**May 1, 2026 (Premium Contribution & Paid Leave Program)**

On **July 11, 2023**, Governor Mills signed a historic budget that includes the creation of a **Paid Family and Medical Leave program**, making Maine the 13th state, at that time, in the U.S. to establish such a program.

**Key Dates:**

* **May 1, 2026**: Employee payroll premium deduction begin.
* **May 1, 2026**: Paid Family and Medical Leave benefits become available to eligible employees.

**What is the Paid Family and Medical Leave Program?**

Beginning in **May** **2026**, eligible employees will be able to take up to **12 weeks** of paid time off for various family or medical reasons. PFML reasons for leave mirror current state law. Reasons for leave include:

* **Family leave:** To care for a new child (birth, adoption, fostering); to care for family with serious health condition.
* **Medical leave:** To care for one’s own serious medical needs.
* **Safe leave:** To stay safe or to help a family member stay safe after abuse or violence.
* **Military deployment:** For emergencies related to a family member’s impending military deployment.

This program will provide financial support to eligible employees, ensuring employees can take time off when they need it most while still receiving income.

**New Payroll Premium Deductions Starting May 1, 2026:**

The Paid Family and Medical Leave program requires employers to pay a premium deduction for employees’ wages. This premium will apply to both employees and employers (UNE). Wages subject to the premium pertain to all benefit-eligible and temporary positions at UNE, including student employment work charged to departments’ budget lines. However, student employment work associated with Federal Work Study employment is not subject to the premium deduction.

* **Employee Contribution**: Employees will contribute **0.5% of their wages** to the program through payroll deductions. This deduction will begin with your first paycheck starting on/after **May 1, 2026**.
* **Employer Contribution**: UNE will also contribute 0.5% to fund the program.

The premium deduction will be noted on your UNE pay statement with the title “Maine Paid Family & Medical Leave.”

**Paid Leave Benefits Available in May 2026:**

* **12 weeks of paid leave** per year for eligible employees.
* The amount you may receive will be based on your average weekly earnings, up to a state-established maximum benefit.

**Eligibility for Paid Leave:**

To qualify for paid leave under this program, employees must meet the following eligibility criteria:

* Must have **earned at least six times the state average weekly wage (SAWW) in** **four of the last five completed quarters** before accessing the benefit.
* *Employees who have not worked for an employer for at least 120 days are not guaranteed job protections when taking leave.*

**How to Apply for Paid Leave:**

* To apply for paid leave, eligible employees must notify UNE’s Human Resources Office at least **30 days** in advance (or as soon as possible if leave is needed unexpectedly).
* You will then need to submit a claim to The Standard’s Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave program to determine eligibility and benefit amounts. Our group policy number with The Standard is **144362-Z.**

**Additional Information:**

For more details about the Paid Family and Medical Leave program, including information on how to apply for benefits, specific contribution rates, and the program rollout, please contact Human Resources at [hr@une.edu](mailto:hr@une.edu). Our mailing address is:

UNE- Human Resources

11 Hills Beach Road

Biddeford, ME 04005

(207) 602-2283

**Your Rights Are Protected:**

* Employees taking leave under this program are entitled to return to the same or an equivalent job.
* Health insurance benefits will be protected during your leave.

*This notice is intended to be a summary to inform you of the new Paid Family and Medical Leave program, including the payroll premium deduction that will begin on May 1, 2026, and the paid leave benefits that will become available in May 2026. Stay informed about these upcoming changes and your rights under this program. Full Maine Paid Family and Leave program details can be found at on Maine’s Department of Labor website,* [*https://www.maine.gov/paidleave/*](https://www.maine.gov/paidleave/)*.*