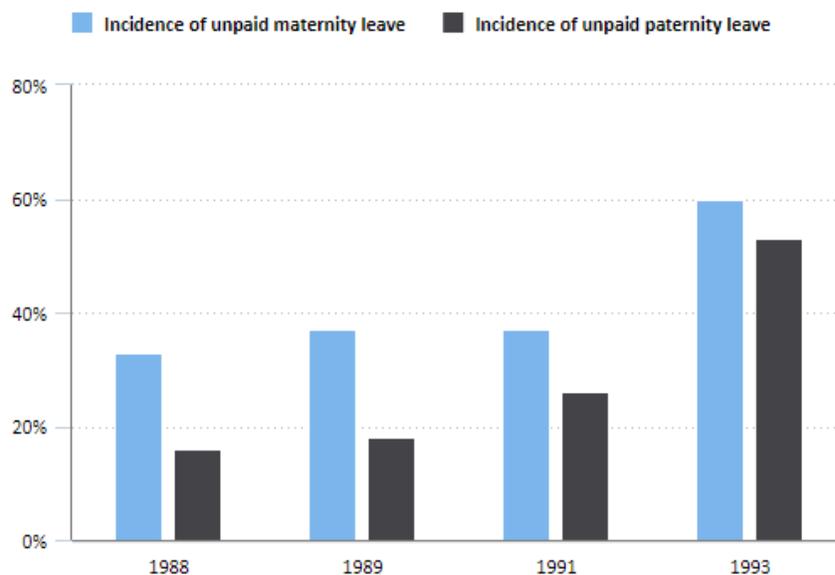


What data does the BLS publish on family leave?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) first published data on family leave for the 1988 reference period, which provided information on the percent of full-time workers in medium and large establishments (100 or more workers) participating in unpaid maternity leave (33 percent), unpaid paternity leave (16 percent), paid maternity leave (2 percent), and paid paternity leave (1 percent).

Over time, the provisions of family leave captured and published by the BLS have evolved. For example, between the 1988 and 1993 publications included incidence of maternity and paternity leave (see chart 1), as well as participation rates and duration of family leave benefits.

Chart 1: Percent of private industry workers in medium and large establishments participating in unpaid leave benefits



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was enacted and required establishments with 50 or more employees to provide 12 unpaid workweeks of leave during any 12-month period for various family matters including parental leave. Following the legislation, the BLS began publishing access rates to unpaid family leave, and no longer differentiated between maternity and paternity leave benefits. Between the years of 1994 and 1998, the BLS alternated publication of benefits for workers in small private industry establishments (less than 100 workers), workers in medium and large private industry establishments (100 or more workers), and for state and local government workers. (See table 1.)

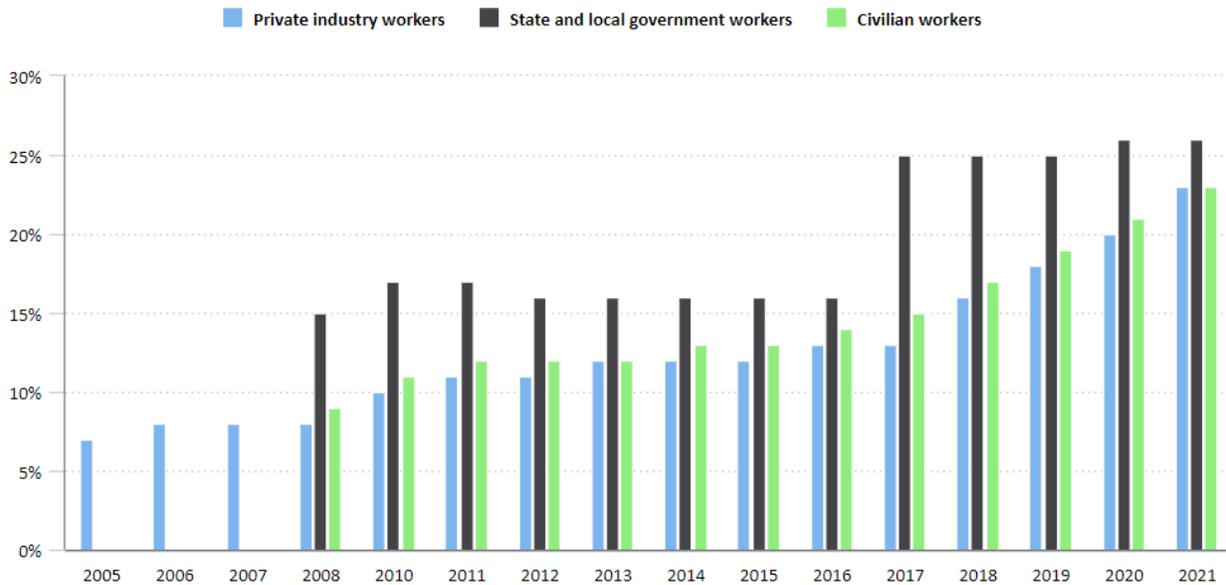
Table 1. Availability⁽¹⁾ of family leave benefits for reference years 1994 - 1998

Year	Private industry workers				State and local government workers	
	Small establishments (less than 100 workers)		Medium and large establishments (100 workers or more)		Paid	Unpaid
	Paid	Unpaid	Paid	Unpaid		
1994	2%	47%	-	-	4%	93%
1995	-	-	2%	84%	-	-
1996	2%	48%	-	-	-	-
1997	-	-	2%	93%	-	-
1998	-	-	-	-	4%	95%

Footnotes:
⁽¹⁾ Availability denotes rate of workers that are eligible to participate in family leave and have met all eligibility restrictions.
 Note: Dash indicates estimates were not published for the reference year. Sum of paid and unpaid leave does not necessarily sum to 100 percent as workers may have one or both plan benefits available to them.
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey

Estimates on family leave were not published between the years 1999 and 2004, but resumed publication in 2005 for private industry workers and in 2008 for state and local government workers. Estimates for civilian workers, the combination of the private and public economic sector workers, were also added in 2008. (See chart 2 and 3.)

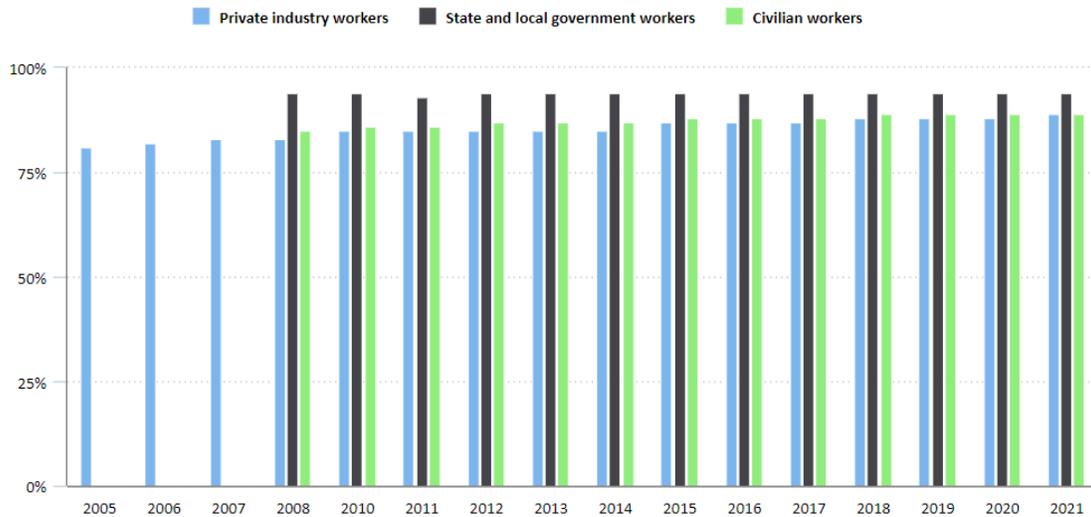
Chart 2. Percent of workers with access to paid family leave benefits by ownership, 2005-2021



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey.



Chart 3. Percent of workers with access to unpaid family leave benefits by ownership, 2005-2021



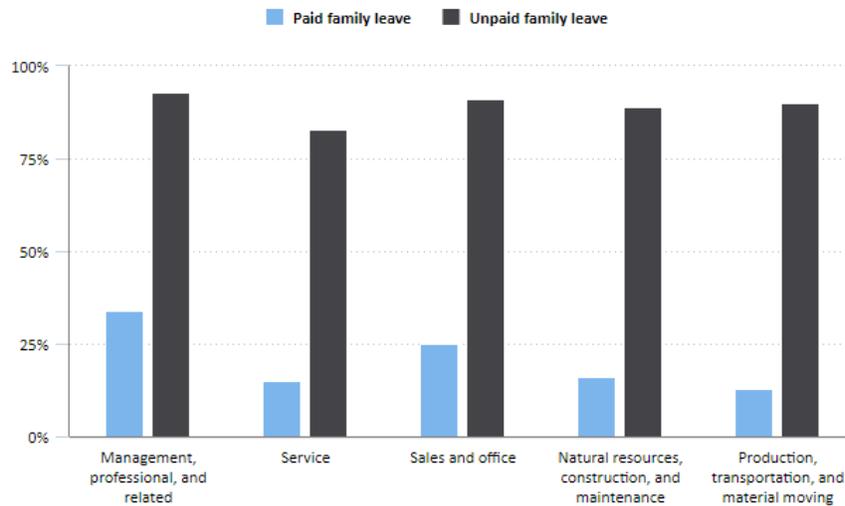
Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey.

In March 2021, 23 percent of civilian workers had access to paid family leave and 89 percent had access to unpaid family leave. Twenty-three percent of private industry workers had access to paid family leave and 89 had access to unpaid family leave. Amongst state and local government workers, 26 percent had access to paid family leave and 94 had access to unpaid family leave.

Additional data by worker (such as union, nonunion, full-time, part-time, average wage categories) and establishment (industry, size, geographic location) characteristics are available for civilian workers, private industry workers, as well as state and local government workers. See “[Employee Benefits in the United States – March 2021](#)” and the [glossary of terms](#) for more information on employee benefits.

Chart 4 provides the percent of civilian workers with access to family leave benefits by occupational group for the March 2021 reference period.

Chart 4. Percent of civilian workers with access to family leave benefits by occupational group, March 2021



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey.



Technical Note

The [Handbook of Methods: National Compensation Measures](#) provides information on the survey design, calculations, weighting, and imputation methods used to produce estimates for the ECI, ECEC, and benefit publications. Information on calculating the reliability of estimates (standard errors) is also included in the [calculation](#) section.

Private industry estimates should not be directly compared with state and local government estimates as differences between these sectors stem from factors such as variation in work activities and occupational structures. Manufacturing and sales, for example, comprise a large portion of private industry work activities but are rare in state and local government. Professional and administrative support occupations (including teachers) account for two-thirds of the state and local government workforce, compared with one-half of private industry.

BLS advises against making comparisons with previously published benefits estimates due to changes in weighting, effects from sample rotation, and changes in estimation and imputation methodology. Since December 2015 the NCS uses a 3-year sample rotation in estimation. One-third of the private industry sample is rotated each year except in years where the state and local government sample is rotated, which occurs approximately every ten years. Prior to December 2015, the NCS used 5 private industry sample groups, and rotated 20 percent of the sample groups each year.

Private industry estimates for paid and unpaid family leave are not available for March 2009 reference year. Estimation and [imputation](#) changes were implemented during that reference year which reduced the BLS' ability to publish many paid and unpaid leave benefits.

For all published estimates of cost, coverage, and provisions of employer-sponsored benefit plans see the [National Compensation Survey \(NCS\) publications list](#).

Additional Resources

- [Latest news release](#)
- [Archived benefits news releases](#)
- [Employee Benefits Survey glossary](#)
- [Household survey on absences from work](#)

Additional Articles

- [Employer provisions for parental leave, 1989](#)
- [Family leave coverage in the 1990s](#)
- [Parental leave benefits provided by employers, 1993](#)
- [Unpaid Family Leave, 1998](#)
- [Family and medical leave: evidence from the 2000 surveys](#)
- [How paid family leave affects mothers in the labor force](#)
- [Pay protection during temporary absences from work: what we know and what we don't know, 2015](#)
- [Does paid family leave increase leave taking among fathers? 2016](#)
- [Racial and ethnic disparities in access to and use of paid family and medical leave; evidence from four nationally representative datasets, 2019](#)

