risk and inequity.

## Menopause Leave

10%

of employers offer menopause accommodations, despite 20% of the workforce being in peak symptom years.

## Maternity Leave

61%

of employees are missing out on the cost savings and compliance benefits of requiring state disability claims with maternity leave.

## Family Caregiver Leave

30%

of employers offer caregiver leave — far too few to meet the sandwich generation's needs.

## Outsourcing and Compliance



One in five see compliance as their team's weakest area. Compliance risk is a top concern for overworked HR teams, and lack of support could be costly.

## What You Can Do

**Address communication gaps** — employees often misunderstand leave policies.

**Modernize leave equity** — parental, caregiver, menopause and bereavement programs — to reduce risk and strengthen retention.

**Quantify the hidden cost** of inefficient manual leave administration and compliance risks.

**Treat leave vendors as strategic partners**, not just providers.

**View leave as both a compliance obligation and cultural investment** for engagement and talent retention.

Facts and figures are from NFP's 2025 leave management policies and practices benchmarking survey unless otherwise indicated.

The majority of respondents (71%) represented organizations with 500 or fewer employees. See "About the Data" on page 34 for a full overview of the survey population.



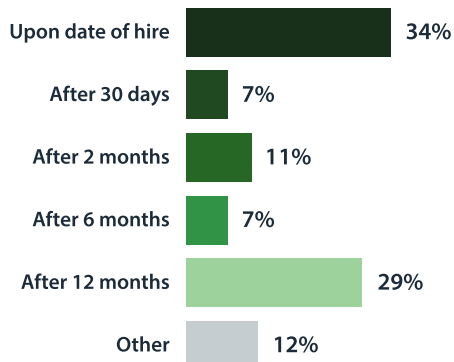


## Maternity Leave

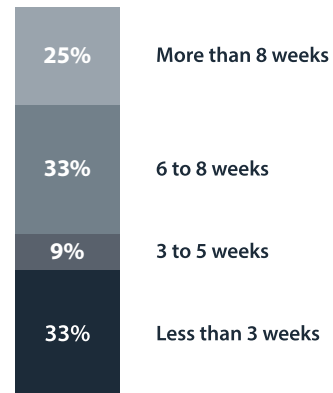
# Evolving Policies for New Mothers

Maternity leave remains a cornerstone benefit in employee wellbeing, reflecting employers' ongoing commitment to supporting new mothers in the workforce. While eligibility and number of weeks of full pay for maternity leave has remained stable over recent years, subtle shifts toward more inclusive and comprehensive offerings are emerging, driven by evolving workforce needs and regulatory landscapes.

### Timing of Eligibility



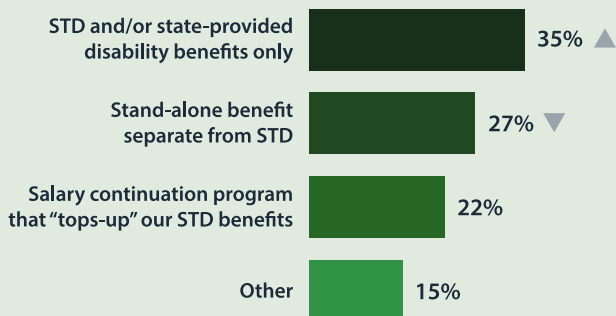
### Weeks of Full Pay Provided



Historically, most employers have provided maternity leave as a stand-alone benefit. Given that recovery from childbirth is covered under disability, it should be administered through an employer's short-term disability plan, if they have one.

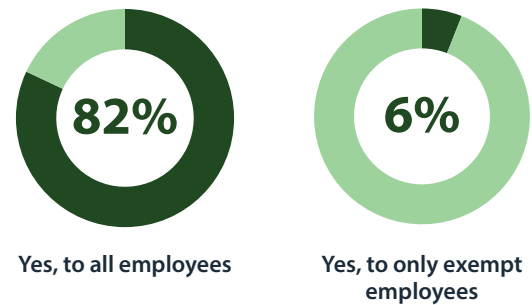
**While it is still prevalent in the market to have a stand-alone maternity leave, there are some compliance risks to providing different benefits for maternity versus other disabling conditions.**

### Structure of Maternity Leave Benefits



However, a positive shift is occurring with more employers integrating maternity leave with short-term disability and state-paid family leave programs. The proportion of employers offering only short-term disability or state benefits has risen in 2025, while the number offering stand-alone maternity leave has decreased. This change aligns with EEOC guidelines that classify maternity as a pregnancy-related disability, signaling a move toward greater consistency and fairness in leave policies.

### Short-Term Disability Offered



Despite this positive trend, **only 39% of employers require employees to file a state claim** to access their internal maternity leave program, a practice that remains concerning. By failing to require employees to file state claims, employers are missing out on the potential cost-saving benefits available through state programs and may inadvertently lengthen the overall leave duration.

Ultimately, employers should require employees to file state claims for maternity leave benefits *and* coordinate these claims with company-provided leave to optimize available resources. This approach helps employers manage leave durations more effectively, maximize benefits for employees and align practices with regulatory changes.

#### Note for Arrow Indicators:

▲ Gray up arrows indicate a significant increase compared to 2024.  
▼ Gray down arrows indicate a significant decrease compared to 2024.  
These arrows appear next to statistics throughout the report to show year-over-year trends.



## *Parental Leave*

# Expanding Support for All Parents

Parental leave policies are also evolving, driven by the growing recognition that equitable time off for all parents is paramount. **While 59% of employers offer parental leave, eligibility requirements vary.** Most organizations require employees to have been with the company for at least 12 months before becoming eligible, matching the FMLA. As with maternity leave, when organizations offer both parental and maternity leave, aligning eligibility periods for both benefits can help simplify administrative processes and ensure a seamless experience for employees. In some cases, parental leave has been designed to support primary caregivers, which can leave secondary caregivers at a disadvantage.

## *Legal Risk in Primary/Secondary Caregiver Policies*

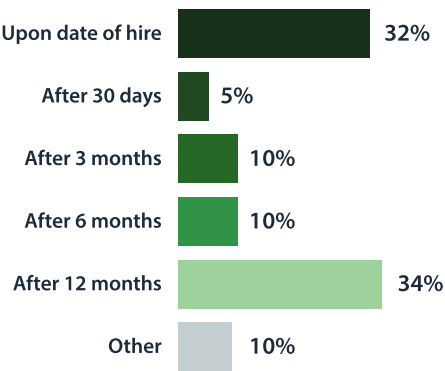
**With 27% of employers distinguishing between primary and secondary caregivers, employers face the potential for legal exposure, particularly regarding gender-based assumptions about caregiving roles.**



Typically, primary caregivers receive more time than secondary caregivers, reflecting traditional leave structures. **Many organizations default to providing this benefit to the birth mother.** Recent high-profile lawsuits against companies where gender was a central factor in caregiving decisions have led to multimillion-dollar settlements, highlighting the financial risk of inequitable policies.

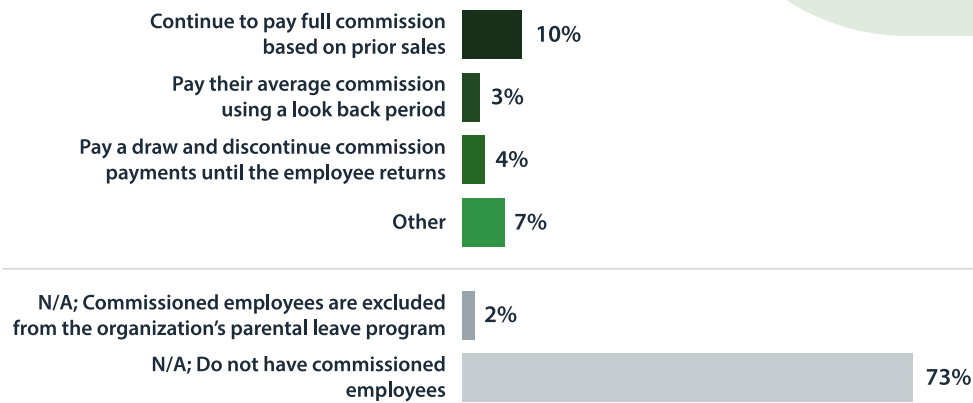
To mitigate risk, employers must ensure that their caregiver policies are defined clearly, consistently applied and free from gender or parental status biases. Ensuring policies are equitable for all caregivers – regardless of gender – helps reduce potential legal challenges and fosters an inclusive workplace.

Timing of Eligibility

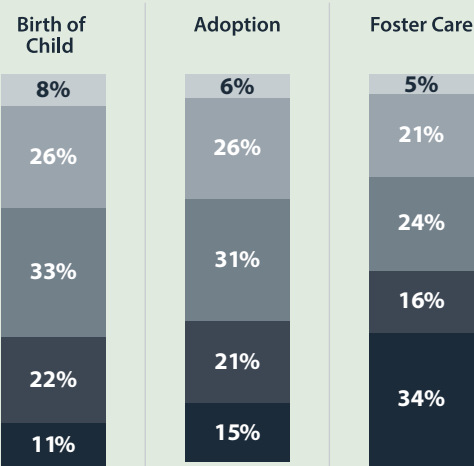


Among employers with commissioned employees, survey results indicate that the most common way to ensure income stability and equitable access to paid parental leave is by paying full commission on prior sales.

Payments for Commissioned Employees



Weeks of Full Pay Provided



Employers should standardize parental leave eligibility across birth, adoption and foster care to promote fairness and prevent potential legal liabilities. Equally important is offering inclusive policies for both primary and secondary caregivers, allowing all parents time to bond with their children without discrimination based on gender or caregiving role.



## *Family Caregiver Leave*

# Addressing the Needs of a Growing Demographic



This topic is personal for me, as I care for my elderly parents who are now in their 80s. Fortunately, I can use PTO for their caretaking needs, but that often compromises the amount of time I can take off for self-care, rest and true relaxation. Over time, as I can attest, this can easily lead to burnout. Employees like me end up using their PTO to care for others rather than themselves. Our survey confirms that I am not alone.



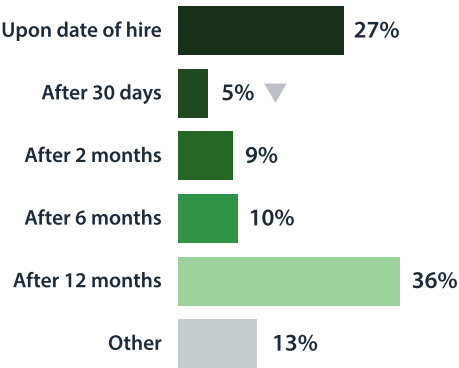
**Family caregiver leave remains a relatively uncommon benefit, with only 30% of employers offering this type of support.**

As caregiving responsibilities for aging parents and relatives increase – particularly among the “sandwich generation,” middle-aged employees who often care for both children and elderly parents simultaneously – these benefits are becoming increasingly essential for the modern workforce.

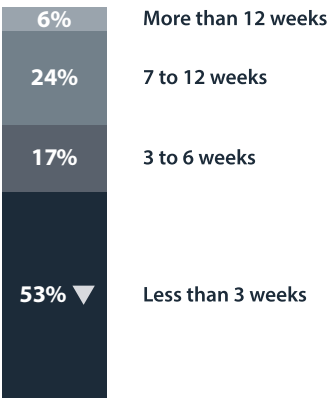


For those employers that do offer caregiver leave, eligibility requirements and benefit duration still vary widely. On a positive note, we did see a slight increase in the number of employers offering between three to twelve weeks of paid caregiver leave, most often after employees complete one year of service.

### Timing of Eligibility



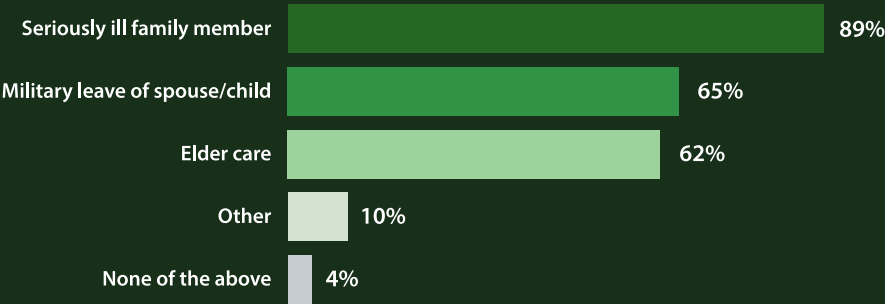
### Weeks of Full Pay Provided



Notably, **a quarter of employers offer caregiver leave immediately, and roughly a third offer it after 12 months of employment.** This indicates that, while some employers see value in offering this benefit at date of hire, others want employees to have some skin in the game before providing this type of benefit, or they structure the benefit to coordinate with FMLA eligibility. Though the benefit is typically offered for less than three weeks of full pay (53% of respondents), a growing number of employers are providing more generous leave options.

**Employers should consider expanding family caregiver leave policies to reflect the growing caregiving responsibilities of their employees.** By providing more comprehensive family caregiver leave, organizations can create a more inclusive and supportive workplace for all employees, enhancing retention and employee wellbeing.

### Eligible Reasons Covered





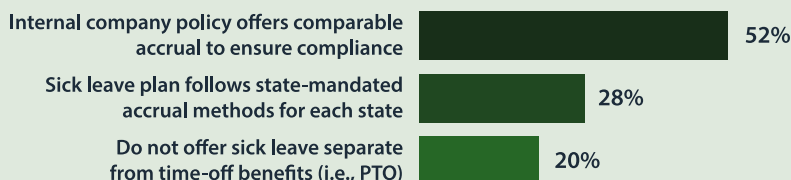
## Sick Leave

# Modernizing Policies to Reflect Changing Legislation

While many employers offer traditional sick leave, **there is a growing need to update policies to reflect a wider range of employee needs and state legislation.**

Many multistate employers strive to create holistic policies that offer comparable entitlements to sick pay regulations — our survey found that 52% of respondents are doing just that. This creates equitable practices for the entire organization while easing the administrative burden of accruing sick time by state or jurisdiction.

### Sick Leave Policies







## *Menopause Leave*

# A Missed Opportunity

Accommodations for menopause, which affects a significant portion of the workforce, are still underexplored.

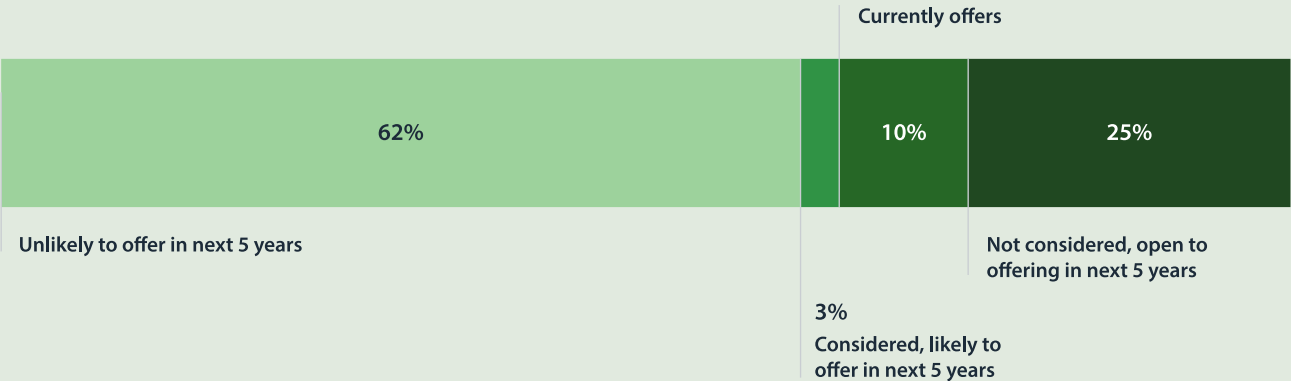


**Currently, only 10% of employers offer menopause-related accommodations, such as flexible work hours or additional health/wellness programs.**

This is a gap, especially considering that many employees face health challenges that fall outside the scope of traditional sick leave.



Accommodations for Employees Experiencing Menopause



Accommodations Currently Offered Within the 10%

Flexible worktime when experiencing symptoms	65%	Extra days off when experiencing symptoms	19%
Workplace/space accommodations	37%	Specialty benefits (e.g., hormone therapy)	14%
Additional health/wellness programs	21%	Other	35%

As the workforce ages and the number of women in their prime menopause years increases, menopause-related support has become a critical but often overlooked need.

**Despite the fact that about 20% of the U.S. female workforce are between the age of 45 and 54,\* range in which menopause symptoms are most prevalent, 62% of employers report being unlikely to offer menopause leave in the next five years.**

This is staggering when we consider that this cohort includes senior-level executives and other key contributors to organizational success. Failing to address the impact of menopause in the workplace will ultimately have detrimental consequences

such as diminished productivity, higher turnover and the loss of valuable institutional knowledge. While accommodations such as flexible work hours and hormone therapy options are becoming more common, they remain limited, and employers may soon be mandated to expand them.

In August 2025, the state of Rhode Island passed House Bill No. 6161 and Senate Bill S0361, amending the Rhode Island Fair Employment Practices Act to require reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees experiencing menopause symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats and other vasomotor issues. This legislation may serve as a model for other states because of the clear connection between menopause support and outcomes like productivity, retention and employee wellbeing.

Employers are encouraged to recognize this gap and consider menopause support as the next frontier in gender-equitable benefits, addressing both the demographic reality and the need to support women through a significant life stage.

*\*Bureau of Labor Statistics. Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, BLS.gov, 2025, Table A-Bb.*

A close-up photograph of a man and a woman in a tender embrace. The man, on the right, has dark hair and a beard, and his eyes are closed in a peaceful or sorrowful expression. The woman, on the left, has long dark hair and is wearing a brown sweater. They are both wearing textured, greyish-brown sweaters. The background is dark and out of focus.

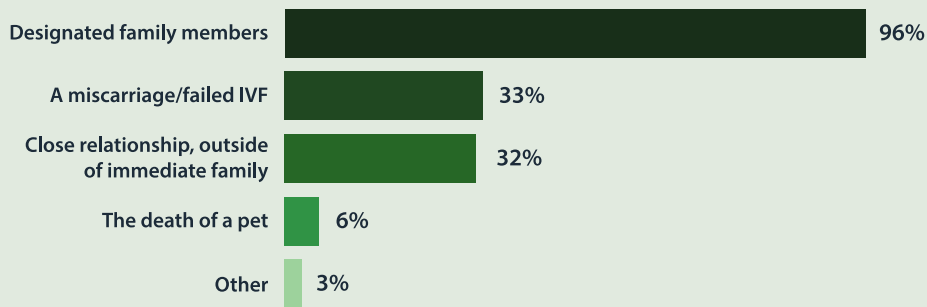
*Bereavement Leave*

# Expanding Support for Diverse Forms of Grief

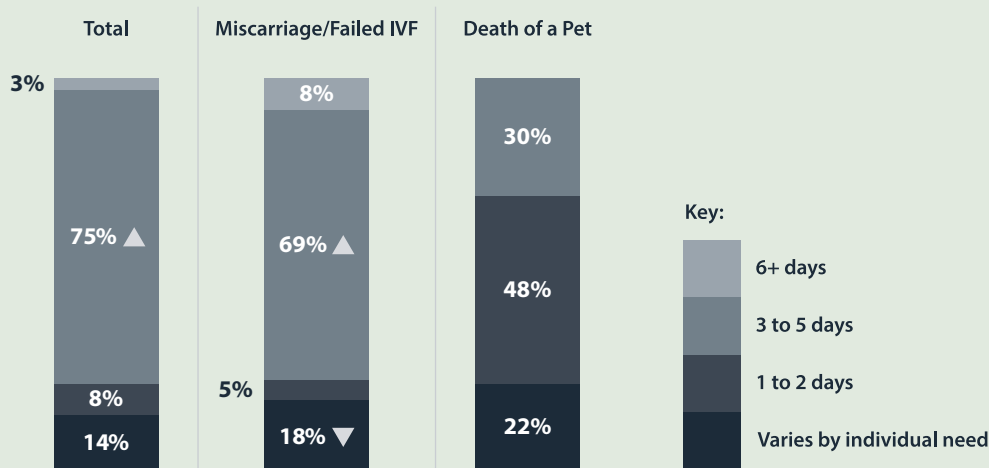
Bereavement leave policies are increasingly evolving to reflect a more compassionate understanding of grief. **In response to evolving legislation and changing social dynamics, more employers are now offering bereavement leave for diverse circumstances, including miscarriage, failed IVF and pet loss.** This growing acceptance of various grief experiences reflects a larger societal shift toward understanding and addressing the emotional needs of employees beyond traditional loss definitions. While only in a handful of states, mandatory time off for bereavement leave requires employers to review policies and practices to ensure compliance.



## Eligible Reasons Covered



## Days of Bereavement Leave Provided



The traditional bereavement leave offering typically provides three to five days off for the loss of an immediate family member. However, there is growing recognition that grief extends beyond the immediate family affected. Policies are expanding to cover more personal losses, though there remains a need for consistency in application. Employers must balance empathy with compliance, ensuring that their bereavement policies are clearly defined and equitably applied.

**Employers should work towards standardizing bereavement leave policies to avoid potential inequities or claims of favoritism.** This year's survey does show that fewer employers are varying the number of bereavement days based on individual needs, which is a positive change. While providing flexibility for personal losses is important, clear, consistent policies that cover a range of grief experiences will help ensure fairness and compliance.



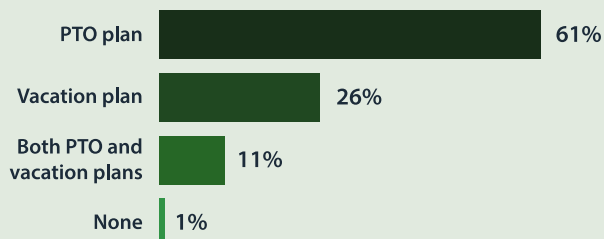
## *PTO and Vacation Leave*

# Shaping a Flexible and Compliant Leave Strategy

Paid time off remains one of the most popular leave offerings among employers, with 61% of employers opting for PTO-only plans. This model offers significant flexibility and can be more compliant with state regulations regarding sick leave, though PTO policies can become complex when incorporating vacation and sick leave provisions, especially for multistate employers.

**Though vacation use has increased overall, roughly 40% of employees continue to use half their time or less, pointing to uneven patterns in how employees approach time off.**

### PTO/Vacation Plan Offered

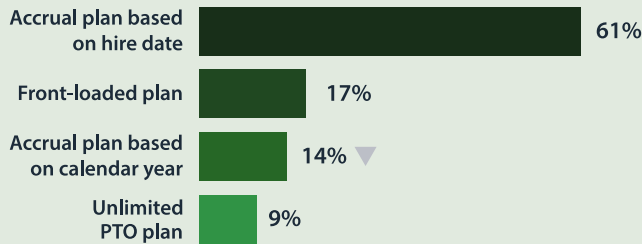


The most common approach for PTO and vacation accrual is based on an employee's hire date (61% for PTO and 67% for vacation). This model allows organizations to comply with state-specific sick leave regulations while maintaining flexibility. The calendar year accrual method, while simpler and easier to handle administratively, is less frequently used (14% for both PTO and vacation).



## PTO Administration

### PTO Plan Structure



### Impacts on Amount of PTO

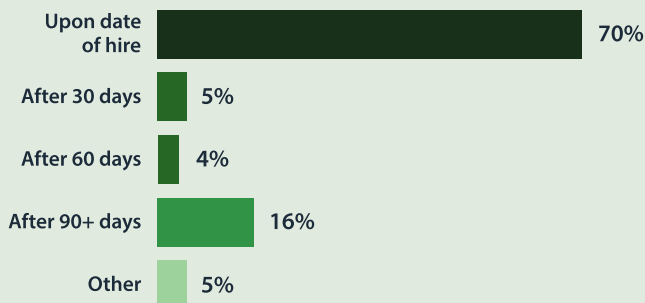
Length of tenure	56%
Both job title and length of tenure	29%
Job title	1%
Other	14%

### Differentiation Between Exempt and Non-Exempt Offering

No difference in PTO amount	75%
Exempt slightly more	10%
Exempt significantly more	5%
Other	10%

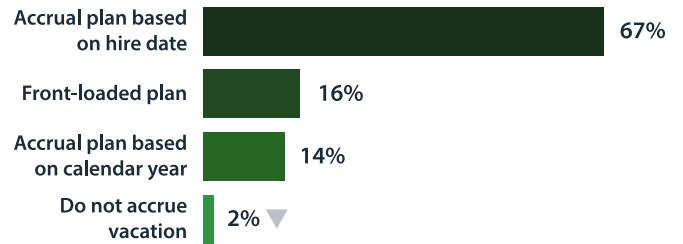
## PTO Eligibility

### Timing of PTO Eligibility



## Vacation Plan Administration

### Vacation Plan Structure



### Impacts on Amount of Vacation Days

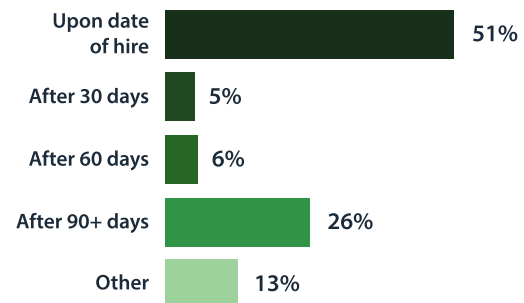
Length of tenure	62%
Both job title and length of tenure	31%
Job title	1%
Other	6%

### Differentiation Between Exempt and Non-Exempt Offering

No difference in vacation amount	74%
Exempt slightly more	13%
Exempt significantly more	4%
Other	9%

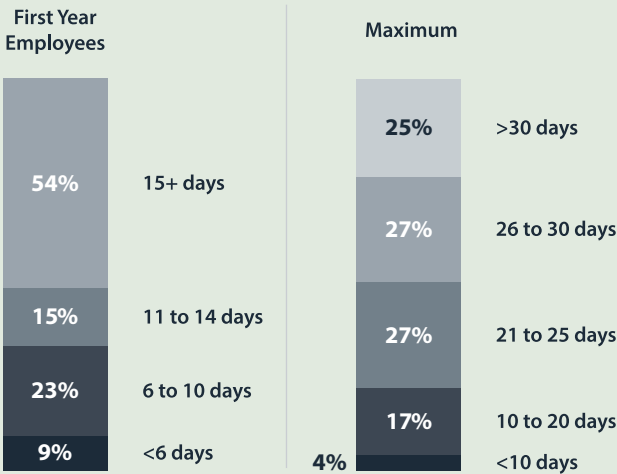
## Vacation Eligibility

### Timing of Vacation Eligibility

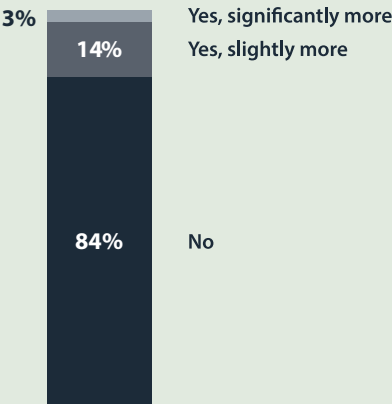


Impact of Work Experience on PTO Offering

Impact of Tenure on PTO Offering

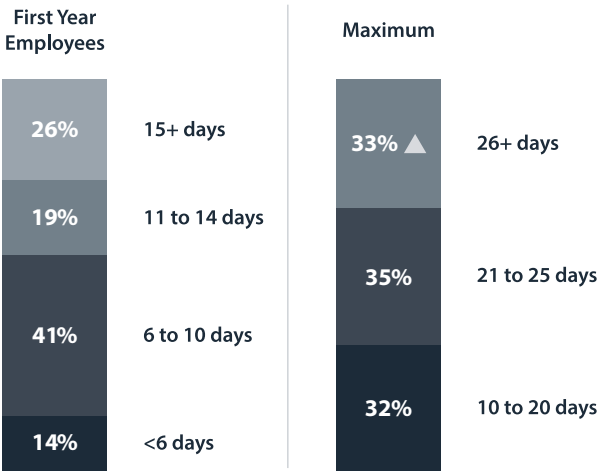


Offers More PTO to First Year Employees With Extensive Experience

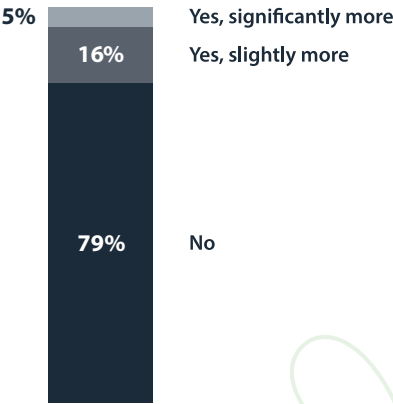


Impact of Work Experience on Vacation Offering

Impact of Tenure on Vacation Offering



Offers More Vacation Days to First Year Employees With Extensive Experience



Ultimately, employers should evaluate their PTO and vacation leave structures to ensure they comply with state regulations while maintaining flexibility. Using a dual-factor approach based on both tenure and job title can help streamline administration and reduce exceptions for more experienced hires and executives, ultimately creating a more efficient leave program.

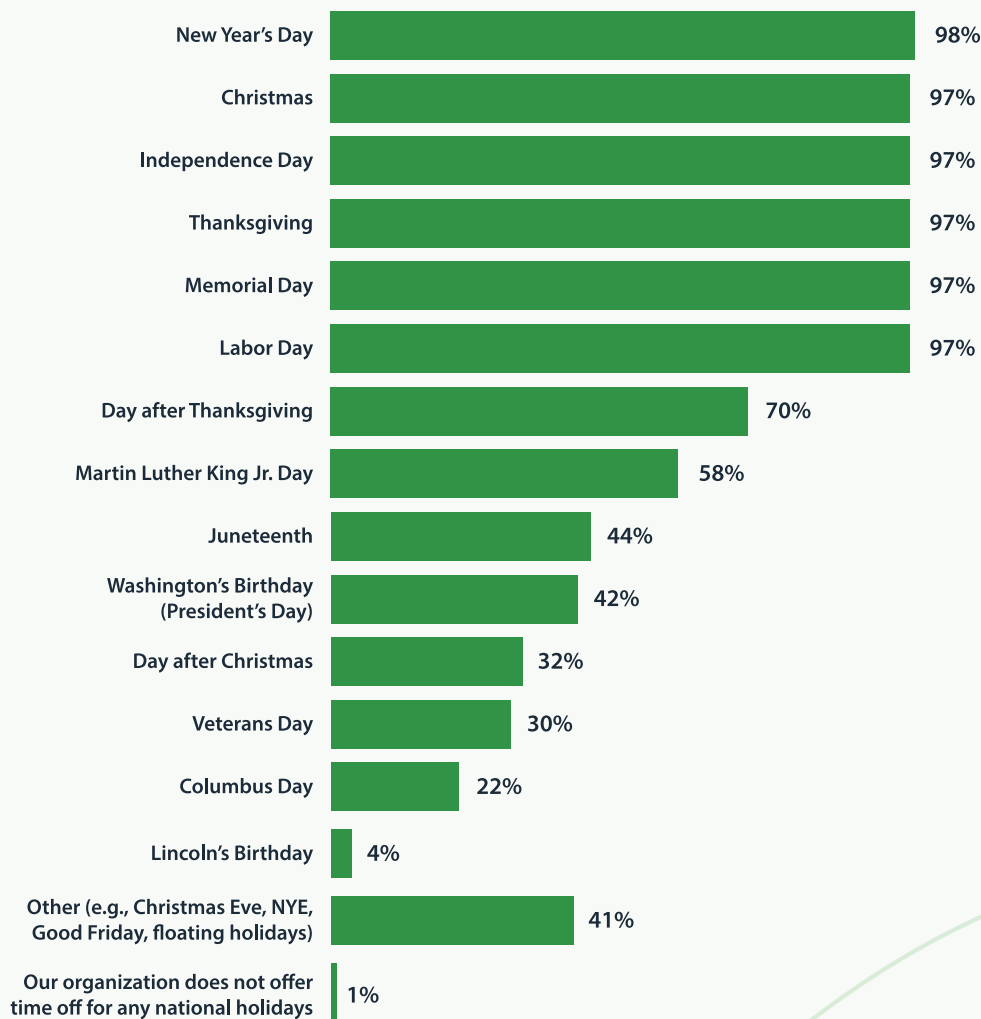
## Holiday Leave

# Adapting to Employee Culture

The majority of employers continue to offer paid time off for key national holidays, with 97% providing New Year's Day, Christmas, Memorial Day, Labor Day and Thanksgiving as paid holidays. Recognition of other significant days is growing, with 44% of employers offering Juneteenth and 70% providing the day after Thanksgiving as a paid holiday.

Many employers (41%) are also adding holidays beyond those nationally recognized, including Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve and floating holidays.

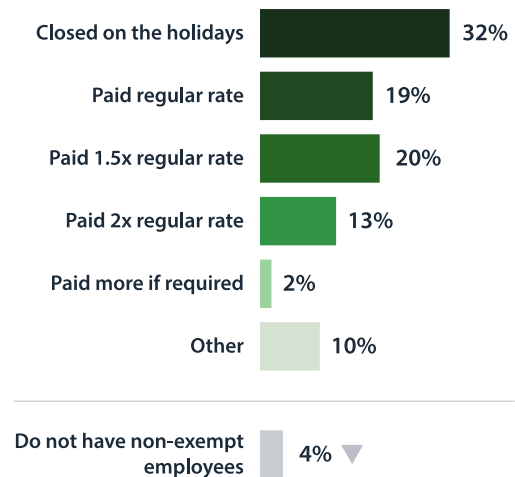
### Company-Recognized National Holidays



## Holiday Time Off for Exempt vs. Non-Exempt



## Holiday Pay Policy for Non-Exempt Employees



**Regarding holiday pay, 91% of employers provide the same time off for both exempt and non-exempt employees, 20% offer 1.5x pay for non-exempt employees working on holidays, and 13% offer 2x pay.**

Everybody loves holidays! As such, **employers should consider expanding holiday offerings to align with employee expectations and cultural shifts**, while maintaining equitable holiday pay practices to foster a supportive work environment.



## Employer Perceptions

# The Cultural Value of Leave

Employees and employers alike recognize that time away from work is not just a perk. In fact, it's crucial for productivity, wellbeing and retention. While formal leave policies define eligibility, duration and pay, the perceived value of leave and flexibility tends to shape how employees engage with their benefits and their employer.

### Summer Fridays

#### A Simple Perk with Big Impact

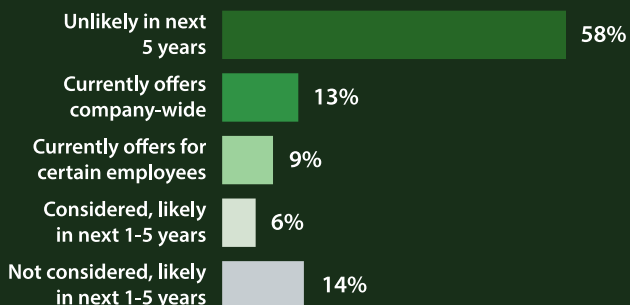
Offering Summer Fridays, where employees are given half or full days off during the summer months, is a benefit that is gaining popularity in organizations looking to boost employee morale without breaking the budget.



**Currently, about 1 in 5 employers offer this perk, while another 1 in 5 plan to do so.**

While a low-cost initiative, Summer Fridays signal trust, flexibility and respect for employees' work-life balance, which can have a significant positive impact on retention and morale. Even though they are still expected to manage important responsibilities and meet their deadlines, they have the autonomy and flexibility to do so while still getting some additional time off. Employers can analyze industry trends to determine where this perk may be most effective, leveraging it as a strategic tool for talent retention.

#### Stance on Offering Summer Friday Hours



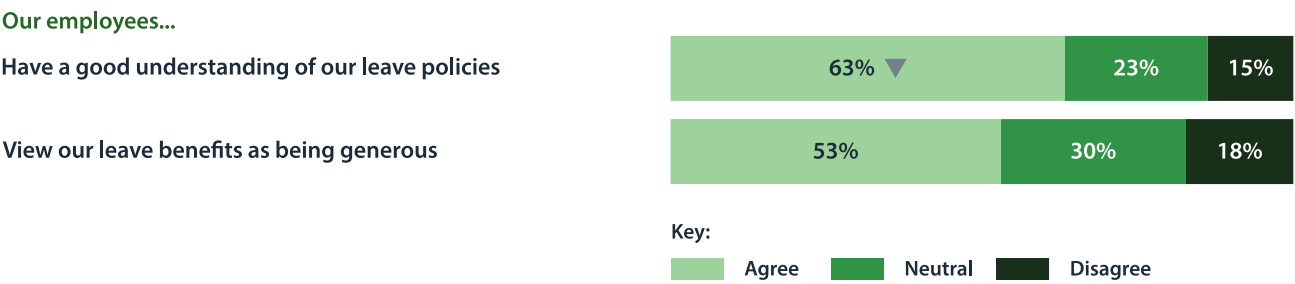
Many organizations report that their leave offerings are adequate on paper, yet employees’ actual experiences often reveal gaps. For example, while most employers provide standard PTO, vacation and holiday benefits, employees increasingly seek flexibility, inclusivity and cultural acknowledgment in how leave is applied.

Employer Perception of Benefit Value



Other informal or culturally signaling leave practices, such as flexible holidays, unlimited PTO or half-days around major holidays, influence how employees perceive organizational support. Equally important is the employees’ understanding of their formal leave benefits. **Clear communication and transparent policies help ensure that leave is not only accessible — it also cements its value.** When combined with equitable administration and supportive practices, these factors contribute to a workplace culture that prioritizes work-life balance and flexibility, ultimately driving greater usage, stronger perceptions of value and smoother policy management.

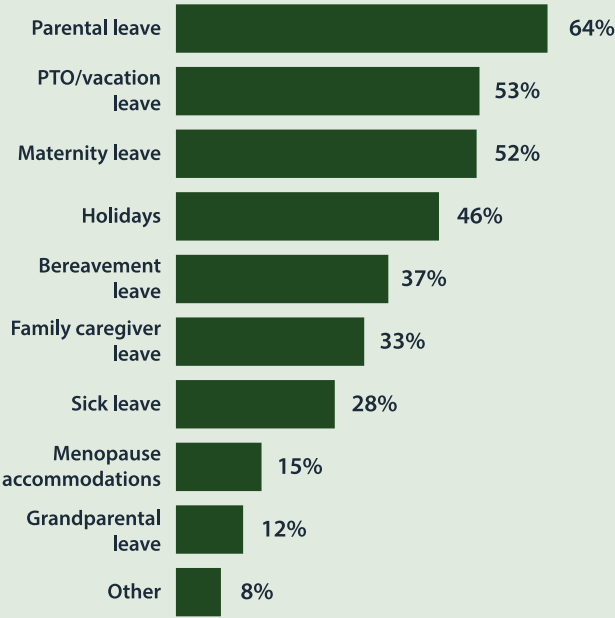
Employer Perception of Employee Understanding



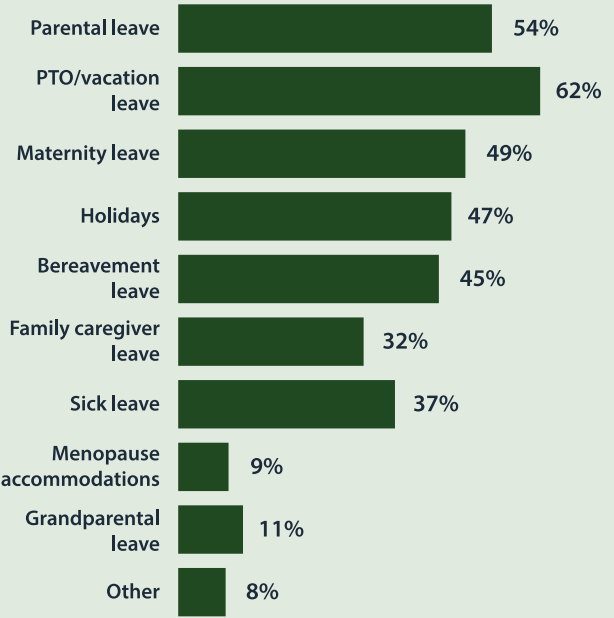
Employers would be well-served to view leave not just as a compliance or administrative requirement, but as a strategic lever for shaping employee experience and perceptions. Regularly reassessing leave policies and benefits ensures they remain competitive and aligned with employees’ evolving needs. **By combining comprehensive policies, thoughtful cultural perks and transparent communication, organizations can strengthen trust, enhance engagement and position themselves as employers of choice in a competitive talent landscape.**

Benefits that Need to Be More Competitive

Employer Perception



Employee Feedback





# Benchmarking Insights for Leave Policy Evolution

The data from the 2025 NFP U.S. Leave Management Survey reveals key trends and emerging shifts in leave policies across industries. Employers are increasingly recognizing the importance of flexible, inclusive leave programs, particularly in areas such as caregiver leave, parental leave and PTO.

Employers of choice are also examining their workforce dynamics and tailoring offerings to support their diverse and unique workforce needs. Menopause and caregiver leave will continue to develop as new

legislation transforms employer requirements and compliance demands. As workforce demographics evolve and legal landscapes shift, organizations must adapt their policies to remain competitive, retain top talent and ensure compliance.

**By focusing on equity, flexibility and clear communication, employers can create leave policies that support the diverse needs of their workforce while fostering a culture of empathy and inclusion.**





# Leave Administration Insights

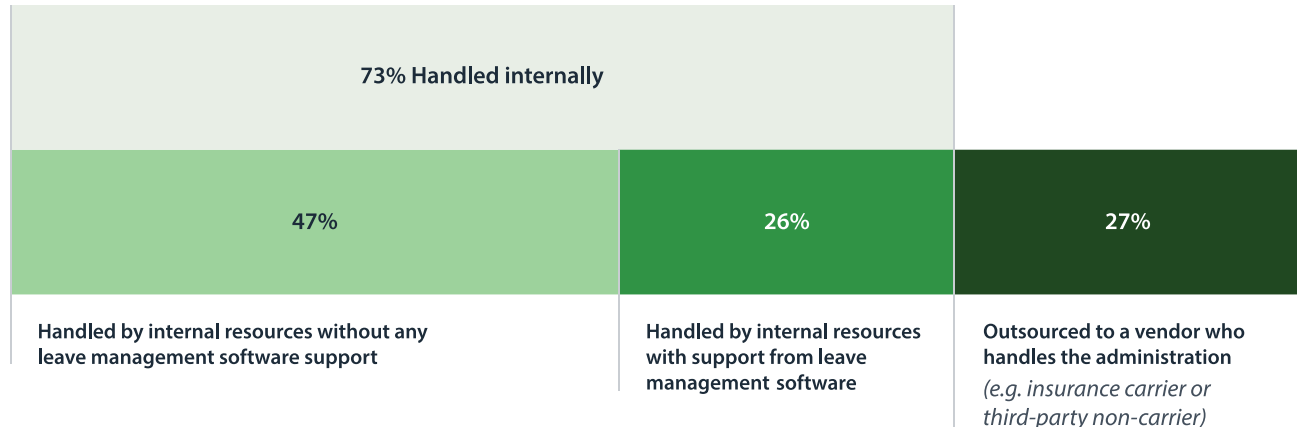
If benchmarking identifies the “what” of employer leave offerings, administration comprises the “how” of leave management. For 2026, we asked employers detailed questions about the ways they administer leave, the technology and vendors they use and how satisfied they are with these approaches. The goal was to go beyond benefit design and explore operational realities, i.e., how leave is tracked, how compliance is maintained and where gaps and efficiencies exist.

The results provide a clearer picture of the choices employers face, the trade-offs they make and the strategies that position them for long-term success.

## Administration Models and Compliance Foundations

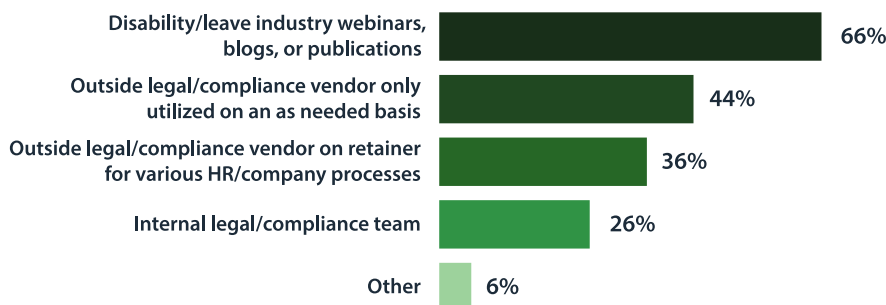
Leave administration models vary widely, and the right fit depends on more than just cost. **Seventy-three percent of employers manage leave internally. Of those, roughly two thirds do so without software.** This approach, while sometimes practical for low-volume, single-state operations, can quickly become unsustainable as complexity grows. Larger or multistate organizations may require internal software or an outsourcing vendor partner based on ROI and the need to reduce risk and administrative burden.

### Administration Process for Leave Requests



On compliance, most HR teams turn to readily available resources, such as webinars, blogs and compliance publications to stay informed. Others seek more robust support, engaging legal vendors or retaining in-house counsel. For multistate employers, any learn-as-you-go approach to compliance could leave them exposed, especially in a fast-changing regulatory environment.

### Means of Staying Informed of Leave Law Changes and Compliance-Related Issues

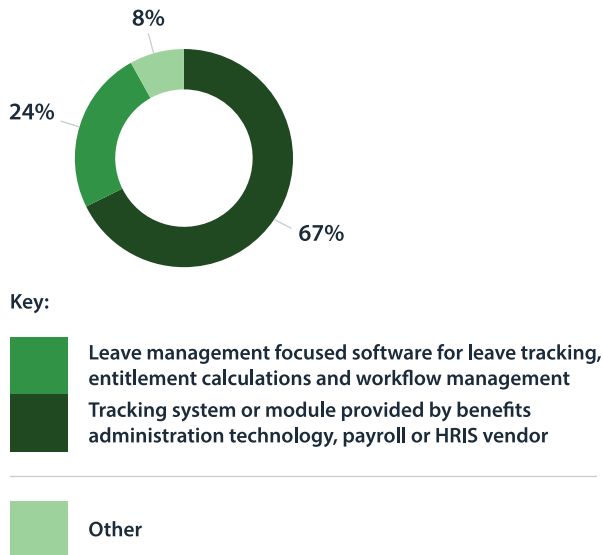


Employers should weigh their administration and compliance choices against operational complexity, HR bandwidth and, most importantly, risk exposure, recognizing that manual processes may suffice for simple scenarios but can quickly become a liability when demands scale up.

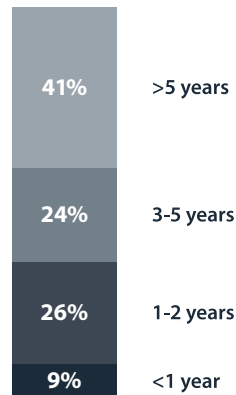
## Internal Management Software Effectiveness

Most employers adopt leave management software to improve tracking, especially for intermittent leave, but there is a gap between what these tools can do and how they're being used. Many organizations underutilize their system's capabilities like entitlement calculations, workflow management and integration with payroll or HRIS systems, despite the fact that these features can significantly reduce manual work. Along those same lines, teams that have relied on the same system for years while underutilizing key capabilities now face important questions about whether their tools have kept pace with evolving regulatory complexity.

### Software Leveraged



### Time Using Software

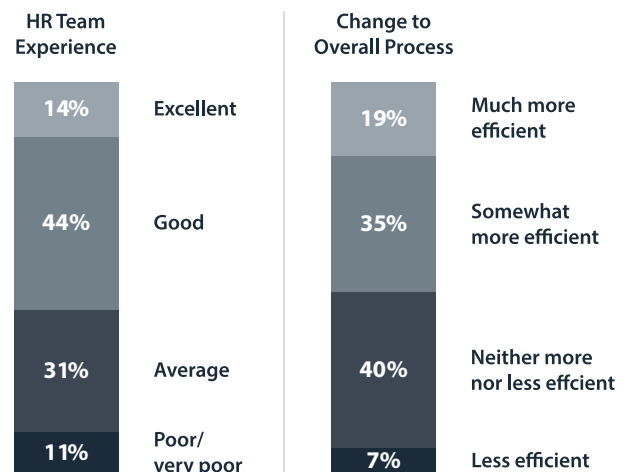


With that in mind, it should come as no surprise that despite broad adoption, **nearly half of employers report no real improvement in efficiency.** This is often due to underused functionality, unclean data or unrealistic expectations. Smaller HR teams, in particular, may lack the expertise to fully leverage these systems, increasing reliance on vendors. For organizations of any size, automated communications, consolidated platforms and better system integration remain highly desired, underscoring that software alone is not a magic fix. To deliver meaningful ROI, it requires comprehensive training, clean data and aligned processes.

### Importance of Factors in Selecting Leave Management Software

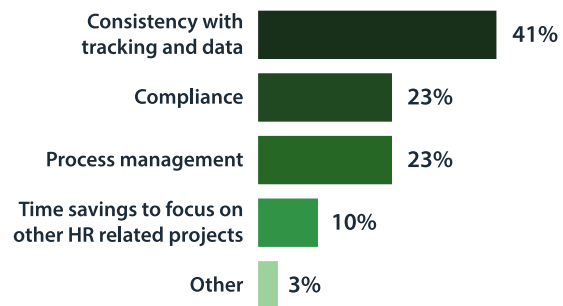
Compliance support	29%
Integration capabilities for payroll and employee updates	21%
Established workflow and tools to manage the leave request process	19%
Customize to fit your process	19%
Price	19%

### Software Impact



When asked about the benefits of their systems, tracking consistency and compliance top the list, yet some still describe their solutions as overly manual. Employers should strive to evaluate not just the compliance and tracking capabilities of their tools, but also the user experience for both HR and employees, as better dashboards, automation and streamlined workflows can significantly improve adoption and outcomes.

## Top Benefit of Implementing Software

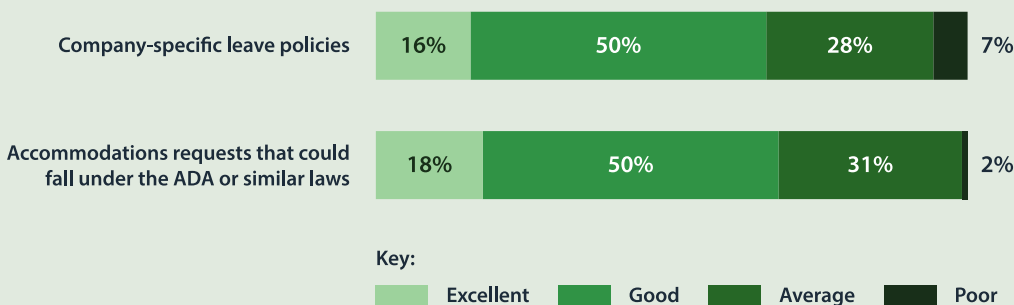


Two out of three employers that use software most often value guidance on company-specific leave policies and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations. It's important to note that ADA support can vary widely, from helping employers navigate conversations to assisting with physical accommodations, making it critical to define vendor roles early.

## Software Support with Management of...



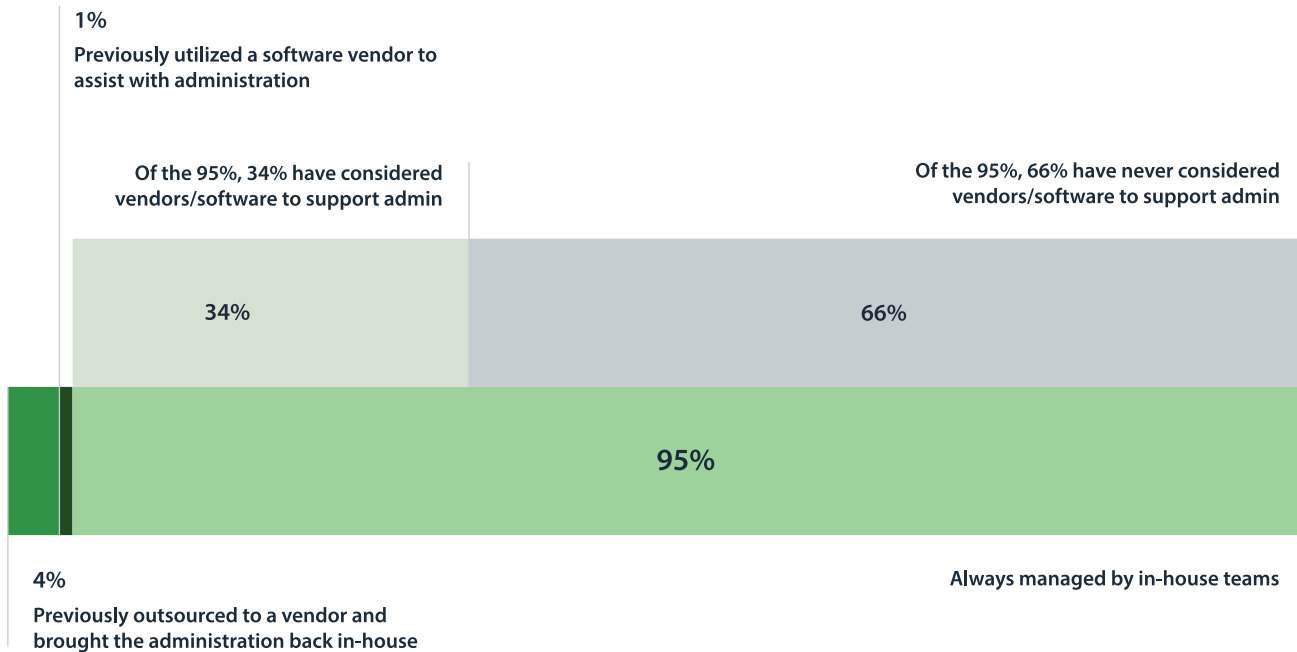
## Software Performance with Management of...



## Internal Management Challenges Without Software

In organizations managing leave without software, the work often falls to employees already balancing a full-time job. Despite this burden, more than half have never even considered a vendor or technology solution. While this setup can provide a high-touch experience, it is alarming given the strain it places on resources and the risk it introduces, particularly for multistate employers.

## Historical Management of FMLA/State Leaves



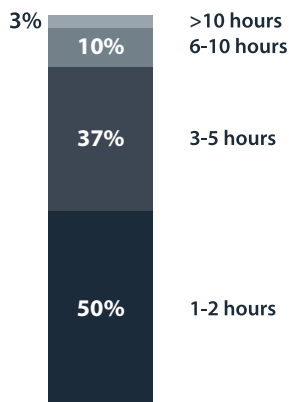
## Structure for Managing Leave Requests



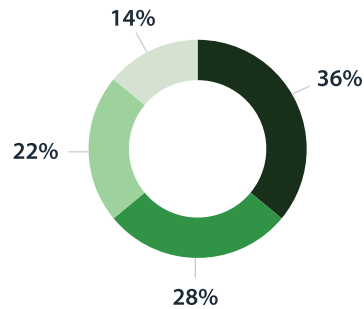


Half of employers spend three or more hours managing each leave, and more than one in four report process management as a top pain point, underscoring the need to evaluate efficiency. Consistent tracking and data is the top challenge, likely creating inefficiencies and compliance risks. Cost is also a significant barrier, often preventing organizations from exploring new solutions.

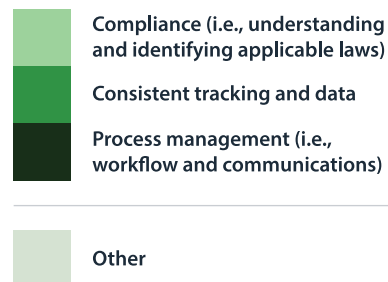
### Hours Spent on Leave Admin (per leave basis)



### Areas In Need of Greatest Improvement

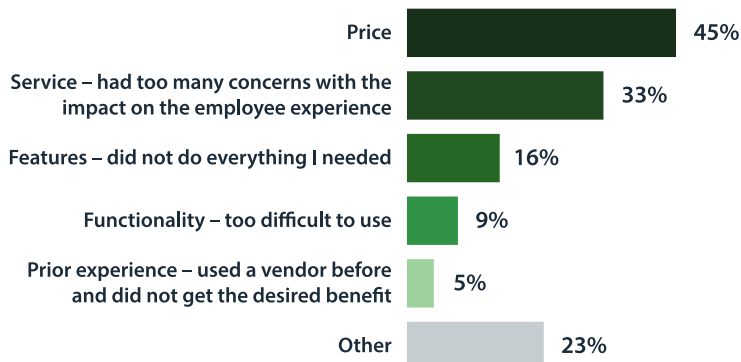


Key:



Employers should quantify the cost of inefficiency and compliance risk in their current model. By comparing those hidden costs, including those significant time demands, to the potential gains from automation or outsourcing. By doing so, whether through full implementation or a phased approach, they can make the most informed decision about where to invest. For some, concerns about losing an ideal experience or perceptions that systems are overly complex may slow adoption, but these assumptions should be tested against actual ROI and risk-reduction potential to see whether they truly outweigh the measurable benefits of a more efficient, compliant and scalable approach.

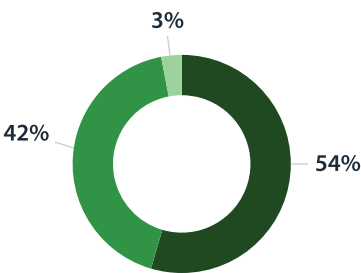
### Inhibitors to Leveraging Software to Support Admin



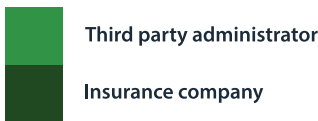
Outsourced Vendor Landscape

Employers that outsource leave administration tend to prioritize service integration and the overall employee experience over cost. That’s because bundling with insurance carriers or TPAs often simplifies administration and creates a more seamless process for HR teams and employees alike. Those already outsourcing have typically weighed the trade-offs and decided that convenience, support, and reduced administrative burden justify the investment. While satisfaction is generally strong, vendors still face pressure to improve accuracy, efficiency and communication, particularly through better use of dashboards, automation and proactive outreach.

Vendor Handling Admin



Key:



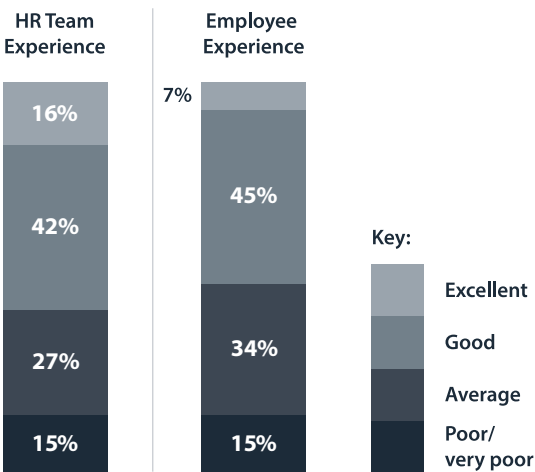
Time with Vendor



Importance of Factors in Selecting a Leave Management Vendor

Ability to bundle leave management with other services for a single administrator	53%
Vendor’s emphasis on employee experience	29%
Technology/features	11%
Price	7%

Vendor Performance



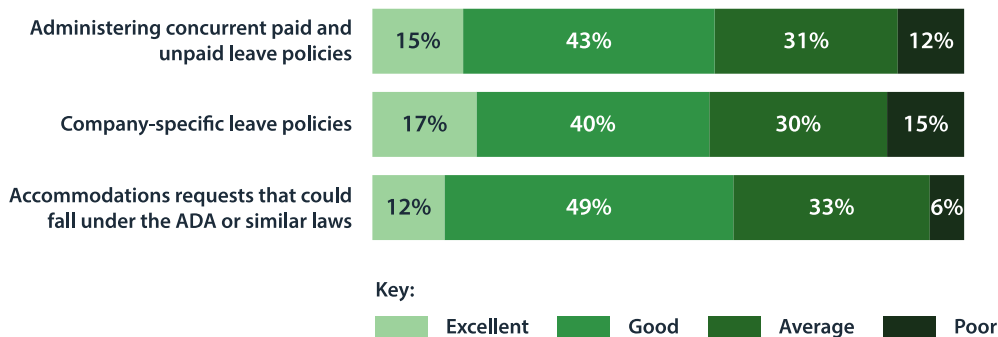
Vendors are most often used to assist with short-term disability and state leave, and less commonly used for company-specific or ADA-related leave needs. Unfortunately, there is room for improvement across the board for vendor performance, as roughly 40% report less-than-good results. Compliance is the most frequently cited benefit of outsourcing, followed by process management and time savings. This is certainly a reflection of employers' desire to offload risk while streamlining administration.

Those already outsourcing tend to view technology as less important than service integration; however, dashboards, automation and proactive communication tools remain underutilized and represent key opportunities for improvement.

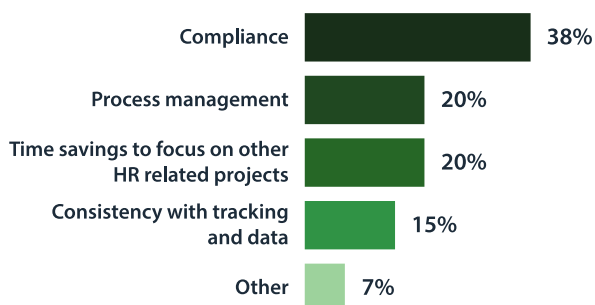
### Vendor Support with Management of...



### Vendor Performance with Management of...

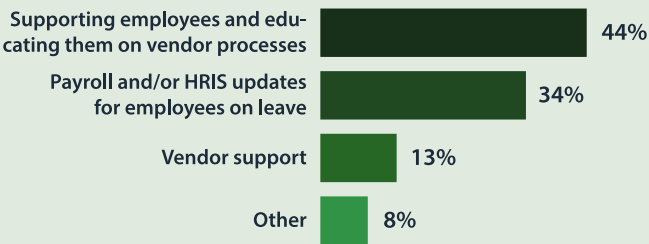


### Top Benefit of Implementing Vendor's Solution

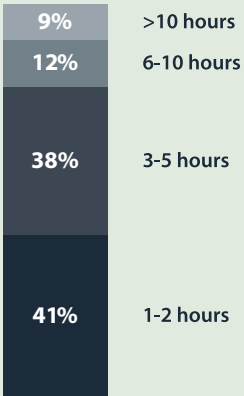


**Even with vendors in place, HR teams often remain responsible for employee education and payroll/HRIS updates.** While efficiency gains aren't the only benefit of working with a vendor – many HR teams want and need compliance support – most employers outsource with a goal of lessening the amount of time their in-house team must dedicate to leave admin.

**Where HR Team Is Still Most Involved**



**Hours Per Leave HR Team Is Still Involved in Admin Process**



As always, setting clear roles and expectations from the outset is key. Along with strong integration between vendor systems and internal processes, this helps maximize efficiency, reduce errors and create a seamless experience for HR teams and employees. **Employers that treat vendor relationships as strategic partnerships and prioritize automation and communication will see the greatest long-term benefits.**



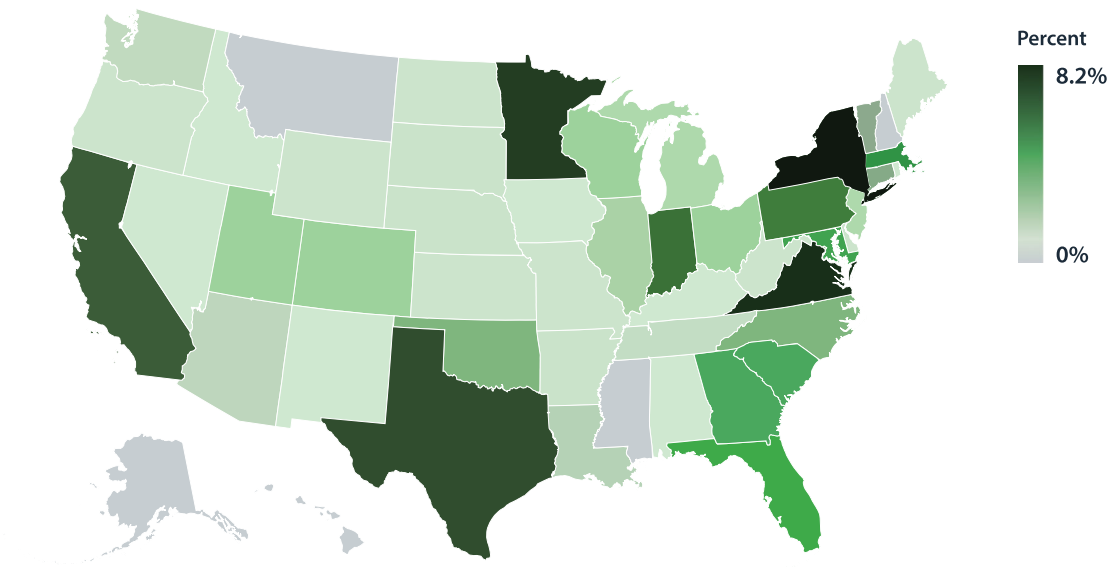


# About the Data

The 2026 NFP U.S. Leave Management Trend Report draws on data from NFP's 2025 leave management policies and practices benchmarking survey, conducted in coordination with Empatix. **NFP surveyed 796 respondents from a range of industries with decision-making authority or input regarding organizational leave management policy.** Respondents were located across the U.S., with 71% of employer respondents having fewer than 500 employees. Any other sources are as referenced throughout. Note that due to rounding conventions, data in some charts may not add to 100%. For full information on the methodology for each NFP survey, contact [marketing@nfp.com](mailto:marketing@nfp.com).



State Representation



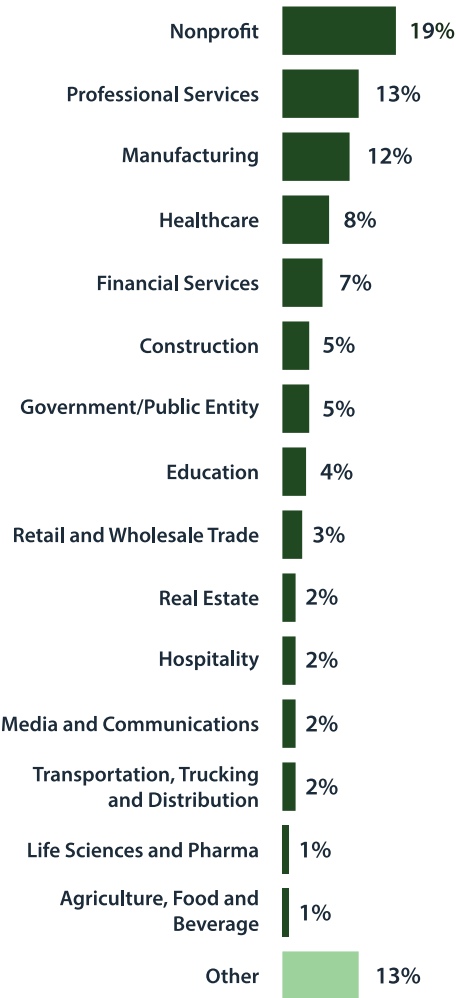
Number of States Respondents Operate In

1	31%
2-5	26%
6-9	10%
10-29	20%
30+	13%

Company Size by Number of Employees

<50	23%
50-99	15%
100-499	33%
500-999	10%
1,000-4,999	15%
5,000+	5%

Industry



### *About the Author*

**Maria M. Trapenasso** serves as the senior vice president and national practice leader of Human Capital Solutions at NFP. She oversees NFP's HR consulting practice and provides clients with strategic HR guidance to develop solutions that reflect each organization's unique culture and values. Maria specializes in leave management, state compliance, HR audits and strategic organizational development.

Maria has 30 years of human resources expertise across many industries. In her previous positions, she focused on evaluating HR organizations to ensure strategic alignment with company objectives, implementing robust and compliant total rewards programs and designing impactful training initiatives to support employee development goals.

Maria is a Senior Certified Professional (SHRM SCP) and Leave Management Specialist (DMEC-CLMS), with membership in SHRM and the National Association of Female Executives since 1998. In addition to her HR background, she holds a NY State Insurance license for Health, Life and Accident Insurance.

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**NFP Human Capital Solutions** employs almost 100 hundred subject matter experts who offer HR consulting services covering every stage of the employment life cycle, from recruitment through retirement. Providing an extensive range of solutions designed to enhance both HR functionality and overall business performance.

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