



## **Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (MA PFML)**

**Depending on the situation, you may qualify for the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (MA PFML) benefits starting January 2021.**

**MA PFML provides temporary income replacement to eligible individuals who need to take leave for their own serious medical condition or to care for a qualified family member. Clark does not participate in the state plan. It has secured a private plan exemption from the state of Massachusetts, which is allowed provided the plan offers coverage as good as or better than the state plan.**

**Please read the following FAQ carefully.**

### **FAQ for doctoral student with stipends, postdocs, and research scientists:**

Q: How does MA PFML work?

A: This is a paid leave, but not a full-paid leave. The plan is designed to provide supplementary income to compensate for the assumed loss of income as a result of your leave. If approved, you will receive benefits in place of your stipend/wage, not in addition to your stipend/wage, and your benefits are always lower than your stipend/wage, and are subject to taxes and regular payroll deductions. For a rough estimate of benefits, see [here](#).

Q: How do I know if I am eligible for MA PFML?

You must receive a W-2 from Clark University and your annual stipend must exceed \$5,400 to be eligible. See the eligibility criteria set by the state of Massachusetts [here](#).

Q: Are benefits automatic or do I have to apply?

Benefits are not automatic. Because Clark University has chosen the path to self-insure and provide benefits at least equal or better than the state plan, you will need to apply to our plan administrator, Prudential; they will evaluate your application and determine eligibility and approval. Please contact Human Resources to start the process. See [here](#) for more details.

Q: Should I notify my faculty advisor, principal investigator and department chair if I intend to take MA PFML?

Just as any of your plans toward degree completion, it is always important to inform your faculty advisor/PI and department chair of any plans for paid or unpaid leave, and if possible, well in advance, so that they can make alternative plans during your leave.



Q: What is the difference between federal Medical and Family Leave Act (FMLA) and the state MA PFML?

Federal leave is unpaid, and state level is paid benefits although not full. The federal program does not cover some part-time workers (under 1,250 hours of work annually), which disqualifies most doctoral students on stipends. You also must be on our payroll for at least 12 months before becoming eligible for the federal program. See the difference [here](#).