



PAID LEAVE AND THE PANDEMIC

Effective Workplace Policies and Practices For a Time of Crisis and Beyond

OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for employees and businesses alike. To understand the impact of paid family and medical leave policies on companies during this crisis, Paid Leave for the US (PL+US) and Promundo, in collaboration with the Parental Leave Corporate Task Force (PLCTF), surveyed 40 companies globally, integrating inputs from executives and human resources teams and insights from in-depth interviews. Based on quantitative and qualitative findings directly from the business community, the report makes recommendations for both public policy and business practice that should endure post-pandemic.

KEY FINDINGS

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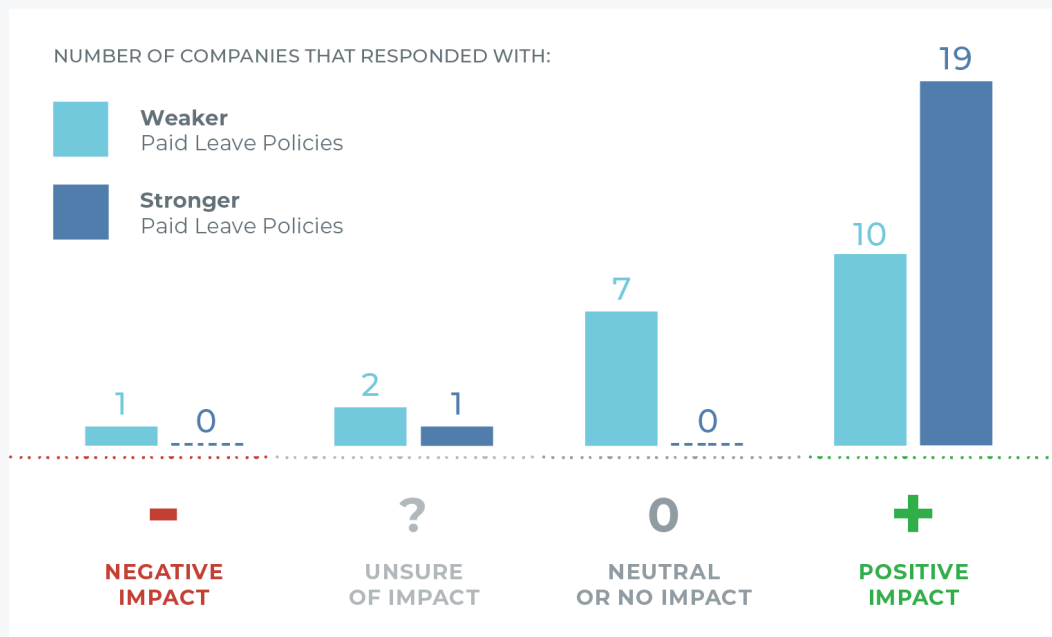
Paid leave policies helped employers and employees weather the pandemic.

In light of significant challenges brought on by COVID-19, paid leave policies provided important support for companies during the pandemic, ensuring greater employee morale and workplace satisfaction, as well as reduced rates of attrition and turnover.

Among the companies surveyed for this report, **72.5 percent of companies said their paid leave policy had a positive impact** on their ability to respond and adapt to the pandemic.

Differences in ability to adapt to pandemic depending on strength of paid leave policy

What impact do you feel your company's paid family leave policy has had on the company's ability to respond and adapt during the pandemic?



2 The pandemic accelerated a culture of caregiving, increasing demands for workplace flexibility and paid leave policies.

As a response to increased visibility of caregiving in the workplace, companies embraced paid leave and worked to emphasize flexibility as key to their culture – something that may well last beyond the pandemic.

35 out of 40 total companies noted that at a minimum, **20 percent of their workforce took days off to care for a child or ill family member** because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We reacted as best as we could, this has been an experiment in adjusting week to week or month to month. Our top executive lives with his parents, who are older and high-risk, so we gave him flexibility - and extended that to other staff. For caregiving, employees who have children have flexibility."

- Respondent from a medium-size employer in the US

3 A work culture that promotes gender equality through equitable use of paid parental and caregiving leave can help stem the tide of women leaving the workforce.

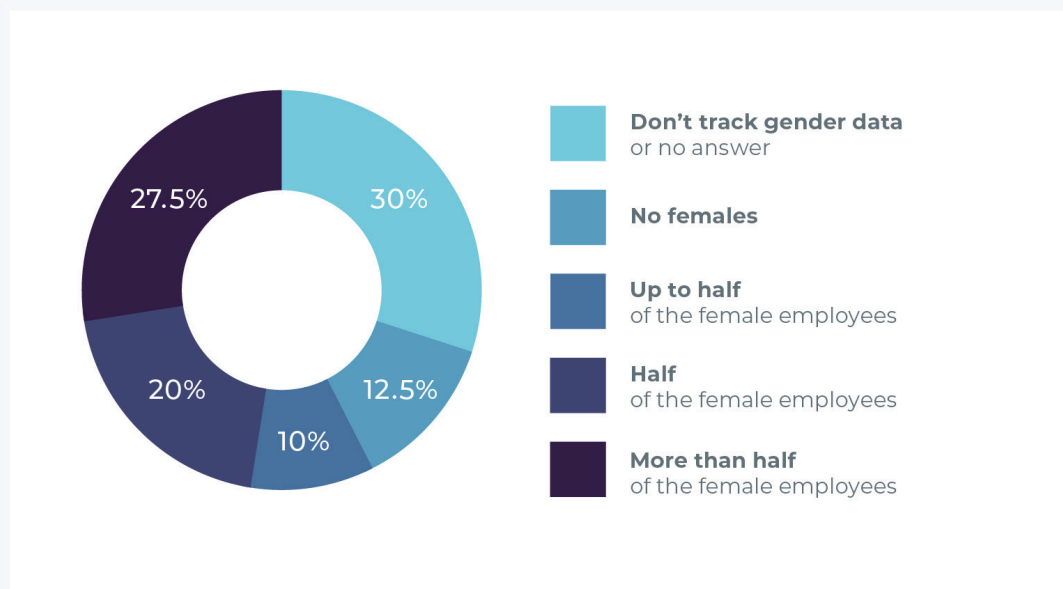
Three factors are crucial to limiting women from exiting the workforce: strong paid leave policies, flexible working cultures that support everyone's needs, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, and the encouragement of men's uptake of leave, especially paid parental leave.

"Many moms might take the full amount...What we find typically is dads took about three quarters of what they were eligible for."

- Respondent from a large multinational corporation

Uptake of paid leaves for female employees

Of employees who have taken days off to care for a child or ill family member because of the coronavirus pandemic, what percentage are female?



"There's still a stigma around motherhood. What will your male counterpart think? Who will get the promotion while you're out? People may think you are 'just a mom' and your time will be spread thin."

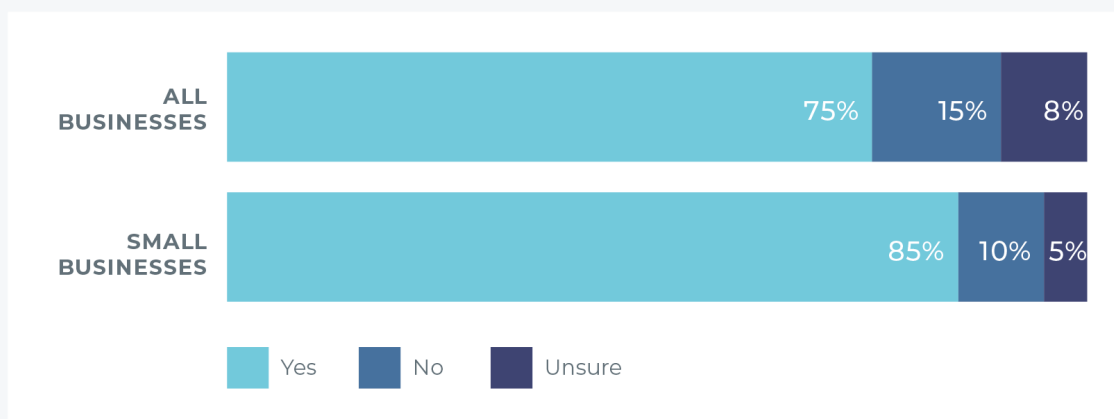
- Respondent from a small business based in the US

4 The pandemic has revealed a critical need for a permanent paid leave program in the US and accelerated support from the business community for a national policy.

While a national paid family and medical leave policy receives consistent bipartisan public support, businesses are increasingly joining the chorus and seeing the benefits.

More than 75 percent of businesses surveyed said that **a national paid leave policy would help them be better positioned** to weather future public health emergencies and economic crises — **with support especially strong among small businesses**, including those who do not currently offer paid family leave.

Business support for national public policy on paid family & medical leave



** Data displayed reflects responses among businesses surveyed for this report as to whether or not a national public policy solution for paid family & medical leave would help their company be better positioned to weather future public health emergencies and economic crises.*

“For paid leave, lots of companies will pay lip service, but people will take it more seriously if it’s a societal thing and not company-by-company.”

- Respondent from a small business based in the US



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESS LEADERS



Implement strong gender-informed paid leave company policies



Create a workplace culture and foster leadership modeling so paid leave can be utilized and optimized by all employees to thrive



Join a growing chorus of businesses supporting a federal paid family and medical leave policy in the United States

METHODOLOGY

To inform this report, Paid Leave for the US and Promundo, in collaboration with the Parental Leave Corporate Task Force, surveyed executives and human resources leaders from a wide cross-section of employers of different sizes, sectors, and geographic regions across the globe, by conducting semi-structured interviews by phone and soliciting responses to a detailed online questionnaire.

More information on the 'Paid Leave and the Pandemic: Effective Workplace Policies for a Time of Crisis and Beyond' report can be found here:

<https://paidleave.us/paidleaveandthepandemic>

ABOUT THE REPORT ORGANIZATIONS

For more information about the report organizations, we invite you to visit their websites.

Paid Leave for the US (PL+US): <http://paidleave.us/>

Promundo: www.promundoglobal.org

Parental Leave Corporate Task Force: www.leavefordads.com

PL+US

