

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS ON WHY THEY SUPPORT PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

Business owners know that paid family and medical leave reduces costs, levels the playing field for employers of all sizes, and allows workers to meet their health needs and caregiving responsibilities. Paid leave is also proven to increase worker retention and productivity and boost employee morale. Win-win-win!*



COLORADO

Toby Gadd

**President & Co-Founder, Nuance Chocolate
Fort Collins, CO**

Like many small business owners, I believe that taking care of the people who contribute so much to Nuance's success isn't just a moral imperative, it's also good for business. After all, my nine wonderful employees frequently spend more time working at Nuance Chocolate than they do with their own families and friends. But, as we all know, providing the compensation and benefits that we'd like while still maintaining profitability can frequently be challenging. Few things are more difficult than watching a loyal employee struggle, with no easy way to help.

This is why I support the creation of a paid family and medical leave insurance program. Very simply, such a program would provide an inexpensive and sustainable way for me to support these great people as much as they support Nuance.

A paid family and medical leave program would enable my employees to take time with their precious families when it's most needed – whether for the birth of a child, or for taking care of an ill family member – without risking their financial stability and futures.

And the bean-counter in me knows that less-stressed employees aren't just more stable, but they are also more productive and better able to effectively represent my company. Supporting paid leave is a moral decision that directly helps my business. It's moral, it's affordable, and it's good for business. Win-win-win.

Tracy duCharme

Owner, Color Me Mine, Colorado Springs, CO

Colorado Springs is home to my small business where I currently employ 6 people. I have owned this retail shop in the Chapel Hills Mall for about 10 years. A small business owner faces many struggles, but I would say maintaining a talented and vibrant staff has been my biggest challenge.

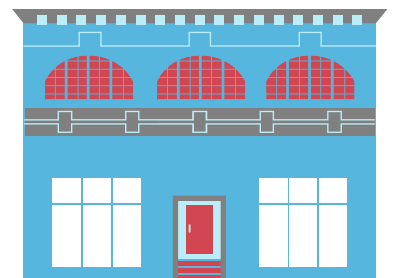
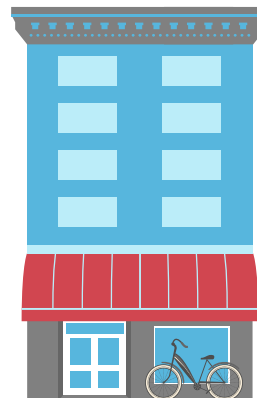
A paid family and medical leave program would be a game changer for me and for my employees. I am competing for employees with larger organizations, and I often lose out on top talent because I can't offer these crucial benefits. I recently lost two new hires that both took jobs that they did not prefer, but had benefits such as paid leave. I can't blame them for wanting those protections.

Folks who oppose a paid family and medical leave program have told me that if I want this coverage for my staff, I ought to do it on my own and not try to "foist it" upon others. These people do not seem to understand how insurance works. A pool of six individuals is not the same as a pool of millions. I would love to be able to give paid leave to all of my employees, but cannot begin to afford to do that alone.



**Huge thanks to Good Business
Colorado for their partnership
in collecting these stories!**

*Source: National Partnership for Women & Families, Paid Family and Medical Leave: Good for Business, September 2018.



MomsRising.org
MamásConPoder.org

Katharine Knarreborg
Owner & President, Merlin Instrument Company
Centennial, CO

As the President of a small engineering and manufacturing company, one of my biggest challenges is offering employee benefits that are affordable, comprehensive, and competitive. I compete against large tech companies to attract top engineering talent, but with so few employees, it's extremely expensive to offer strong benefits like paid family and medical leave because I don't have the same economies of scale as larger companies.

It's important to me to protect my business and my valuable employees when life happens – if they don't have access to paid leave, I know I'm likely to lose a great employee that I've invested resources into training. The most reasonable option I've found so far is to secure short term disability insurance for my employees, but by no means is it an ideal solution. It was hard to find a company offering it for a business of my size, there's no guarantee that the same policy or pricing will be available next year, it's expensive for limited coverage, and it doesn't cover family leave at all.

My small business doesn't have an HR department to research options and manage programs like this; it's up to me. This is why I support a paid medical and family leave program -- I want to be able to focus my time and budget on investing in my business while having peace of mind that I can attract top talent and that my employees will be protected when they need it most.

Edwin Zoe
CEO, Zoe Ma Ma, Denver and Boulder, CO

I am the founder of Zoe Ma Ma (a local fast-casual restaurant concept with locations in Downtown Boulder and at Union Station in Denver). I support paid family and medical leave legislation because it is a WIN-WIN for Coloradans and small businesses. It's a WIN for Coloradans because it helps workers to care for their loved ones without fear of losing their jobs or income.

It's a WIN for small businesses like mine because it levels the playing field. It is said that small businesses are the backbone of our communities and economy. Yet, we are at a distinct disadvantage because we don't have the resources and scale of large corporations to provide paid family and medical leave. We lose good employees to large corporations because they can provide these benefits. Good, smart paid family and medical leave legislation will help small businesses retain great employees.

Carol Cochran
Owner, Horse & Dragon Brewing, Fort Collins, CO

As a small business owner who is working hard to provide options for our team, paid family and medical leave is vital. We will ALL, at one point or another, face a situation where we need others to help us through and provide some job and income security for a short time. If you don't mandate it, small businesses across the country who are trying to do the right thing will be trying to compete with businesses that aren't devoting any dollars to this. That's ridiculous. It's a universal human need; we should ALL be supporting it to make it accessible to those who need it.

 NEW HAMPSHIRE

Darlene Gildersleeve
Owner, Phoenix Transportation
Hopkinton, NH

I am a proud mother of two daughters, ages 13 and 3, as well as one son who is 19. My husband and I own a small transportation company in Hopkinton, NH. We never thought we would be small business owners but due to the needs of my family and the lack of paid family and medical leave, we needed to adjust our lives so we could be there for our children.

My daughter suffers from a debilitating illness. She was hospitalized in Boston twice while I was working for a non-profit organization. My former employer offered benefits like sick days and vacation time, which I found myself using entirely during her hospitalizations. The balance between caring for the child in the hospital and caring for your children who are at home is a painful struggle I wish upon no one.

I needed to work and help my family financially, but our circumstances could not align with this need. With paid family and medical leave insurance, a huge burden would have been lifted from my family. My health wouldn't have suffered, and I would have been able to focus on my sick child without the pressure from my employer.

After this experience, we started our own company. Our history only amplified the extreme need to offer our employees realistic modern-day benefits that would truly make a difference in their lives. We are small, but I want a paid family and medical leave program to pass for me, for my family and for my employees in case they are faced with similar situations.

Ann Campbell
Owner, The Campbell House
Sullivan County, NH

I am the proud small business owner of The Campbell House, an assisted living facility that has 11 beds and is staffed by 5 employees. My experience working for a company in Maryland showed me what kind of an employer I want to be. When I needed leave to have two surgeries my employer worked with me to allow me to bank my sick days and vacation days so I could receive a paycheck during my time out of work. It was a lifesaver to me to be able to take the time I needed to heal.

This experience has inspired me to value a good employee/employer relationship. I strive to be able to offer my employees an enjoyable place to work as well as offering them the benefits they truly need. Even though we are a very small business, we can offer our employees wages above the minimum mandate in NH as well as paid sick days.

However, we cannot offer paid family/medical leave because we do not have the reserve funds to do so. Small businesses and our employees need an social insurance-style paid family/medical leave program in order to be able to afford it. I know from my own experience that having paid time off to care for yourself and family is a win/win for employers and employees.

Tim LeClair
Amish Homestead
Concord, NH

My name is Tim LeClair and I am one of the owners of the Amish Homestead, a gift shop, in Concord, NH. My personal experience battling addiction contributes greatly to my support for paid family and medical leave. As a now clean and sober man, I recognize that there are a variety of life experiences that can lead you to “rock bottom” financially and that it often takes many moving parts to guide you to recovery.

As a successful small business owner, I recognize the importance of being able to offer paid family and medical leave, but I cannot afford to do so independently. If there was a paid family and medical leave program in place, then I would be able to offer my employees support financially as well as morally if a medical crisis were to occur.

 PENNSYLVANIA

Sue Pera
Owner, Cornerstone Coffeehouse
Camp Hill, PA

Owning a small business is one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences all at the same time. The thing that must be valued above all else has been and always will be, the employees. They are the backbone of your business and what propels you forward. Employing so many people over the years has taught me that employees NEED to feel valued and cared for. Being able to offer paid family and medical leave would be a game changer for us. It is not currently something that we are able to offer but we do recognize the need for it and that it helps to foster a sense of belonging and safety. Being able to offer this would allow us to create an environment where our employees can care for themselves and their families without the worry of becoming financially unstable.

