



STEAMBOAT SPRINGS  
**CHAMBER**

VITALITY IN THE VALLEY

# FAMILY FORWARD GUIDEBOOK



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



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# ABOUT US

## Steamboat Springs Chamber

The Steamboat Springs Chamber exists to ensure Routt County continues to be an ideal place to live and work. Our efforts focus on support of businesses so they can thrive and provide meaningful employment for residents. Community development, economic development and destination marketing and management are our core avenues that all lead to the same goal.

### Mission

Our organization is dedicated to economic vitality within Routt County through business advocacy, destination marketing and management, and economic development.

### Vision

Be the leading regional business organization laying the foundation for an exceptional quality of life.

### History

Established as the Commercial Club of Steamboat Springs in 1907, the Steamboat Springs Chamber provides support for local businesses and economic development for the Yampa Valley.

## First Impressions

First Impressions is Routt County's Early Childhood Council and serves as the hub for all early childhood resources. In strengthening and streamlining all early childhood services, families with young children are connected with the resources they need to ensure all children are valued, healthy and thriving.

### Mission

First Impressions of Routt County works to ensure that young children will be provided adequate resources and quality programs to promote healthy development and school readiness.

### Vision

First Impressions of Routt County strengthens the community's collaborative web of resources where children and families experience dignity and a sense of belonging.

### History

Routt County's early childhood council and the program, First Impressions of Routt County was formed in March 1997 after extensive community forums and needs assessments.

## About the Family Forward Policy Guidebook

Our goal is to provide support and resources for businesses to understand and enact policies that contribute to a robust and healthy workforce including working parents. This guide details research-informed benefits that positively impact child health and well-being and provide a positive return on investment for employers. Not all policies within this guide are right for every employer, however, the variety of options provides something for every business. We encourage human resource professionals, business owners, CEOs, and employees to use this guide as a reference to start or continue conversation or action within your organization. *"HR" is referenced throughout this handbook, please adjust to the responsible party if different for your organization.*

## Legal Disclaimer

The content in this handbook is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Laws and regulations are constantly changing, and we encourage you to work with your own attorney to finalize the development of your workplace policies.

## About the Routt County Early Childhood Community Plan

In 2018, a diverse group of community members came together to work on a plan for early childhood in Routt County. The purpose of this process, facilitated by the First Impressions Early Childhood Council, was to create a comprehensive early childhood community plan to identify needs and work on solutions for early childhood care and education in Routt County.

The community plan is focused on the following top four priority areas:



### **Increase Infant and Toddler Slots**

Focusing on identifying the barriers to the creation of new facilities and then determining the ways in which those barriers might be mitigated.



### **Recruiting and Retaining High-Quality Early Childhood Workforce**

Looking at how to increase early childhood workers in the county.



### **Partner with Employers to Support Early Childhood Education and Care**

Exploring family-friendly workplace policies and employee childcare options in the community.



### **Engage with the Community**

Increasing understanding of critical roles of early childhood education and care.

This is not a plan created by a group of outside consultants, but a plan that reflects the people of Routt County. Through this process, input was received from more than 300 community members and compiled into meaningful documentation of the challenges and opportunities related to early childhood in Routt County.

## **The Challenges**

Several challenges emerged:

- Childcare capacity is at a significant shortage from birth to age 3.
- Cost of childcare is a barrier for families.
- Many parents do not have options for non-standard work schedules.
- Many parents do not have childcare options for children with significant medical or behavioral needs.
- Lack of childcare is a barrier for employers in recruiting and retaining employees.
- Maintaining a high-quality, early childhood workforce is a significant barrier to increasing capacity.
- Many factors related to a healthy community are intertwined with early childhood — mental health, poverty, housing needs, health care, legal services, food insecurity, etc.

## **Indicators of Success**

This planning process is just the beginning. The challenges identified are great and complex. Several indicators of success have been identified:

- Increased supply of infant and toddler care for children from birth to age 3.
- Pipeline and set of strategies for recruiting and retaining a high-quality, early childhood workforce.
- Children are ready for school by the time they enter kindergarten.
- Access to community health and human services, especially early in a child's life.
- Increased community understanding of the important impacts of early childhood care and education.
- Increased employer partnerships for early childhood care and education.
- Families have affordable options that fit their needs.
- Access to services is equitable for all members of the community.

# THE CASE FOR FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES

“American business depends on a strong workforce, now and in the future, to compete and succeed globally. But America is facing an unprecedented workforce crisis: a large and growing shortage of skilled workers. One root of this problem is that we’ve underestimated the importance of the earliest years of life.” – US Chamber of Commerce Foundation

## Business Smart.

Family-friendly workplaces have a competitive advantage. They attract and retain more top talent, and their employees are more productive and more committed. Additionally, family-friendly employers benefit from reduced employee health care costs, a healthier work environment and fewer employee absences. Research analyzing a wide variety of long-term life outcomes, such as health, crime, income, IQ, schooling, and the increase in a mother’s income after returning to work due to childcare, finds 13% ROI for comprehensive, high-quality, birth-to-five early education.

## Family Friendly.

For children and families, the benefits of family-friendly workplaces are numerous and long lasting. They include positive impacts on health, development and well-being, financial stability, and future career success. Children whose parents have access to family-friendly benefits receive much-needed support and time with their parents during the most critical years of human development. This leads to positive health outcomes, higher education attainment and future success. Parents who have access to family-friendly benefits also have improved health, are happier and more productive at work, and are less likely to leave the workforce.

## Future Ready.

To prepare our future workforce for success, we must start in early childhood. During children’s earliest years, their experiences are built into their bodies – shaping the brain’s architecture and creating the foundation for future learning and health. The early years are so defining that by the time a child turns eight, their third grade reading outcomes can predict future academic achievement and career success. Decades of research have established what children need to build strong brains – health and development on track from birth, supportive and supported families and communities, and high-quality birth through age eight learning environments with regular attendance.

From 2016 to 2018, more than 2 million parents of children age 5 and younger—nearly 1 in 10 parents—had to quit a job, not take a job, or greatly change their job because of childcare problems.  
(Novoa & Jessen-Howard, 2020)

# FAMILY FORWARD POLICIES

## What Makes a Workplace Policy Family Forward?

Each policy recommended in this guide is supported by research that shows positive business impact for employers and a positive impact on the employee and children's health and well-being. Each policy is described in detail throughout this section, with benefits identified for employers, children, and employee/parents. There are also sample policies outlined that we encourage employers to consider adding to their employee handbooks. Policies in this guide fall into five categories:

<b>Leave</b>	FMLA, HFWA, parental, family and medical, PTO, sick & safe, parental involvement
<b>Flexible Work &amp; Scheduling</b>	Flextime/compressed schedule, working from home/telecommuting, job sharing/part time work, predictable scheduling
<b>Health Benefits &amp; Coverage</b>	Health insurance, wellness benefits, FSA, HSA
<b>Childcare</b>	Backup/emergency, subsidized/reimbursed, referral
<b>Accommodations and Support</b>	Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act, breastfeeding support, Pregnant Worker Fairness Act, pregnant worker accommodations, babies at work

## LEAVE

Benefits to Employers	Benefits to Children	Benefits to Employees/Parents
Increases/does not decrease productivity	Increases birthweight	Improves family incomes
Improves recruitment	Reduces infant mortality	Increases initiation and length of breastfeeding
Increases likelihood that new mothers will come back to work (and to same employer)	Improves health care	Decreases depression and stress
Increases likelihood that new fathers will stay employed	Increases immunization rates	Increases engagement in caregiving
Reduces turnover costs through increased retention	Builds healthier parent-child relationships	Builds healthier parent-child relationships
Improves morale and job satisfaction	Supports child development	Increases job satisfaction
Increases loyalty and commitment	Increases educational attainment	Builds healthier parent-child relationships
Reduces employee absenteeism	Increases grades, IQ, and test scores	Reduces wage gap between women and men
Provides healthier work environment	Reduces behavioral/mental health problems	Increases gender equality
Reduces health care costs	Reduces stress	Workers are more likely to remain in the workforce, increasing family economic security
Quicker recovery from temporary disability, illness, or injury	Improves regular school attendance	Increased autonomy and flexibility
	Early identification of learning problems	Better work/life balance
	Improves likelihood of high school graduation and attending college	Encourages use of preventative health care
	Encourages use of preventative health care	Quicker recovery from disability, illness, or injury
	Quicker recovery from illness and injury when parents are available to care for them	Lowers risk for spread and worsening of illnesses
	Lowers risk for spread and worsening of illnesses	Allows workers to care for themselves and their children while in crisis situations, when children and parent health and well-being can be severely impacted
	Increases the likelihood that children are in a safe home environment and supervised by an adult when they are sick	
	Allows workers to care for themselves and their children while in crisis situations, when children and parent health and well-being can be severely impacted	



## Colorado FMLA

Currently, Colorado employers with more than 50 employees who have worked for at least 20 weeks in the current or previous year must comply with the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Additionally, to be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must have worked for the company for at least one year, have worked 1,250 hours in the previous year, and work at a location with at least 50 employees in a 75-mile radius. The law requires that employers provide employees with 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

- Birth of a new child
- Issues related to the adoption or fostering of a child
- Serious health condition
- To care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition
- Issues related to military deployment

Paid parental leave taken under most policies will run concurrently with leave under the FMLA.

Proposition 118 was approved by Colorado voters in 2020, which will allow employees to take 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave beginning **January 1, 2024**. Employees with pregnancy or childbirth complications will be eligible for an additional 4 weeks. A payroll tax will fund the leave, which employers and employees will split 50/50. The premium pay will begin on January 1, 2023. Businesses with fewer than 10 employees would be exempt from the employer premium, and companies could apply to use a private leave program instead of participating in the statewide program if it meets set criteria approved by the Division of Family and Medical Leave Insurance within the State Department of Labor.

### Sample add-in to the parental leave policies when concurrent with FMLA:

Any leave taken that falls under the definition of circumstances qualifying for leave due to the birth or placement of a child due to adoption or foster care, the leave will be counted toward the 12 weeks of available FMLA leave per a 12-month period. All other requirements and provisions under the FMLA will apply. In no case will the total amount of leave—whether paid or unpaid—granted to the employee under the FMLA exceed 12 weeks during the 12-month FMLA period, with the exception of additional weeks given for pregnancy or childbirth complications.

## Colorado HFWA

A recently signed law will require employers to provide at least 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours an employee works, adding up to 48 hours per year. Employees may use the leave as soon as they accrue hours. They can also carry over 48 hours per year, but employers do not have to allow employees to take more than 48 hours in one year. Starting January 1, 2021, employers with 16 or more employees will be covered by the paid sick leave requirements. On January 1, 2022, ALL employers in Colorado, excluding the federal government, will be required to provide paid sick leave. Sick leave must be paid at the same hourly rate or salary as the employee normally earns, not including overtime, bonuses, or holiday pay. The employer has no obligation to pay employees for unused sick leave upon separation or at any other time. Paid sick leave must be available for use in hourly increments at a minimum.

### REASONS FOR USE OF PAID SICK LEAVE

Employees may use paid sick leave for any of the following needs:

- The employee's mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition that prevents him or her from working
- Obtaining preventive medical care, or medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of any mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition
- Caring for a family member who has a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition.
- The employee or family member has been a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or criminal harassment, and needs leave for related medical attention, mental health care or other counseling, victim services (including legal services), or relocation
- Due to a public health emergency, a public official having closed either (A) the employee's place of business, or (B) the school or daycare provider of the employee's child, requiring the employee to be absent to care for the child

In addition to regular paid sick leave, full-time employees will be allowed up to 80 hours of paid sick leave, and part-time employees an amount equal to their average hours in a fourteen-day period, for a public health emergency.

# Unpaid Parental Leave

Unpaid parental leave for the birth, adoption, or acceptance of foster placement of a child that is separate from vacation or sick leave. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 12 weeks of parental leave for its family health benefits and correlation with increased early childhood checkups and immunizations. However, research indicates that parental leave is better the longer it is.

## Sample Policy

It is the policy of EMPLOYER to provide up to 12 or x weeks of unpaid, job protected parental leave to eligible employees. The parental leave policy exceeds any legal requirements as, currently, there are no state or federal requirements to provide any parental leave for employers with fewer than fifty employees. *However, Proposition 118 was approved by Colorado voters in 2020, which will allow employees to take 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave beginning January 1, 2024.*

The purpose of the policy is to give parents additional flexibility and time to bond with their new child and adjust to their new family situation. Flexibility and family-friendly policies are essential to cultivating an atmosphere where employees can thrive professionally without sacrificing essential family obligations.

Parental leave can be taken for the following reasons:

- Birth of a new child
- Issues related to the adoption or fostering of a child
- Serious health condition
- To care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition
- Issues related to military deployment

Employees who plan to take parental leave shall initially notify their supervisor of the need for parental leave and include the estimated timing and duration of such leave at least 60 calendar days in advance of the need for parental leave. EMPLOYER will attempt to work with employees that want to come back on a part-time basis prior to x weeks.

Any benefits earned up to the day when leave begins are kept by the employee; however, paid time off and holidays will not be earned during this period. If you are covered by the medical plan at the time of leave your coverage will continue. *\*Employers should check with their health care insurer to determine the impact of unpaid parental leave.*

# Paid Parental Leave

Paid leave for the birth, adoption, or acceptance of foster placement of a child that is separate from vacation or sick leave.

## Sample Policy

EMPLOYER will provide paid parental leave, concurrent with FMLA, to employees following the birth of an employee's child or the placement of a child with an employee in connection with adoption. The purpose of paid parental leave is to enable the employee to care for and bond with a newborn or a newly adopted child. Flexible and family-friendly policies are essential to cultivating an atmosphere where employees can thrive professionally without sacrificing essential family obligations.

Eligible employees must meet the following criteria:

- Have been employed with the company for at least a year
- Have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous year

In addition, employees must meet one of the following criteria:

- Birth of a new child
- Issues related to the adoption or fostering of a child

It is the policy of EMPLOYER to provide up to x weeks of paid parental leave to eligible employees per year. The fact that a multiple birth or adoption occurs (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings) does not increase the 12-week total amount of paid parental leave granted for that event. In addition, in no case will an employee receive more than 12 weeks of paid parental leave in a rolling



12-month period, regardless of whether more than one birth or adoption occurs within that 12-month time frame, with the exception of additional weeks given for pregnancy or childbirth complications.

Each week of paid parental leave is compensated at x percent of the employee's regular, straight-time weekly pay. Approved paid parental leave may be taken at any time during the six-month period immediately following the birth or adoption. Paid parental leave may not be used or extended beyond this six-month time frame. Employees must take paid parental leave in one continuous period of leave and must use all paid parental leave during the six-month time frame indicated above. Any unused paid parental leave will be forfeited at the end of the six-month time frame. Upon termination of the individual's employment at the company, they will not be paid for any unused paid parental leave for which they were eligible.

In no case will the total amount of leave—whether paid or unpaid—granted to the employee exceed 12 weeks. Available paid time off (PTO) cannot be used to extend leave. Employees are not required to exhaust PTO before taking paid leave. EMPLOYER will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid parental leave period just as if they were taking any other paid leave such as paid holidays or PTO. PTO will not accrue during paid leave. If an organizational holiday occurs while the employee is on paid parental leave, such day will be charged to holiday pay; however, such holiday pay will not extend the total paid parental leave entitlement period.

The employee will provide their supervisor with written notice of the request for leave at least 60 days prior to the proposed date of the leave (or if the leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible). The employee must complete the necessary forms and provide all documentation as required by EMPLOYER to substantiate the request. As is the case with all company policies, the organization has the exclusive right to interpret this policy.

"The attrition rate for women after childbirth was twice our average attrition rate...After making the change in leave, the difference in attrition rates vanished. And moms told us they were often using the extra two months to transition slowly back to work, making them more effective and happier when the leave ended. When we eventually did the math, it turned out this program cost nothing. The cost of having a mom out of the office for an extra couple of months was more than offset by the value of retaining her expertise and avoiding the cost of finding and training a new hire." – Laszlo Bock, Former Senior VP of Google's People Operations.

## Paid Family and Medical Leave

Family and medical leave allows employees to take paid time off to care for a long-term medical issue for themselves, their children, or a loved one or to address needs during a long-term absence from work.

### Sample Policy

EMPLOYER is committed to a culture that helps our employees meet the demands of family and employment responsibilities. Offering our employees the option of taking paid time off when they or a family member is sick is not just good for our employees and their families, it's good for our business. Therefore, it is our policy to provide up to x weeks of paid family and medical leave in a 12-month period, concurrent with FMLA, to eligible employees as defined below.

To be eligible for Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML), an employee must:

- Have been employed with the company for at least a year
- Have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous year

In addition, employees must meet one of the following criteria:

- Birth of a new child
- Issues related to the adoption or fostering of a child
- Serious health condition
- To care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition
- Issues related to military deployment

Generally, employees are entitled to take up to x weeks of leave in a single 12-month period for the reasons specified above. For the purposes of this policy, EMPLOYER will calculate the amount of PFML available to an employee using a "rolling" 12-month

period. Available leave is determined by subtracting the number of weeks of PFML taken during this 12-month “look back” period from the x-week total allowed.

Any PFML taken for the birth/adoption/foster care placement of a child must be completed within 6 months after the date of birth or placement.

Full-time employees will be compensated at the employee’s regular, base weekly rate of pay. Part-time employees’ compensation will be pro-rated based on an average number of hours worked in the x months before leave begins.

If the reason for PFML also is covered by the EMPLOYER’s short-term benefits policy (or other policies), benefits will run concurrently. However, EMPLOYER will supplement the employee’s pay so that the employee receives 100 percent compensation during the period of leave.

To the extent applicable, PFML will run concurrently with federal FMLA, and any leave provided under state or local law.

If an employee is enrolled in group health insurance or other insurance benefits, these benefits will continue as if the employee had not taken leave. However, the employee is responsible for their portion of the premiums due on the coverage.

If an employee requests leave for a reason that the employee believes qualifies under this policy, the employee must comply with EMPLOYER’s absence notification policy [include reference to handbook page here]. Failure to comply with EMPLOYER’s absence reporting policies and procedures or to provide documentation or information requested may result in delay or denial of requested time off and/or discipline.

In support of the need for PFML, the employee must provide a complete and sufficient certification form [include reference to handbook page here] to EMPLOYER within 15 calendar days after EMPLOYER requests it.

If an employee timely returns from PFML and used the leave for the stated purpose, the employee will be reinstated to the same position held when leave began, or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay and other terms and conditions of employment.

Before returning to work from PFML for the employee’s own serious health condition, the employee may be required to submit certification from a health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

## Paid Time Off (PTO)

Paid time off provides employees with the flexibility to use their time off to meet their personal needs, while reducing unscheduled absences and the need for supervisory oversight.

### Sample Policies

Employees will accumulate a specified amount of PTO each pay period worked and it is up to the employee to allocate how you will use it – for vacation, illness, caring for children, school activities, medical/dental appointments, volunteerism, emergencies, or any other activity of the employee’s choice. The amount of PTO earned will depend on your length of service with the EMPLOYER and the number of hours worked in a week as outlined in the “Accrual Schedule” below.

Each full-time employee will accrue PTO bi-weekly in hourly increments. PTO is added to the employee’s PTO bank when the bi-weekly paycheck is issued. PTO is not earned in pay periods during which unpaid leave, disciplinary leave, short- or long-term disability leave, or workers’ compensation leave are taken.

Employees may use time from their PTO bank in hourly increments. Employees may only use as many PTO hours as available to be accrued under the “Accrual Schedule” for that year and cannot use PTO that they will earn in the following year. That is, an employee at times may have used more PTO than has yet been accrued for the year, but the used amount may never exceed the annual accrual amount as determined under the “Accrual Schedule”.

You are required to provide your supervisor with reasonable advance notice (typically at least fourteen 14 days) and obtain approval prior to using PTO. This allows for you and your supervisor to prepare for your time off and assure that all staffing needs are met.

Employees must use the Paid Time Off form [include reference to handbook page here] to request PTO. EMPLOYER appreciates as much notice as possible when you know you expect to miss work for a scheduled absence.

PTO is subject to supervisory approval and not every employee may take accumulated time around the holiday season. Generally, PTO will be granted on a first come, first-serve basis unless determined otherwise by your supervisor/HR.

There may be occasions, such as sudden illness, when you cannot notify your supervisor in advance. In those situations, you must inform your supervisor of your circumstances as soon as possible.

Any employee who misses three (3) consecutive days of work without notice to their supervisor may be considered to have voluntarily quit their job.

Employee will be paid for the accrued, unused PTO if you leave the EMPLOYER. If an employee has used PTO time not yet accrued, and employment terminates, the PTO taken is deducted from the final paycheck. Employees who give two-weeks' notice of employment termination must work the two weeks without utilizing PTO. *\*Colorado employers must pay out accrued and unused vacation time upon an employee's separation. Any policy or agreement that purports to forfeit an employee's accrued but unused vacation pay upon the employee's separation is now void and unenforceable.*

95% of HR leaders blame employee burnout for the inability to retain staff. (SHRM, 2017)

## Sick and Safe Leave

Sick and safe leave refers to paid leave for employees to care for themselves or a family member during a temporary, short-term medical issue, such as illness; to attend to a critical safety need, such as domestic violence or sexual assault recovery; or for preventative health care, such as an annual well visit or a prenatal doctor appointment.

CO HFWA General Paid Sick Leave (PSL): Starting in 2022, all employers are required to provide up to 48 hours of sick pay per year (this is unrelated to the pandemic). All employees receive 48 hours of paid sick leave per calendar year. Employers can elect an accrual method of tracking or can choose to provide a lump sum at the beginning of each year.

Colorado Revised Statutes 24-34-402.7 permits an employee to request or take up to three working days of leave from work in any twelve-month period, with or without pay, if the employee is the victim of domestic abuse, stalking, sexual assault, or any other crime related to domestic abuse.

### Sample Policy

Eligible employees are entitled to accrue up to x days of paid time off per year for the illness of the employee or a family member, or to help ensure the safety of the employee or a family member as provided below.

Employees begin to accrue leave under this policy at the start of employment and can use leave anytime thereafter.

One hour of paid sick or safe time accrues for each x hours worked by the employee, up to a maximum of x days per year. All employees are eligible to accrue and use sick and safe time leave regardless of whether they are full-time, part-time, or temporary workers once they meet the eligibility requirements.

Sick or safe time can be used for the employee's own illness, injury, or medical condition, the employee's need to obtain diagnosis or treatment or preventive care (i.e., doctor's appointments), the employee's need to care for a family member, and/or an absence resulting from the employee or a family member becoming a victim of stalking, domestic violence, or sexual abuse.

For more information about which absences qualify for sick or safe time leave, please contact \_\_\_\_\_.

A "family member" includes a spouse, including a domestic partner, parents, parents of a spouse, children (including foster children and grandchildren), spouses of children, brothers and sisters, spouses of brothers and sisters, a child who lives with an employee and for whom the employee permanently assumes and discharges parental responsibility, and/or a person with whom the employee shares or has shared, for not less than the preceding 12 months, a mutual residence and with whom the employee maintains a committed relationship.

For more information about who counts as a “family member,” please contact \_\_\_\_\_.

Sick or safe time leave under this policy carries over at the end of each calendar year. However, an employee cannot use, in any one calendar year, more than their maximum annual accrual of x days. Sick or safe time leave is not paid out on termination of employment.

In the case of an unforeseen need to take leave, for example, the illness of an employee or their family member or in the case of an emergency, no written request for leave is required. Notice should be given as soon as possible, either prior to the start of the next work shift or within 24 hours of the onset of an emergency. If a request for leave is foreseeable, an employee should request the leave in writing stating a reason for the absence and its expected duration. This request should be made as early as possible or at least 10 days prior to the absence.

No documentation will be required before three consecutive days of absence. Employees who take sick or safe time leave for three or more consecutive days may be required to provide reasonable certification of the need for leave including, for example, a signed document from a health care professional. An employer may not require disclosure of information relating to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking, or the details of an employee’s medical condition as a condition of providing paid sick and safe time leave. If an employer possesses such information, it shall be treated as confidential, as shall the employee’s request for paid sick and safe time leave.

When providing certification, no health care provider shall be required to provide information protected by the Social Security Act or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Employees will not face retaliation or reprisal for requesting or using leave or asserting rights under this policy.

## Parental Involvement Leave

Short-term paid leave that allows a parent to take an afternoon or a day off to attend a school performance or athletic event, volunteer at a child’s school or otherwise take care of a child’s needs.

### Sample Policy

Employees who have children in childcare/preschool, primary or secondary school may take up to 16 hours of paid time off for school activities per calendar year.

Employees must request time off for a child’s school activity at least seven days in advance. In the event of an emergency school meeting, at least 24 hours’ notice is required if possible.

The time off will be given in increments of no less than one hour and no more than four hours. Employees are not required to make up lost time. An employee may be requested to provide documentation for the time off for school activities.

# FLEXIBLE WORK & SCHEDULING

Benefits to Employers	Benefits to Children	Benefits to Employees/Parents
Increases productivity	Improves physical and social emotional health, through parental stress reduction	Improves health
Reduces real estate and overhead costs	Reduces obesity	Increases happiness and job satisfaction
Improves the bottom line	Increased time with parents	Reduces stress and improves overall healthy behaviors
Improves recruitment	Improves education, through increased parental engagement	Supports work life balance
Increases retention, reducing turnover costs	Supports child development	Saves employees' time
Reduces employee absenteeism	Leads to better child development outcomes because of more stability for childcare arrangements, which improves cognitive and behavioral outcomes and language development	Increases job satisfaction
Improves relationships with co-workers		Reduces reports of physical and mental fatigue
Increases morale, loyalty, commitment		Provides more time to meet family needs
Increases overall job satisfaction		Offers large benefits for disabled or temporarily disabled workers
		Allows employees to plan for childcare, transportation, and budgets
		Reduces commuting time and pressures
		Reduces financial burden of childcare expenses

85% of businesses confirm that productivity has increased in their business because of greater flexibility.  
(International Workplace Group, 2019)

## Flex Time/Compressed Work Schedule

A flexible work schedule allows employees to choose when they work, as long as they put in their hours every week. A compressed work schedule allows employees to work a traditional 35–40-hour work week in less than five workdays. For example, a full-time employee could work four 10-hour days instead of five 8-hour days.

### Sample Policy

Flextime is an arrangement that allows employees to alter the start and end times of their workday around the normal business hours of 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. Flextime does not reduce the total number of hours expected to be worked by an employee, but rather gives the employee more flexibility day-to-day to meet other life demands. The EMPLOYER believes that flexing work hours can increase staff motivation and promote a healthy work-life balance, thereby reducing employee stress and improving performance and productivity. All flextime must be approved by an employee's supervisor in writing. Flextime requests will be denied if there is not appropriate coverage or if the flextime will adversely affect the EMPLOYER. Further, hourly employees are not eligible for flextime if it results in more than 40 hours worked in a week or 12 hours worked in a day.

You must work, at a minimum, an average of your allotted hours of scheduled work each week. A flextime schedule must have no adverse impact on work quality or quantity and should not negatively affect the workload or productivity of coworkers either by shifting burdens or creating delays and additional steps in the workflow.

Flextime must be earned in advance of taking it and must be used within the same week earned. Further, an employee must ensure coverage before they can make a flextime request to their supervisor.

Flextime shall be initiated on a trial basis and may be discontinued at any time. EMPLOYER reserves the right to immediately suspend the arrangement in the event of unanticipated circumstances regarding employee performance or operational needs. If an employee is abusing the flextime policy, it could result in a negative performance review or complete termination of flextime for the EMPLOYEE.

## Work from Home/Telecommute

Telecommuting allows employees to work from home or some other remote site some or all of the time.

### Sample Policy

Working at home is not an employee right or benefit and may be discontinued by EMPLOYER for any business reason, at any time. Employees will be permitted to work at home at the discretion of their supervisor.

To be eligible to work at home, employees must, among other things: have portable job duties, have a safe work site and equipment (telephone, internet, supplies, etc.) suitable for working at home and be able to work independently and productively.

Some positions, responsibilities and projects are more suitable for working from home than others and may be appropriate to maintain business continuity in the event of inclement weather or as part of a flexible work arrangement. Also, responsibilities that do not require face-to-face interaction, require minimal supervision, involve the extensive use of computers and/or telephones, and have clearly defined and easily measurable tasks are more appropriate for a work at home arrangement. Department managers must examine the distinct activities, functions, and tasks to determine whether a work at home arrangement is appropriate.

During these work at home arrangements the employee will document all time worked and account for hours not worked with the appropriate leave designation (vacation, sick, comp time, leave without pay, etc.) and, if eligible for overtime, must receive supervisor authorization prior to working overtime.

Employees shall be entitled to an uninterrupted and duty-free meal period of at least a 30-minute duration when the shift exceeds five consecutive hours of work, and 10-minute rest periods per the following:

Work Hours	Rest Periods
2 or fewer	0
Over 2, and up to 6	1
Over 6, and up to 10	2
Over 10, and up to 14	3
Over 14, and up to 18	4
Over 18, and up to 22	5
Over 22	6

The employee is responsible for operating costs, home maintenance and any other cost associated with the use of the home as an alternate work location. In the event of equipment failure or malfunction, the employee will immediately notify the supervisor. In the event of delay in repair or replacement, or any other circumstance which makes work from the home location impractical, the employee understands that the supervisor may require the employee to report to the regular work site or document the time with the appropriate leave designation (vacation, comp time, leave without pay, etc.)

All EMPLOYER information with regards to security and records management and retention policies that apply at the regular EMPLOYER worksite also apply when the employee works from home.

EMPLOYER is not liable for injuries to third persons, including family members, at the home worksite. Further, EMPLOYER is not liable for damages to the employee’s personal or real property.

The employee is covered by workers compensation during the performance of official EMPLOYER business at the home worksite during work hours. The employee must report work-related injuries immediately to the supervisor and will comply with all reporting requirements established for the purpose of reporting such claims.



## Hybrid Telecommuting/Flex Time Sample Policy

### Scope and eligibility

- Only employees who meet or exceed performance standards are eligible for telecommuting/flex time.
- Only employees who have completed their introductory period are eligible.

### Telecommuting:

*Eligibility: only employees who have verifiable work to complete from home are eligible for work from home.*

- Each month, each eligible employee will be given 16 hours/month for telecommuting.
- These hours may not be rolled over to another month. These hours may be broken up and used in no less than 1-hour intervals for a given month.
- Employees must send a request via email to their supervisor requesting the option to telecommute to ensure proper coverage and support for meeting or teaming activities. Ideally, the request is made and scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance. However, we ask that you put the request in as soon as you know telecommuting is a possible need.
- Telecommuting work arrangements are not guaranteed, and the supervisor may decline the request for any reason.
- Telecommuting work arrangements must follow electronic security and data policies, as well as all other policies.
- Supervisor will specify when employees are expected to be present in the office, how they are to be available during their offsite work time and how they are to communicate their specific availability, if the telecommuting work arrangement is approved.
- Telecommuting should occur in 4-hour increments, but if needed, hours may be broken up and used in no less than 1-hour intervals for a given month with a limit of three telecommuting occurrences per month. Example: two 8-hour blocks (reached 16-hour limit) or three 1-hour block occurrences.

### Flex time:

*Eligibility: Flex time is open to all employees pending proper office and work activity coverage (i.e., no temporary worker supervision required that day, duties, and deadlines covered).*

- Twice a month, an employee may have a week in which they flex and work four 10-hour days and have one day off.
- If not utilized, flex day option does not accumulate or roll over to another month or cycle.

### Supervisor/Manager responsibilities

- The supervisor will review the request through the following criteria:
  - Needs of the office
  - Staff eligibility and understanding of the requirements and expectations
  - Workload and scheduling needs
- Supervisor will communicate in writing whether the telecommuting/flex time is approved.
- Supervisor will discuss the telecommuting/flex time arrangement during 1:1's once/month with the employee to make sure expectations are maintained. At any point, a conversation can and should happen if the employee is not meeting expectations.
- Assure operations are effective and efficient.
- Assure performance standards are reviewed and communicated regularly.

### Employee responsibilities

- When working from home, employee must clock in and out per EMPLOYER app/tech.
- Request telecommuting work arrangements at least 2 weeks in advance (or more when possible, to support scheduling).
- Understand and adapt to colleagues' various work schedules and locations.
- Maintain safe computing procedures including following all required policy and best practices for security.
- Come into the office when the supervisor requests it.
- Maintain performance standards.
- Be online and available for any calls or emails that need your attention. Complete all work as you would as if you were at the office.
- Put telecommuting and flex days on your calendar.
- Drive time is on your own time

This policy has been created to ensure equity and fairness throughout the organization and it is required that employees abide by the parameters in the policy. If an employee does not request to use the available allotted remote hours during an eligible month

there is no rollover of hours, and they are not entitled to these hours in a future month. While telecommuting, it is expected that the employee's workday hours remain the same as when in the office, within 1-2 hours on either end if pre-arranged with supervisor. This is to support other employees in case they need to reach you. If alternative arrangements can be worked out with your supervisor and team, that is allowed. Where meetings are scheduled when employee wishes to work remotely; employee is expected to contact meeting organizer and request remote attendance.

It is up to the employee who is requesting remote attendance to set up the technology/structure to call in, etc. If organizer requests in-person attendance, employee is expected to respond professionally and join in-person. If a meeting is scheduled during a flex day, the employee is expected to proactively alert organizer of the conflict and work with them to make alternate arrangements, ensure coverage, or reschedule the flex day. The supervisor should also check the calendar of those who need to be in attendance of the meeting for who is flexing, telecommuting, etc. to accommodate scheduling the meeting. There may be events and meetings that aren't moveable and are mandatory or critical. Further, there will often be important and necessary meetings that may be scheduled last minute for various reasons. This will be worked out on a case-by-case basis and up to supervisor discretion. Note: \_\_\_\_\_ are mandatory and must be attended in person.

Employees should work closely with their supervisors to plan properly and proactively to use this benefit (i.e., minimizing meeting disruption or creating a backlog for others). To support team planning, employees are expected to reflect remote and/or flex plans in their calendar and work with their supervisor.

If the employee is not meeting expectations of this policy or of their job, the supervisor may revoke this benefit. This policy may be adjusted at any time to support EMPLOYER needs.

## Job Share/Part-Time Work

In a job share, two or more employees share a single position, each working a fraction of the necessary time. Job sharing allows employees to hold a position and still have time to spend with children or take care of other family responsibilities. A full-time employee might be allowed to shift to part-time (temporarily or permanently)—either as part of a job share, or simply as a reduction in working hours—and continue in the same position.

### Sample Policy

#### Employee Requests

The policy of EMPLOYER is to allow employees to job share or work part-time where operationally feasible, and subject to the approval of your supervisor. EMPLOYER recognizes that job sharing, and other part-time work arrangements permit employees to better balance their work and personal lives. Employees may wish to reduce their work hours to:

- Devote more time to family responsibilities
- Pursue community work, hobbies, or further education
- Deal with health problems, stress, burn-out, or aging.

Job sharing or part-time work requests will not be granted for any purpose which could lead to or be perceived as a conflict of interest with the employee's position of employment. Job sharing and part-time work may be a permanent arrangement, or for a specifically agreed upon time. There are no restrictions with respect to employee type, classification, or supervisory responsibilities.

#### Management Requests

Managers may elect to allocate vacant positions specifically for job sharing or alternative work arrangements. These arrangements can assist work units in meeting operational requirements by addressing workload or extended hours for public service requirements. Managers will not change the status of an employee without the agreement of the affected employee. The number of jobs shared, or part-time positions approved per unit is at the discretion of the head of the department.

#### Job Share Proposal

Your proposal should outline the operational feasibility of your request and indicate how you intend to share your job. A suggested outline is as follows.

- Begin with your statement of purpose, e.g., this proposal is a request to share the position of (position title) currently held by (your name) on a permanent basis.

- Using your position description as the basis, indicate how your job duties should be shared and why. If you or your partner should have overall responsibility for a particular project or section of work, state this. If you supervise staff, how would you divide or share this responsibility?
- Outline a proposed time schedule, indicating where any overlap would occur. Indicate what alternatives you would be willing to consider. Do you want to be able to switch time with your partner? Indicate whether you would be willing to cover for vacation, sick leave, etc.
- Indicate how communications with your partner will be handled, as well as with others that your position interacts with, such as clients, your supervisor, and other staff. Indicate what communication mechanisms could be used to overcome problems. How would staff meetings be handled? What requirement is there for both partners to attend other meetings or training? How would unfinished work be handed over to your partner? How would crisis calls be handled?
- Indicate what extra space or equipment may be required for a partner, or what other arrangements could be considered.
- List any advantages that may benefit the organization from your job sharing, such as coverage for vacations and illness, lunch hour coverage, or better coverage for peak periods. Is there any other way that two employees may be better than one? After listing the advantages, briefly list any potential disadvantages and how they could be lessened or avoided.
- If you have identified potential partners, indicate this in your proposal. In any event, indicate what experience and skills should be sought for your partner, and how these skills would complement yours.
- It may be helpful to list other examples of job sharing in your field, and how specific concerns were addressed.
- Indicate a preferred implementation date.

Present the proposal for discussion with your supervisor and negotiate any areas of disagreement. Where your supervisor has significant concerns regarding the operational impact of a job share, a trial may be considered.

### **Recruitment**

Your supervisor, in conjunction with human resources, will determine the most appropriate recruitment method for obtaining your partner. Your supervisor may request your participation on the selection board, to ensure congruence of work habits, etc. Each employee's classification, salary, and benefits are determined separately.

### **Terms and Conditions**

Once the terms and conditions relating to the job share or part-time work arrangement have been negotiated and agreed upon by the manager and employee(s), your manager will provide you with written confirmation of the agreed-upon terms, either through a memo, letter of offer or a separate agreement.

### **Termination of Arrangements**

When you accept a job share on a permanent basis, you relinquish all rights to your former full-time position. Should you wish to revert to full-time, and the other portion of the position is not vacant, or management wants to continue the job share arrangement, you would have to compete through the regular process for a full-time position. If you entered a job share or part-time arrangement on a trial or time-bound basis at the outset, then you would retain the right to return to full-time status at the end of the agreed-upon time. Upon termination of one of the parties, depending upon the arrangements made, the job share agreement may be terminated. Management will evaluate at that time if the job share arrangement can be continued with a new partner or if the position will revert to full-time. If it is not operationally feasible to continue the arrangement, then the remaining partner will either convert to full-time or be required to obtain an alternative position. Managers may also terminate job share or part-time work arrangements for bona-fide operational reasons.

### **Impact on Benefits**

Job share employees are entitled to the same benefits as other part-time employees. Refer to the most recent applicable benefits with Human Resources.

69% of women with advanced degrees or high-honors undergraduate degrees that left work would not have done so had their workplace offered more flexible arrangements. (Krentz, Garcia-Alonso, & Hoteit, 2019)

# Predictable Scheduling

Predictable scheduling involves ensuring that employees have some control over their scheduled work hours, not changing work schedules without employees' consent, and/or giving employees advanced warning about changes to their work schedules.

## Sample Policy

Scheduling must take an individual approach, allowing for both the consistency and flexibility that are important to each of our employees. In the event of unforeseen or emergency circumstances, employee may be subject to a change in their work schedule.

Our established scheduling principles include:

- All employees are asked to provide their availability and preferred schedules when they are hired.
- All employees are provided a good faith estimate of the hours they will receive.
- We do our best to provide stability and consistency in schedules.
- Schedules are posted at least x days in advance, posting current week plus x weeks.
- We do not, nor have we ever, had on-call scheduling.
- Managers are required to schedule employees with at least eight hours between closing and opening shifts.
- We have a dedicated support team for partners to ask questions or share concerns about scheduling and other policies.

# HEALTH & WELLNESS BENEFITS

Benefits to Employers	Benefits to Children	Benefits to Employees/Parents
<p>Reduces payroll taxes and workers' compensation premiums, and employer contributions are tax-deductible</p> <p>Improves recruitment</p> <p>Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</p> <p>Increases productivity</p> <p>Improves morale</p>	<p>Improves health through increased access to health care, including primary care, dental care, mental health care, prescriptions, preventative care, and treatment for chronic conditions</p> <p>Improves education and cognitive development</p>	<p>Improves health through increased access to health care, including greater access to primary care, preventative screenings, ambulatory care, prescription medications and chronic disease care; greater medication adherence; and higher rates of diagnosis</p> <p>Reduces depression</p> <p>Reduces stress</p> <p>Improves self-reported health</p> <p>Improves work/life balance</p> <p>Improves family economic security</p>

73% of U.S. workers said health and wellness programs are a consideration in deciding whether to work for a company. (Ahuja, 2019)

## Health Insurance and Wellness Benefits

Health benefits can include health, disability, dental, and life insurance, on-site wellness/fitness centers, subsidies for joining a gym, and/or wellness programs for employees, as well as employees' children or spouses.

### Sample Policy

EMPLOYER provides its regular full-time employees with elective medical, dental, and vision insurance plans. Coverage is effective on the first of x month following their employment date or during the open enrollment period. The terms of each plan may change from time to time, as deemed appropriate by the Employer, and as governed by applicable federal and state law. The specific costs and coverage provided under each plan are distributed to employees upon regular full-time employment and are available through the Human Resources department. The employee may also elect to cover their spouse and/or their dependents.

#### COBRA:

Upon separation, an employee has the right under federal law, titled the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), to extend individual coverage or dependent coverage for a period of up to eighteen months at their own expense. Extended coverage up to thirty-six months may be available in certain circumstances.

#### Group Life and AD&D Insurance:

Each full-time employee is covered under a group life Insurance policy and accidental death and dismemberment insurance plan during the term of their employment.

#### Short-Term Disability

Each full-time employee is covered by a short-term disability policy beginning with their first day of employment. This policy may pay a portion of an employee's wages for a period up to x weeks beginning on the 15th day of a non-work-related illness or disability (includes maternity leave), that renders the employee unable to perform the duties of their occupation. The employee must use accrued paid-time-off (PTO) or other available leave time during the elimination period, depending on availability.

The employee is not required to exhaust their accrued paid-time-off prior to being eligible for short-term disability. Further, the employee may elect to supplement their short-term-disability benefit with paid-time-off (PTO) up to an amount not to exceed their regular pay. Due to plan restrictions, banked sick leave must be exhausted before being eligible for short-term disability.

#### **Long-term Disability**

Each regular full-time employee is eligible to be covered beginning with their first day of employment. This policy may pay a portion of an employee's wages until later of age 65 or social security retirement, beginning on the 91st day of an illness or disability that renders the employee unable to perform the duties of their occupation.

#### **401K Plan**

A 401K Plan is provided by EMPLOYER after one full year of full-time employment; sign up available first day of the month following one year of employment. The plan summary is obtainable upon request and may change from time to time. Currently, EMPLOYER offers x% employer match for eligible employees.

#### **Active Health Benefit**

Regular full-time employees are eligible for an annual Active Health benefit. The benefit provides for eligible employees to be reimbursed for expenses incurred for health, medical or recreational activities, programs, supplies, or materials that enhance their personal physical and/or emotional wellbeing.

Employees will complete the Active Health Dollars Reimbursement Form and submit to HR, along with copies of any receipts. Determination of which expenses are qualifying is at the sole discretion of the HR department. When in doubt, check with HR prior to incurring the expense.

Employees are eligible for the Active Health benefit upon hire. The program provides for reimbursement of qualifying expenses based on the following schedule:

Full-time employees: Up to \$1000

Part-time employees: Up to \$500

Note: Annual Active Health benefits are prorated at 50% if the employee is hired on or after July 1st. Limitations apply

## **Flexible Spending Accounts**

A Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a pre-tax benefit account in which employees put money that can be used to pay for certain out of pocket health care costs, tax-free. A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA) or dependent care reimbursement account, is a pretax benefit account used to pay for eligible dependent care services, such as childcare, preschool, and before or after school programs.

#### **Sample Policy FSA**

EMPLOYER'S Flexible Spending Account (FSA) plan offers full-time regular employees the opportunity to set aside money from each paycheck before taxes are taken to be used for certain dependent care and unreimbursed health care expenses, as well as non-EMPLOYER health insurance premiums in the employee's name. Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code allows EMPLOYER to provide this pre-tax benefit; however, it also locks the participant into the benefit as well as the payroll deductions until the next open enrollment period unless a qualifying event occurs. Please note that the IRS has set a limit of \$10,500 per year for reimbursable dependent care expenses.

The FSA plan allows you to pay for certain expenses throughout the year in installments. It reduces your amount of taxable income, thereby saving you money. It is important that you only use this for definite expenses since the money cannot be refunded. If you have childcare payments, take maintenance medications, or have scheduled a medical procedure, the FSA plan may be a good option.

Here's how it works: You have a surgery scheduled in June that will cost you \$1,300 out of your pocket. EMPLOYER splits up the large cost into a per pay period amount and withholds \$50 (for an hourly paid employee) from each paycheck for the entire year, (pretax). When you get the \$1,300 medical bill, you send it to our Flexible Spending Account administrator along with valid receipts/statements and a reimbursement is made to you. You can enroll in the FSA plan as a new hire or during our annual open enrollment. Changes to the plan throughout the year are allowed only if a qualifying event occurs (birth, marriage, divorce, etc.).



Rollover: EMPLOYER offers a rollover option. You may rollover \$500 to the following year; however, all other unused funds will be forfeited. See summary plan description for filing details.

## Sample Policy DCFSA

EMPLOYER has partnered with CollegeInvest, at no cost to the employer or employee, to offer our employees access to Colorado's 529 College Savings Program as part of our benefits package. This opportunity will allow our employees to use a tax-advantaged college savings plan, made available through the Colorado Department of Higher Education, to save for higher education expenses for their children, grandchildren, even themselves. This program allows you to easily save for college by setting up a direct deposit from your paycheck or establishing automatic transfers from your checking to savings account. Deposits are made with after-tax dollars, and you'll receive a state income tax deduction for every dollar you contribute. Funds can be used for children, grandchildren, or even yourself.

State Tax Benefits: Every dollar you contribute to CollegeInvest 529 can be deducted from your Colorado state income tax return.

Federal Tax Benefits: Earnings grow tax free for both federal and state. Withdrawals used for qualified higher education expenses aren't taxed on your federal or state tax return.

Nationwide Access: Money can be used nationwide at eligible public or private college, university, vocational, or trade school.

Beneficiary Options: You name the beneficiary and have the ability to change the beneficiary as you choose.

New First Step Program: \$100 contribution for babies born in Colorado starting 1/1/20.

## Health Savings Accounts

A Health Savings Account (HSA) is a pre-tax benefit account in which employees can set aside money to pay for qualified medical expenses. This account is controlled by the employee.

### Sample Policy

Employees of EMPLOYER participating in our High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) may participate in a Health Savings Account (HSA). The advantage of an HSA is that money going into the HSA is tax-free, earns interest tax-free and is not taxed when withdrawn to pay for qualified medical, dental and vision expenses. The HSA is not an employer-sponsored employee benefit plan. It is a savings account that is established and maintained by an HSA trustee/custodian to be used primarily for reimbursement of "qualified eligible medical expenses" as set forth in Code Section 223(d)(2). The EMPLOYER has no authority or control over the funds deposited in an HSA. Even though the EMPLOYER may allow pre-tax salary reduction contributions to an HSA, the HSA is not intended to be an ERISA benefit plan sponsored or maintained by the EMPLOYER.

### ESTABLISHING THE HSA

Most financial institutions, credit unions and banks can assist with setting up an HSA. Insurance companies are also approved to offer HSA services. The HSA should only be used to pay for or reimburse qualified medical expenses that are incurred after the HSA is established. Employees will be responsible for managing their HSA, including choosing how their HSA funds are invested, creating their account, and following the rules that the HSA trustee/custodian and the IRS impose. Once the Company's contributions have been deposited in the employee's HSA, the employee will have a non-forfeitable interest in the funds and will be free to request a distribution of the funds or to move them to another HSA provider, to the extent allowed by law.

**ELIGIBILITY** Full-time employees participating in our HDHP are eligible for an HSA 90 days from their date of hire provided that the employee:

- Cannot be claimed as another person's tax dependent
- Is not entitled to Medicare benefits
- Does not have any health coverage other than the EMPLOYER's HDHP coverage (except for certain types of permitted insurance or coverage as discussed in IRS Publication 969).

An employee will not be an HSA-eligible individual if covered under a spouse's or domestic partner's non-HDHP.

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

Our company provides x amount in employer contributions into the HSA annually for eligible participants. Eligible employees may also contribute to their HSA. The annual maximum deposit to an HSA is based on the federal tax-deductible limits on HSA contributions. All HSA contributions become the property of the employee, regardless of the source of contributions. Funds deposited but not withdrawn each year will carry over into the next year. If an employee ends their HSA-eligible insurance coverage (e.g., because the employee ends participation in an HDHP or separates from service), the employee loses eligibility to deposit further funds but funds already in the HSA remain available for use for qualified expenses for the lifetime of the employee, their spouse or tax dependent. Although the EMPLOYER expects to continue this HSA program indefinitely, it has the right to amend or terminate the HDHP and/or suspend or terminate HSA contributions at any time for any reason. It is also possible that changes to the program may be necessary or advisable because of future changes in state or federal tax laws.

**ENROLLMENT**

To participate in an HSA, please see Human Resources for the appropriate forms. Participation in the HSA program is entirely voluntary, and participants may terminate their participation at any time by notifying EMPLOYER.

**WITHDRAWALS**

Distributions from the HSA will be tax-free to a participant if they are for expenses incurred for medical care (as defined in Code section 213(d)) or the medical care of the participant's legal spouse or tax dependents. Expenses generally must have been incurred after the establishment of the HSA to qualify. HSA distributions used to pay insurance premiums will not be tax-free unless they are used for COBRA or USERRA coverage, qualified long-term care insurance, health insurance maintained while the individual is receiving unemployment compensation under federal or state law or health insurance for an individual age 65 or over (other than a Medicare supplemental policy). HSA funds can also be withdrawn for nonmedical reasons, but such distributions must be included in a participant's taxable income and generally will be subject to an additional 20% excise tax. The excise tax will not apply to certain distributions made after death, disability or attaining the age of 65. More information about HSAs, including who is eligible, other health coverage that might disqualify an individual from being eligible, contribution limits, distributions, and other rules, are set forth in IRS Publication 969(Health Savings Accounts and other Tax-Favored Health Plans), and is updated annually.

# CHILDCARE

Benefits to Employers	Benefits to Children and Parents/Families	Benefits to Employees/Parents
Increases productivity	Improves overall health	Reduces stress
Improves recruitment	Improves education	Improves work/life balance
Increases retention, reducing turnover costs	Emergency or backup care may reduce risk of spreading illness when a child is mildly ill by encouraging parents to keep the child out of normal daycare or school	Reduces financial burden
Reduces employee tardiness and absenteeism		Improves family economic security
Reduces “fill-in” costs		

## Backup or Emergency Care

US companies lose \$3 billion in revenue annually due to employee absenteeism as the result of childcare breakdowns. (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, n.d.)

Backup and emergency childcare programs are offered at an employer’s work site, in centers or in an employee’s home, and allow employees to continue working despite temporary disruptions in normal caregiving arrangements or when a child is mildly ill. Employers can negotiate rates with local childcare facilities.

### Sample Policy

- Annual Day Allotment for Onsite Backup Childcare: Employees are allocated 30 days per child per year at a subsidized cost.
- Additional Program Weeks: We will offer program weeks during Spring, Summer and Winter Breaks. The program weeks will include special programming and/or field trips. These days are in addition to your annual allotment of back-up days will not count toward the annual allotment of 30 back-up days per child per year. Program days can be reserved up to 90 days in advance.
- Infant Care and Time of Transition (TOT) Program: The TOT program includes a x consecutive week childcare program available to help new parents as they transition back into the workplace after having or adopting a child.
- Additional Onsite Backup Childcare Days: Employees who require more than the allotted 30 days will be able to use the back-up childcare center at the full-price rate (based on fair market value) for up to 15 additional days. This will allow employees to utilize the back-up childcare center, even on days that they hadn’t planned on it.

## Subsidized/Reimbursed Childcare or Childcare Referral

Employers who reimburse or subsidize employees’ childcare pay all or part of approved arrangements and/or reserve slots at particular facilities for employees’ children. Through childcare referral, employers offer resources to parents to help them find childcare in the area.

### Sample Policy

To help meet the cost of pre-kindergarten grade childcare, EMPLOYER offers a childcare subsidy to eligible staff. The program provides you the flexibility to choose a childcare provider (facility, in-home, nanny) and a subsidy amount to contribute to the cost of that childcare. The childcare subsidy is applied to your dependent care flexible spending account (FSA), which is administered by third-party vendor, \_\_\_\_\_.

To be eligible for the subsidy:

- You must be a benefits-eligible, full-time staff member
- Your child or children for which you wish to receive the subsidy must be claimed by you as IRS-tax dependents
- Your child or children for which you wish to receive the subsidy must not have started first grade
- If married, your spouse must also be employed, looking for work, or enrolled in school full-time

To apply for the subsidy, submit the online childcare subsidy form when you are eligible. A new childcare subsidy form must be submitted online for each year that the benefit is requested during open enrollment, within the first month following the date of hire, or within the first 30 days when returning to work after experiencing a qualifying event (i.e., birth or adoption of a new child).

If you are currently receiving the childcare subsidy for one child and you give birth to or adopt a second child during the year, you must re-apply for the childcare subsidy to receive the subsidy for your second child.

The monthly subsidy amount is determined by your annual salary. Reach out to EMPLOYER Human Resources for details.

You will receive the full subsidy amount for your level for your first eligible child and an additional 75% of the subsidy amount for subsequent eligible children, if applicable, up to the IRS dependent care FSA limit for the calendar year.

The subsidy is a reimbursement arrangement, which means that you pay for any eligible expenses first and then submit your expenses for reimbursement. Childcare subsidy funds are added to your dependent care FSA. You do not receive your full childcare subsidy amount for the year in one lump sum. Rather, you receive a portion of the reimbursement during each pay period, depending on your employee type, each month. You will receive your payments via check or direct deposit, depending on how you set up the reimbursement. The maximum monthly amount that you will be able to receive reimbursement for each month cannot exceed the amount that you are eligible for each month.

Common eligible expenses include: daycare, nanny fees, after-school care, and extended day programs. Reach out to EMPLOYER Human Resources for information on personal contributions to your FSA and a full list of eligible expenses.

If both parents work at EMPLOYER, only one parent is eligible to apply for the childcare subsidy.

\$1 invested in high-quality early childhood education programs can lead to \$16 back in the pockets of the community. (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, n.d.)

# WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS & SUPPORT

Benefits to Employers	Benefits to Children	Benefits to Employees/Parents
Increases retention, reducing turnover costs	Reduces risk of preterm birth, low birthweight, miscarriage, and infant mortality	Breastfeeding lowers mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes
Improves recruitment	Breastfeeding lowers child's risk of ear infections, respiratory infections, diarrhea, dermatitis, gastrointestinal disorder, asthma (young children), obesity, certain childhood cancers, and types 1 and 2 diabetes	Improves mother's health and safety
Reduces health care costs		Improves family economic security
Reduces employee tardiness and absenteeism	Increases parent-child bonding	Lowers childcare costs
Increases productivity	Reduces doctor and hospital visits	Improves family economic security
Provides benefit to employee at no or low cost to employer	Facilitates better socialized babies	Creates social network/support for parents
Increases diversity		Reduces stress
Increases safety		Facilitates easier breastfeeding
Increases employee commitment and satisfaction		Enables working parents to be more involved with their babies
Increases loyalty and morale		
Increases teamwork and collaboration		

## Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act

The Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act requires public and private employers who have one or more employees to provide reasonable unpaid break time or permit an employee to use paid break time, mealtime, or both, each day to allow the employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for up to two years after the child's birth.

An employer shall make reasonable efforts to provide a room or other location near the work area, other than a toilet stall, where an employee can express breast milk in privacy. Reasonable efforts means any effort that would not impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

## Support for Breastfeeding Mothers

Support for breastfeeding mothers includes a range of benefits:

- Writing corporate policies to support breastfeeding women
- Teaching employees about breastfeeding
- Providing designated private space for breastfeeding or expressing milk
- Allowing flexible scheduling during work
- Providing high-quality breast pumps
- Offering professional lactation management services and support

Other policies outlined throughout this handbook also help to support breastfeeding mothers, including giving mothers flexible options for returning to work, such as teleworking, part-time work, and extended paid parental leave; and providing on-site or near site childcare.

### Sample Policy

There are a variety of health benefits to continuing breastfeeding. An employee should not feel that they must stop breastfeeding when they return to work. If an employee wishes to express during work time, a suitable venue and storage facility will be provided. If an employee wishes for this to occur, then they will need to contact their manager within 1 month of return to ensure the facilities are available.

**Milk Expression Breaks** - Breastfeeding employees can breastfeed or express milk during work hours using their normal breaks and mealtimes. For time that may be needed beyond the usual break times, employees may use personal leave or may make up the time as negotiated with their supervisors.

A Place to Express Milk - A private room (not a toilet stall or restroom) shall be available for employees to breastfeed or express milk. The room will be private and sanitary, located near a sink with running water for washing hands and rinsing out breast pump parts, and have an electrical outlet. If employees prefer, they may also breastfeed or express milk in their own private offices, or in other comfortable locations agreed upon in consultation with the employee's supervisor. Expressed milk can be stored in general company refrigerators.

Employees who wish to express milk during the work period shall keep supervisors informed of their needs so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the needs of both the employee and the company.

## Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act prohibits employment practices that discriminate against making reasonable accommodations for qualified employees affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. A qualified employee is an employee or applicant who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the position, with specified exceptions.

Specifically, the bill declares that it is an unlawful employment practice to:

- fail to make reasonable accommodations to known limitations of such employees unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on an entity's business operation
- require a qualified employee affected by such condition to accept an accommodation other than any reasonable accommodation arrived at through an interactive process
- deny employment opportunities based on the need of the entity to make such reasonable accommodations to a qualified employee
- require such employees to take paid or unpaid leave if another reasonable accommodation can be provided
- take adverse action in terms, conditions, or privileges of employment against a qualified employee requesting or using such reasonable accommodations

## Pregnant Worker Accommodations

Pregnant worker accommodations are work adjustments such as more frequent breaks or light carry duties that allow pregnant women to do their job safely, without jeopardizing their health or the health of their babies.

### Sample Policy

#### Accommodation

If you need a temporary change to how, when, or where you work due to pregnancy or related conditions, you may request an accommodation under this policy. EMPLOYER will approve such a request so long as the accommodation requested is reasonable and will not create an undue hardship for the company. EMPLOYER will determine on a case-by-case basis whether a requested accommodation is reasonable or would create an undue hardship after considering the nature of the accommodation, the business needs of the company and its customers, the needs of the company's other employees, the company's operations, and the company's resources.

#### How to Request an Accommodation

You may make a request for an accommodation orally or in writing to your supervisor or the Human Resources department (HR). A request for an accommodation should include an explanation of why you require an accommodation, which may include any physical limitations or risks you face in your job, or a description of the difficulties you are having with one or more aspects of your job. Your request may also include a description of the accommodation you are requesting. A request should also include the date when accommodation will become necessary and the expected duration of your need for accommodation. If the end date for your accommodation changes in the future, notify your supervisor and/or HR. Note that employees and applicants who have a temporary disability caused or contributed to by pregnancy are not required to advise EMPLOYER of their pregnancies if they do not wish to, and may initiate a request for an accommodation due to disability in the same manner as non-pregnant employees and applicants do.

Once you have requested an accommodation, you and your supervisor will discuss your needs and the ways in which your needs can be met reasonably and effectively. This discussion is intended to be an open and thorough exchange of ideas. If the accommodation you request is not reasonable or would not be effective, your supervisor and/or HR may ask you to suggest other accommodations or



may suggest other accommodations themselves. Please keep in mind that although you may be entitled to an accommodation, you may not be entitled to a particular accommodation or even your preferred accommodation. (However, EMPLOYER will not require you to take leave if you do not wish to do so and are able to continue performing the essential functions of your job with or without a reasonable accommodation.)

### **Approval Process**

If the accommodation you request is minor (such as allowing water or snacks at the work site, providing a chair to sit on, or changing break times), you and your supervisor may agree to implement the accommodation for the period that it is needed without seeking assistance from HR. You or your supervisor should contact HR for assistance if you are unable to identify or agree upon an accommodation, if the accommodation you request is not minor, if the accommodation you request is listed in the next section, or if you are dissatisfied with your supervisor's response to your request. HR may help to determine whether an effective and reasonable accommodation exists and may request medical documentation from your health care provider to assist in the interactive process of determining an appropriate accommodation. HR may also engage additional assistance from others, such as consultants and counselors.

Ordinarily, your supervisor and/or HR will decide regarding your request for an accommodation within three business days. Delays may be caused by waits for medical or other documentation, or necessary information from third parties. You will be kept informed of the status of your request. Approved accommodations will be implemented as quickly as possible. If your request is denied, you will be given an explanation of the denial. You will also be told if an alternative accommodation has been approved.

### **Specific Types of Accommodations**

Each request for an accommodation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Some common accommodations are discussed below. This is not intended to be a complete list of all possible accommodations. You and your supervisor are encouraged to think creatively and focus on your individual needs and the needs of your department in determining an appropriate, effective, and reasonable accommodation that does not create an undue hardship for the company.

**Schedule change.** Schedule changes could include changing the time you arrive at and depart from the work site, the days when you work, when you take your breaks or the number of breaks you take, or when you perform certain duties. Requests for a schedule change will be determined in accordance with the company's flexible work policy, taking into consideration the schedule you request, whether your duties can be performed on that schedule, and the business needs of your department. If your request is approved, the flexible work policy will govern the terms and conditions of your employment while you work a changed schedule. Once your need for accommodation has ended, you will be returned to your original schedule in accordance with the provisions below regarding how to end an accommodation.

**Reduced hours.** Requests for reduced hours will be determined in accordance with the company's flexible work policy, taking into consideration the reduction and schedule you request, the work you will perform, and the business needs of your department. If your request is approved, the flexible work policy will govern your compensation, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment while you are working reduced hours. Once your need for accommodation has ended, you will be returned to your original schedule in accordance with the provisions below regarding how to end an accommodation.

**Transfer.** You may request a transfer to an open position within the company that is easier or less hazardous for you to perform. Please note that transfers are possible only when a position is open, and only if you have the necessary skills, credentials, and experience to perform the duties of the position. Once your need for accommodation has ended, you will be returned to your original position or an equivalent position in accordance with the provisions below regarding how to end an accommodation.

**Light duty.** You may request a light duty assignment that is easier or less hazardous for you to perform. Light duty may include remaining in your current position and being excused from performing your more strenuous or hazardous duties or being temporarily re-assigned to another position that has less strenuous or hazardous duties. Please note that reassignment is possible only when a light duty position is open, and only if you have the necessary skills, credentials, and experience to perform the duties of the position. Once your need for accommodation has ended, you will be returned to your original position or duties in accordance with the provisions below regarding how to end an accommodation.

**Work from home.** Certain jobs must be performed at the work site, and others may be performed at a remote location. Requests to work from home will be determined in accordance with the company's telework policy. Requests to work from home will require an individualized assessment of which of your duties can be performed from a remote location, how those duties will be performed, the technology and tools you have or may need, how you will be supervised, and whether you will need to be present in the office on occasion. If approved, the accommodation will be governed by the telework policy. Once your need for accommodation has ended, you will be returned to your original on-site position or an equivalent position in accordance with the provisions below regarding how to end an accommodation.

# Babies at Work

A babies at work program allows parents to bring infants to work with them – generally up to about six months of age or crawling.

## Sample Policy

It is the policy of EMPLOYER to provide a positive work environment that recognizes parents' responsibilities to their jobs and to their infants by acknowledging that, when an infant can stay with a parent, this benefits the family, the employer, and society. The EMPLOYER Infant-at-Work Program encourages new mothers or fathers to return to work sooner by allowing the new parents to bring their infant to work with them until the child is (180 days old/240 days old) or begins to crawl, whichever comes first.

Full-time and part-time employees in good standing are eligible to participate in the program, subject to the specific job responsibilities of the parent and subject to ensuring the physical safety of the infant. Employees currently involved in disciplinary action and employees who have not completed their \_\_\_\_-day orientation/probation period are not eligible to participate.

The parent will accept complete responsibility for the safety of the infant. If the parent's duties require that they leave their primary work site, the parent will take the infant with them. An employee may not take the infant anywhere in an EMPLOYER vehicle. A parent participating in this program may not leave the building (not even for a short time) without taking the infant with them.

The parent must provide all supplies and equipment needed to care for the infant at the work site and ensure that the area is kept in a clean and sanitary condition. Diapers must be changed only in a designated restroom or in quiet room locations and not in work areas. All supplies utilized by the parent must be maintained in a manner that is not disruptive to the work of other employees.

There may be work circumstances that require a parent's full attention such that it may be necessary for parents to make other arrangements for childcare during the utilization of this policy. Parents are expected to work closely with their supervisor and coworkers to ensure that all parties involved are aware of what duties can and cannot be reassigned and parents are expected to make alternate childcare arrangements when required to do so.

For an infant-at-work program to be effective, all parties need to be sensitive to the needs of others. The employee must maintain acceptable work performance and ensure that the presence of the infant does not create any office disturbances. If problems arise that cannot be resolved, the employee understands that the program may be terminated for that employee.

If a baby is fussy for a prolonged period, causing a distraction in the workplace, or preventing the parent from accomplishing required work, the parent shall remove the infant from the workplace. The parent will be charged for time away from work according to leave time provisions of EMPLOYER or may be subject to pay deductions for missed work.

EMPLOYER will identify one or more locations on the premises that employees may use, if they so choose, while breastfeeding or otherwise feeding their infants, as well as a location or locations for changing and disposing of diapers. The location designated for breastfeeding or expressing of milk will be "a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public," in compliance with Sec. 4207 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The parent shall choose two Alternate Care Providers who will care for the infant if the parent needs to attend a meeting, work with a customer, go to the restroom, or another situation in which the parent is unable to effectively care for the infant for a short time. Each care provider will have previously signed an Alternate Care Provider Agreement form.

If a parent is going to be unable to care for their child at work for a period of less than 1.5 hours within a four-hour period, the parent shall notify a care provider and place the infant in the provider's care.

If the parent is going to be unable to care for their child at work for a period exceeding 1.5 hours within a four-hour period, the parent shall plan for the infant's care outside the EMPLOYER premises. An Alternate Care Provider in the workplace shall not be permitted to care for an infant for a period exceeding 1.5 hours within any four-hour period.

## Closing Resources

Employees are multidimensional; they have personal lives, family responsibilities and competing demands on their time and attention. Family-friendly employers have a competitive advantage to attract and retain skilled top talent. Increasingly, the workforce expects family-friendly policies and practices at the workplace. This handbook is designed to help employers explore the benefits of family-friendly workplaces and provide them with sample policies to pull from for their own employee manuals. Supportive policies and practices increase organizational productivity and support the physical and emotional health of employees and their families. We hope you take the first or the next step to increase family-friendliness at your workplace. Additional resources are provided below.

For more business resources:

[Steamboat Springs Chamber](#)

(970) 875-7000

For more information on First Impressions:

[Routt County First Impressions](#)

(970) 870-5270

For more information on Federal and State social service programs:

[Routt County Department of Human Services](#)

(970) 879-1540

For more information on early childhood education in Routt County and providers:

[Family Development Center](#)

(970) 879-0977

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