



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Friday, April 11, 1997

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies**

FROM: William J. Clinton President

Subject: Expanded Family and Medical Leave Policies

I have strongly supported meeting Federal employees' family and medical leave needs through enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and the Federal Employees Family Friendly Leave Act of 1994 (FEFFLA). However, Federal employees often have important family and medical needs that do not qualify for unpaid leave under the FMLA or sick leave under the FEFFLA. I ask you to take immediate action to assist Federal workers further in balancing the demands of work and family.

Last year I proposed to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. My legislation would allow Federal and eligible private sector workers 24 hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period to fulfill certain family obligations. Under the legislation, employees could use unpaid leave to participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of a child, including early childhood education activities; accompany children to routine medical and dental examinations; and tend to the needs of older relatives.

In furtherance of my proposed policy, I ask that you take immediate action within existing statutory authorities to ensure that Federal employees may schedule and be granted up to 24 hours of leave without pay each year for the following activities:

***(1) SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES--***

*to allow employees to participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of a child. This would include parent-teacher conferences or meetings with child-care providers, interviewing for a new school or child-care facility, or participating in volunteer activities supporting the child's educational advancement. In this memorandum, "school" refers to an elementary school, secondary school, Head Start program, or a child-care facility.*

***(2) ROUTINE FAMILY MEDICAL PURPOSES--***

*to allow parents to accompany children to routine medical or dental appointments, such as annual checkups or vaccinations. Although these activities are not currently covered by the FMLA, the FEFFLA does permit employees to use up to 13 days of sick leave each year for such purposes. Agencies should assure that employees are able to use up to 24 hours of leave without pay each year for these purposes in cases when no additional sick leave is available to employees.*

***(3) ELDERLY RELATIVES' HEALTH OR CARE NEEDS--***

*to allow employees to accompany an elderly relative to routine medical or dental appointments or other professional services related to the care of the elderly relative, such as making arrangements for housing, meals, phones, banking services, and other similar activities. Although Federal employees can use unpaid leave or sick leave for certain of these activities under the FMLA or FEFFLA, such as caring for a parent with a serious health condition, agencies should ensure employees can use up to 24 hours of unpaid time off each year for this broader range of activities related to elderly relatives' health or care needs.*

This new policy will assure that Federal employees can schedule and receive up to 24 hours away from the job each year for these family and medical circumstances. I also urge you to accommodate these employee needs as mission requirements permit, even when it is not possible for employees to anticipate or schedule leave in advance for these purposes. In addition, I ask that you support employees' requests to schedule paid time off--such as annual leave, compensatory time off, and credit hours under flexible work schedules--for these family activities when such leave is available to these employee. The Office of Personnel Management shall provide guidance to you on the implementation of this memorandum.

I encourage you to use a partnership approach with your employees and their representatives in developing an effective program that balances the employees' needs to succeed both at work and at home. I ask agencies, unions, and management associations to continue to work together to assess and improve the use of family-friendly programs and to make certain that employees are aware of the expanded family and medical leave policy.