



District of Columbia, Department of Employment Services: Office of Paid Family Leave

Contact Information of Individual Submitting Nomination

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Agency Name: District of Columbia, Department of Employment Services

Office of Paid Family Leave

The District of Columbia's Paid Leave Act, which became District law in 2017, provides paid leave for employees who are bonding with a new child, providing care or companionship for a family member with a serious health condition, and/or caring for the employee's own serious health condition. The Paid Leave Act allows for eight weeks of parental leave, six weeks of family leave, and two weeks of medical leave for every 52 weeks worked. The maximum weekly benefit amount is \$1,000 and is funded solely by an employer tax.

The Department of Employment Services (DOES) has established the Office of Paid Family Leave (OPFL) to implement the District's PFL program. The OPFL is comprised of the Division of Tax (collection of taxes, fees, and revenue functions); Division of Benefits (claim filing, claim processing, and payment of PFL benefits); Benefit Payment Control (prevention and detection of fraud and overpayments, as well as recovery of improper payments of benefits); Appeals (representing the OPFL at hearings on protested claims before the Office of Administrative Hearings); Medical (physician certifications); Contact Center (customer service); and Support (procedures, budget, research, etc.).

DOES has worked to ensure that District businesses have a clear understanding of their requirements to pay employer taxes and inform their employees about PFL benefits. OPFL is on track to meet each of its primary milestone deadlines: the July 1, 2019 deadline for collecting taxes and the July 1, 2020 deadline for administering PFL benefits to eligible employees. DOES is finalizing the expansion of the online portal and tax collections system, proceeding with the training of internal and external stakeholders, and laying the framework for a seamless integration to benefits administration. The two interoperable systems will work together and highlight the agency's core technology values of customer service, ease of use, and performance accuracy.

Statement of results, accomplishments, impacts and any other appropriate information that demonstrates why the nominee's efforts were an exceptional contribution.

On July 1, 2019, employers began to utilize the District's Employer Self-Service Portal to submit wages and remit their PFL taxes. To meet the July 1 statutory deadline during the first phase of implementation, DOES prioritized key functionality within the PFL tax system, which included employer registration, account maintenance, wage reports, tax payments, and a general ledger. The second phase of the PFL Tax System will deploy in December 2019 following systems testing in November 2019. During this phase, DOES will deploy the remaining program functionality, which will include refunds, compliance, field audits, and management reports.

In addition to IT development, DOES is executing a marketing strategy to educate employers, employees, and medical communities about the PFL program. The Paid Leave Act requires public education and awareness campaigns, and DOES is embracing comprehensive campaigns in both areas. Even with the launch of the PFL tax system, engaging District employers remains a high priority, and the agency has engaged employers through information sessions, town hall forums, and business walks. DOES worked to expand outreach by launching the District's PFL website at dcpaidfamilyleave.dc.gov, conducting an employer webinar series for more than 2,000 employers, and distributing a digital newsletter to over 42,000 businesses.

Other significant contributions

While facing one of the most aggressive timelines for PFL implementation in the country, DOES established a roadmap to successfully overcome the challenges of developing regulations, procuring technology, and administering the District's new PFL program. During the two years following the enactment of the PFL law, DOES created a bifurcated rulemaking process, which included the publication of the final tax regulations on June 21, 2019. The agency engaged

thousands of businesses through a multi-faceted public outreach campaign, utilized strategic recruitment initiatives to hire talented staff, and engaged numerous IT professionals to determine the best method to deploy tax and benefits systems within the timelines established by legislation.

While other states with similar PFL programs delayed their implementation rollouts and requested additional resources, DOES implemented the District's tax program on time, and the agency stands prepared to deliver a benefits administration system on July 1, 2020. OPFL staff will continue working on rulemaking, procurement, community engagement, IT development, and research to bring the District a world-class benefits program.

Examples of work

[UPFL Q3 FY19 Report - Final.pdf \(9.7MB\)](#)

[DOES_PFL_EmployerToolkit_compressed \(7 10 19\).pdf \(1.4MB\)](#)