

A COMPREHENSIVE CASE STUDY

Work-Life Integration Through Equitable Family Leave Policies

Client Demographics

Nonprofit HR Practice Area: HR Outsourcing

Location: Nationwide (Remote)

Sector: Nonprofit

Mission Type: Education

Staff Size: 99 Employees

Annual Budget: \$10.1 - \$20 million

Engagement Scenario

A fully remote, nationwide education nonprofit sought to expand its family leave policy to aid in staff retention and support a more seamless transition back to the workplace. The current policy was not inclusive of the evolving healthcare needs of its dynamic and geographically dispersed workforce. For one, it did not effectively meet the needs of employees bringing another child into their family. Namely, the policy did not offer sufficient time for parents to bond with their new children and recover physically. Another consideration was complying with other states where the organization had employees that offered state-paid family leave. For example, staff who live in Washington, D.C. receive 16 weeks of paid leave, while staff in states without a family leave law receive only 12 weeks. The client engaged Nonprofit HR's Outsourcing team to help resolve the internal inequity of offerings across states.

Engagement Duration: 45 days

Engagement Goals

Nonprofit HR's Outsourcing practice collaborated with the organization's internal HR team to research best practices, survey staff and address specific concerns expressed by employees that the family leave policy did not align with the organization's cultural values. The goal was to enhance the family leave policy to be more inclusive and offer additional paid time options that showed more care for employees re-entering the workplace after having a new child.

Considerations

The United States is still the only industrialized country to not offer paid family leave federally, so it is critical for multi-state employers to demonstrate and ensure equity in their policies for employees across the organization. The prior policy was 12 weeks of leave, four of which the organization would fully pay. The nonprofit required the remaining eight weeks for birthing parents to be subsidized by short-term disability (STD), equivalent to 60% of weekly pay for six weeks, and the employee's paid time off (PTO). Non-birthing parents could not use STD, so the remainder of their time off would be unpaid or they would have to use their PTO.

The singular potential challenge included a subsection of staff who would be dissatisfied as the survey revealed that some wanted 100% paid leave without using PTO. However, in steadfast partnership, Nonprofit HR and the organization diligently worked to create a policy that addressed the many needs of the staff — as stated in the survey — while aligning with the organization's budget and values.

Solutions

Research still overwhelmingly indicates that a remote or hybrid working arrangement best supports employees' mental health. Expanding family leave programs provides organizations with a strategic advantage in acquiring talent because job seekers tend to evaluate benefits before accepting offers. It also allows the non-birthing parent time to bond with the child and support the needs of the birthing parent.

Nonprofit HR's Outsourcing team supported the organization in creating a newly expanded policy that includes 16 weeks of family leave— eight of which are fully paid by the organization. Staff can supplement the remaining time by STD and PTO. The organization also invited staff to slowly transition back into the workforce by working part-time for the final two weeks of leave time. The phased return helps new parents slowly transition back to the workforce, giving them time to adjust to their new realities as working parents.