



**WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
SUMMIT 2025**

an **AIA** Leadership Event

NOVEMBER 3 - 5





Advocating for Parental Leave: Research-Driven Policy Change

Tuesday, 11/04/2025, and 11:30am-12:30pm

1.00 Learning Units



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Questions related to specific products and services may be addressed at the conclusion of this presentation.



Speakers List



Anastasia Markiw

AIA, ACHA, LEED GREEN ASSOCIATE, NCARB
Project Manager / *DesignGroup*



Parva Markiw

AIA, NOMA, LEED GREEN ASSOCIATE
Project Architect / *DesignGroup*



Learning Objectives



Objective 1: Identify current gaps and trends in parental leave benefits across architecture firms and state regulations.

Objective 2: Apply a data-driven framework for evaluating and benchmarking firm benefits that support employee health and family care.

Objective 3: Demonstrate strategies for building internal coalitions and presenting research findings to firm leadership to advocate for policy change.

Objective 4: Describe common challenges to implementing firm-wide parental leave policies and propose solutions based on successful internal advocacy.

Setting Intentions

- Create space for vulnerability
- Lead with compassion & love
- Respect each person in the room
- Respect each person's privacy
- Curiosity & openness encouraged
- Hate speech not tolerated

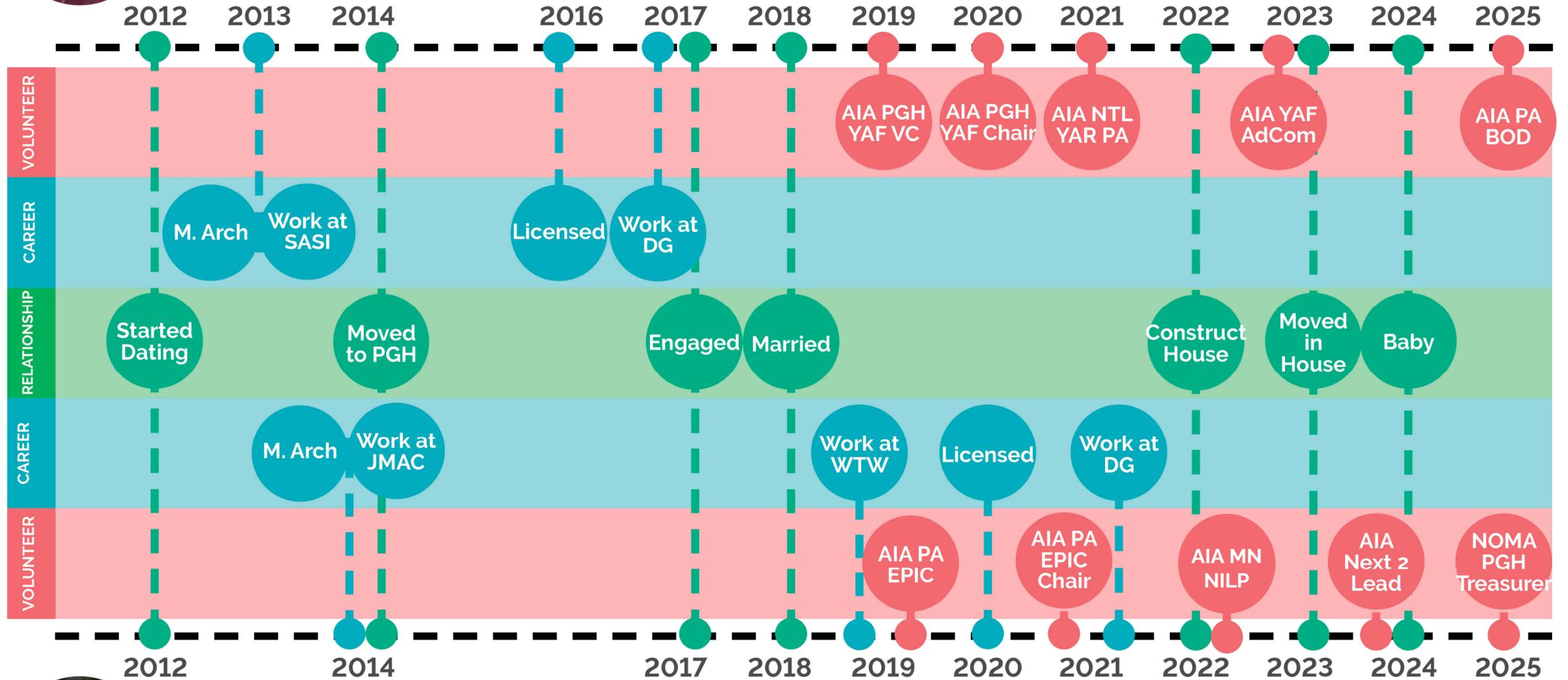


Setting Intentions



DIFFERENT FAMILIES
Same Love

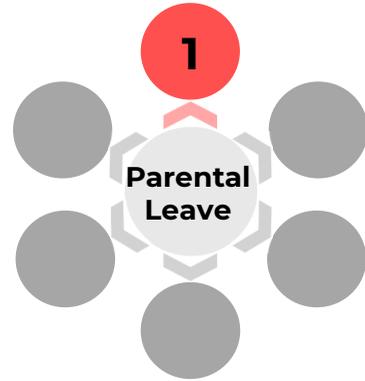




Quick Recap



AIA PA Emerging Professional Committee



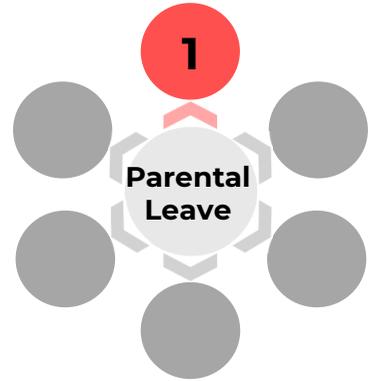
What is EPiC?

- The AIA Pennsylvania Emerging Professionals Community (EPiC)
- Improve the network, role, and impact of emerging professionals
- Initiatives include:
 - EPiC Firm Recognition
 - Architecture School Visits
 - PALM
 - Paula Maynes ARE Grant

- **Chair from 2021-2024**



EPiC Firm Recognition

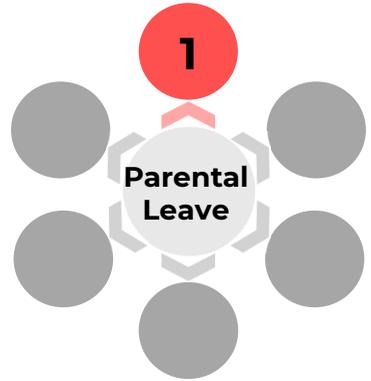


EPiC Firm Recognition

- A fundamental initiative founded in 2016
- Annual recognition to firms with outstanding commitment to the development of their emerging professionals
- Four main categories:
 - Architectural licensure
 - Leadership/Professional development
 - Firm support
 - EDI within firms' culture - **added in chair term**



EPiC Firm Recognition



EDI within firms' culture (Added in 2021)

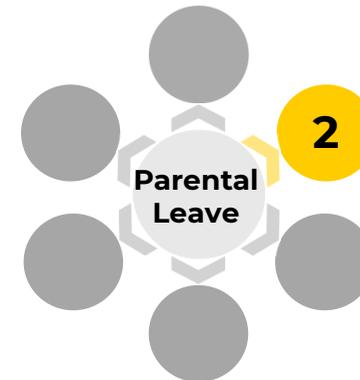
PART 4 | Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Check all that apply.

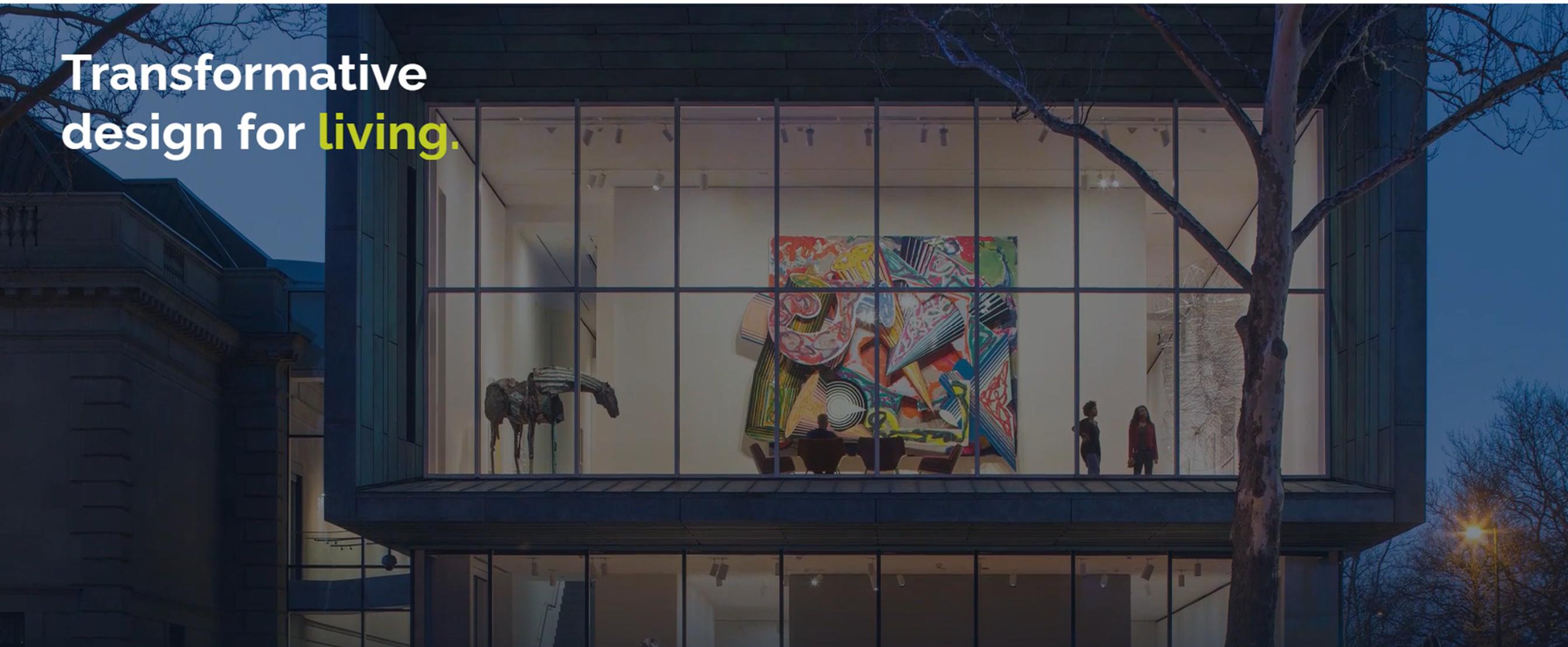
- EPs in our firm are encouraged to speak up when they see an opportunity for change and leadership acknowledges their suggestions.
- Our firm strives to be inclusive for all people.
- Our firm provides equity, diversity, and inclusion training for all staff to create a sense of belonging and a welcoming environment at work.
- I see underrepresented firm leaders around me (differences in race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic status, culture, age, and/or livelihood, etc.), either in my own firm or in the consultants we choose to work with.
- My firm has an EDI committee / policy to openly talk about different needs
- My firm has an inclusive, flexible scheduling for holiday time off (i.e. considering all religions and cultures)
- My firm has a transparent salary structure which is comparable to the AIA Compensation Report.
- Our firm supports and hires new graduates
- Our firm provides paid parental leave (both maternity and paternity)
- Our firm provides accommodations for new parents including but not limited to (lactation room) or daycare services
- To support a welcoming environment, our firm provides equity, diversity, and inclusion training for all staff

Our firm provides paid parental leave (both maternity and paternity)

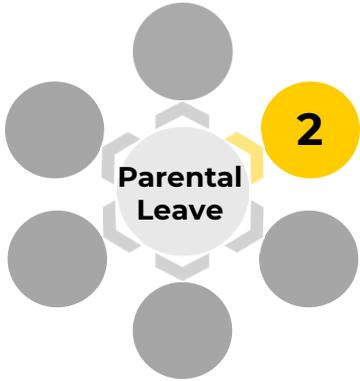
About DesignGroup



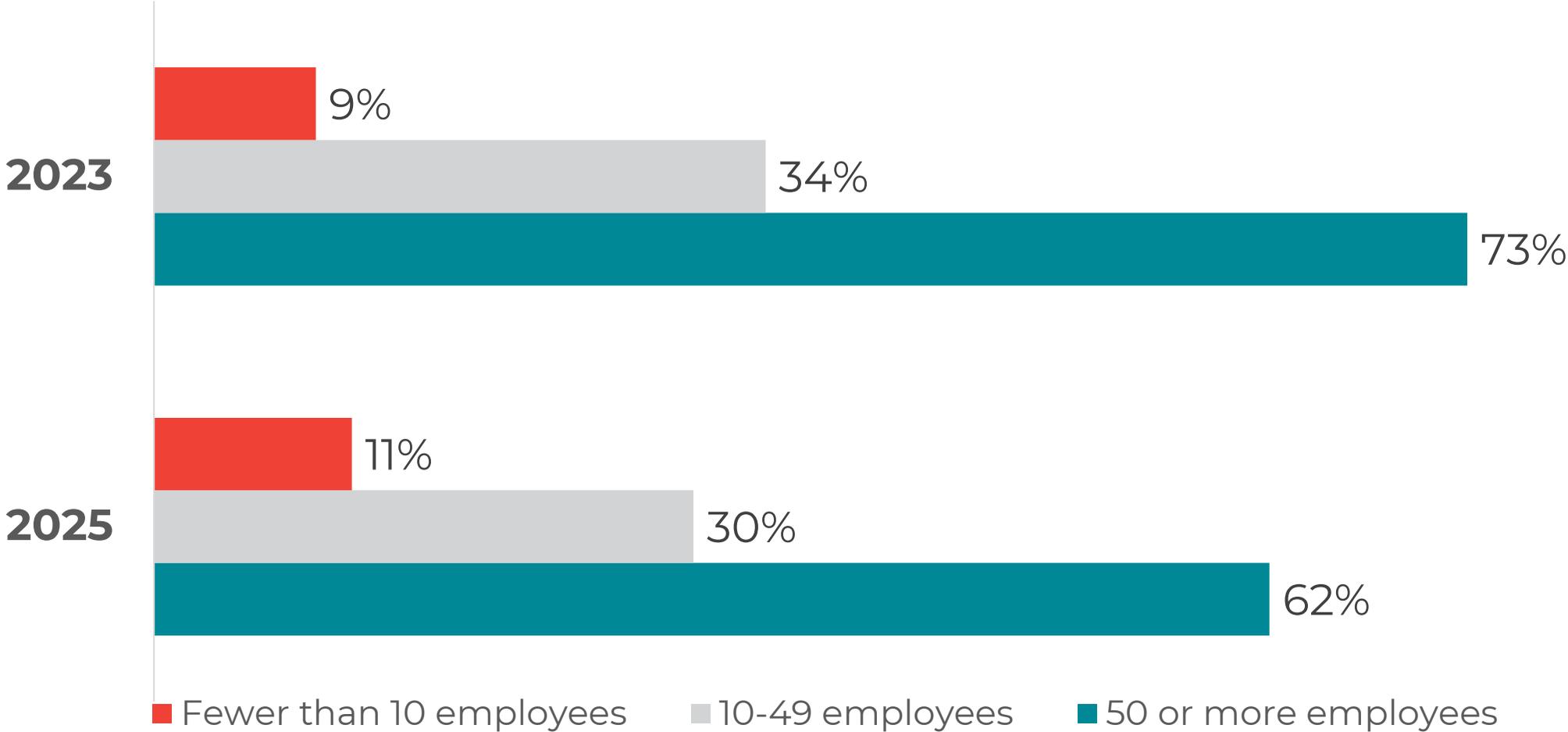
Transformative
design for **living.**



DesignGroup EDI Committee

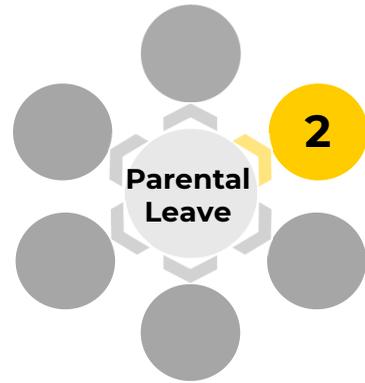


Firms with EDI Committees



Source: AIA Compensation & Benefits Report

DesignGroup EDI Committee

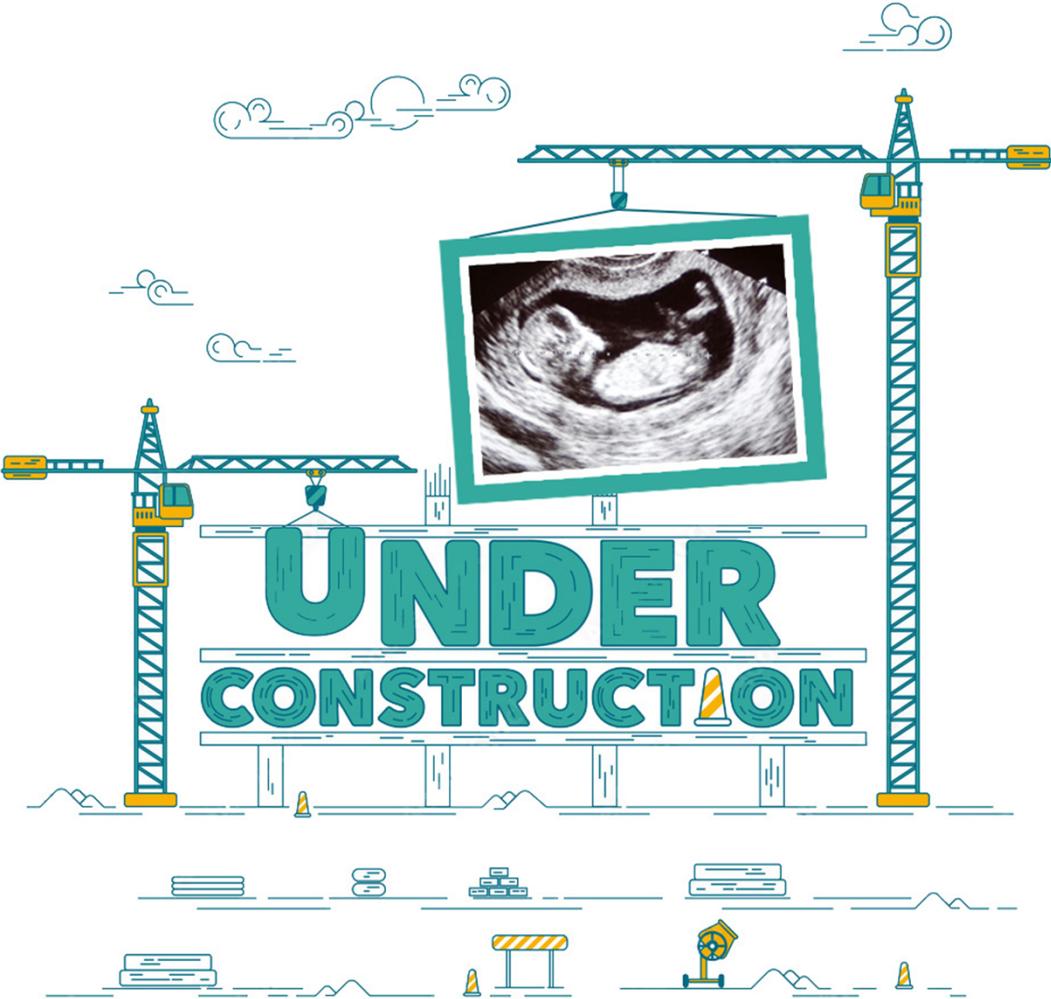


Based on 2023 AIA Benefit Survey

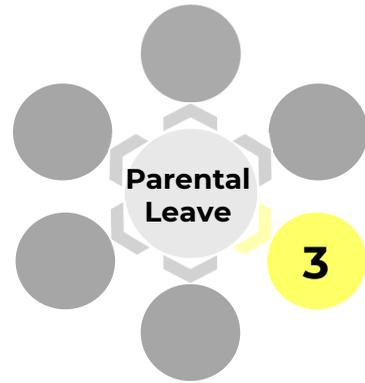
| Category | 50-99 Emp. | DG |
|---|------------|----|
| ARE Exam Cost | 92% | ✓ |
| Flex Time (Flexible Working Hours) | 90% | ✓ |
| Office Provided Tablet/Laptop | 75% | ✓ |
| Parental Flexibility | 66% | ✓ |
| Paid Time Off for Professional Exams/Professional Development | 70% | |
| Pet-friendly Office | 23% | ✓ |
| Child Friendly Office | 16% | |
| Mentorship Opportunities | 64% | ✓ |
| Paid Parental Leave | 70% | |
| Paid Time Off to Serve in AIA Leadership Roles/Boards | 40% | |
| Office Retreat | 23% | |

| Category | 50-99 Emp. | DG |
|---|------------|----|
| Shorter Summer or Seasonal Hours | 21% | ✓ |
| Fitness Club Discount | 32% | |
| Wellness Program with Incentive for Participation | 48% | |
| Offered Medical Coverage | 100% | ✓ |
| Contributed 100% to Medical Coverage | 21% | ✓ |
| Work Remotely multiple days per week | 79% | ✓ |
| Work Remotely all/most days | 36% | |
| Combined time off | 63% | |
| Separate buckets for time off | 34% | ✓ |
| Employee Assistance Program (EAP) | 77% | ✓ |
| Paid Leave Beyond Parental Leave | 24% | |

Pregnancy Announcement!



Discovering Policies



Federal Policies

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

- Federal Policy
- Applies to organizations with **≥ 50 employees**
- 12 weeks of employment-protected, gender-neutral, **unpaid leave** during a 12-month period
 - Care for a newborn
 - Care for an adopted or fostered child
 - Care for a family member
 - Attend to one's own serious medical health condition

State Policies

None

Firm Benefits

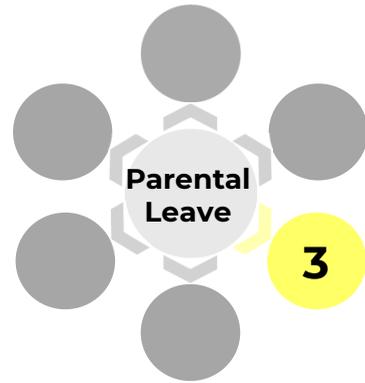
Short Term Disability Insurance

- **Voluntary** Election
 - **60% of wages / weekly max \$1,000**
- Injury or illness
 - Lasts 2 – 26 weeks
- Pregnancy & birth
 - Lasts 6 – 8 weeks depending on the type of birth

No parental leave for non-birthing parents



Discovering Policies



Healthcare Insurance

“Infertility”

- Not being able to conceive after a year or longer of unprotected sex for **heterosexual couples**.
- **Artificial donor insemination** may meet the definition of infertility for females without a male partner who do not have an identified infertility factor having not being able to conceive **after 12 consecutive inseminations attempts**.

Updated in October 2023

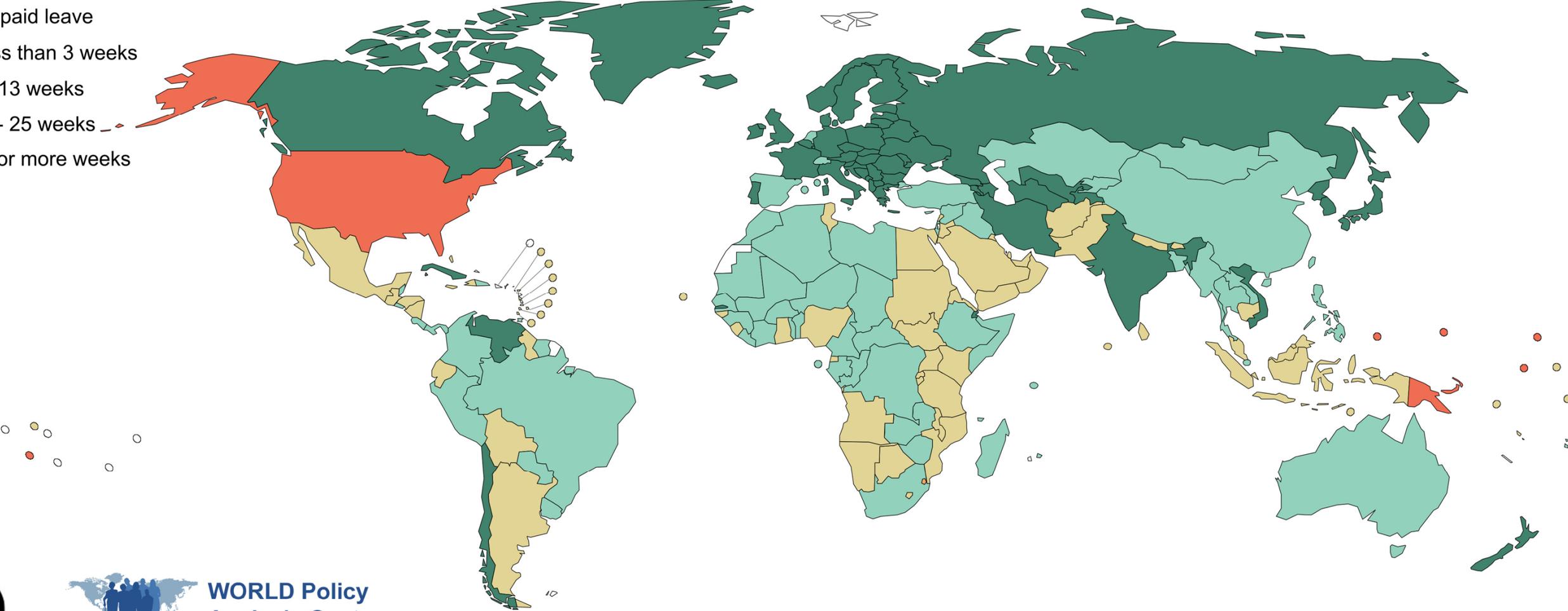
- Inability to achieve a successful pregnancy **with or without a partner** based on a patient’s medical, sexual, and reproductive history, or any combination of those factors.
- There is a need for **medical intervention, including donor embryos or donor gametes**, among others, to achieve a successful pregnancy either as an individual or with a partner.
- For couples having regular, unprotected intercourse with no known fertility issues in either partner, evaluation for infertility is recommended **after 12 months of trying to conceive**.

Global Policies



Is paid leave available for mothers of infants?

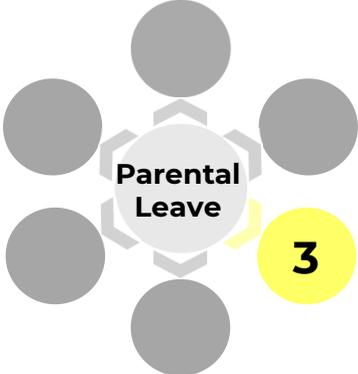
- No paid leave
- Less than 3 weeks
- 3 - 13 weeks
- 14 - 25 weeks
- 26 or more weeks



**WORLD Policy
Analysis Center**

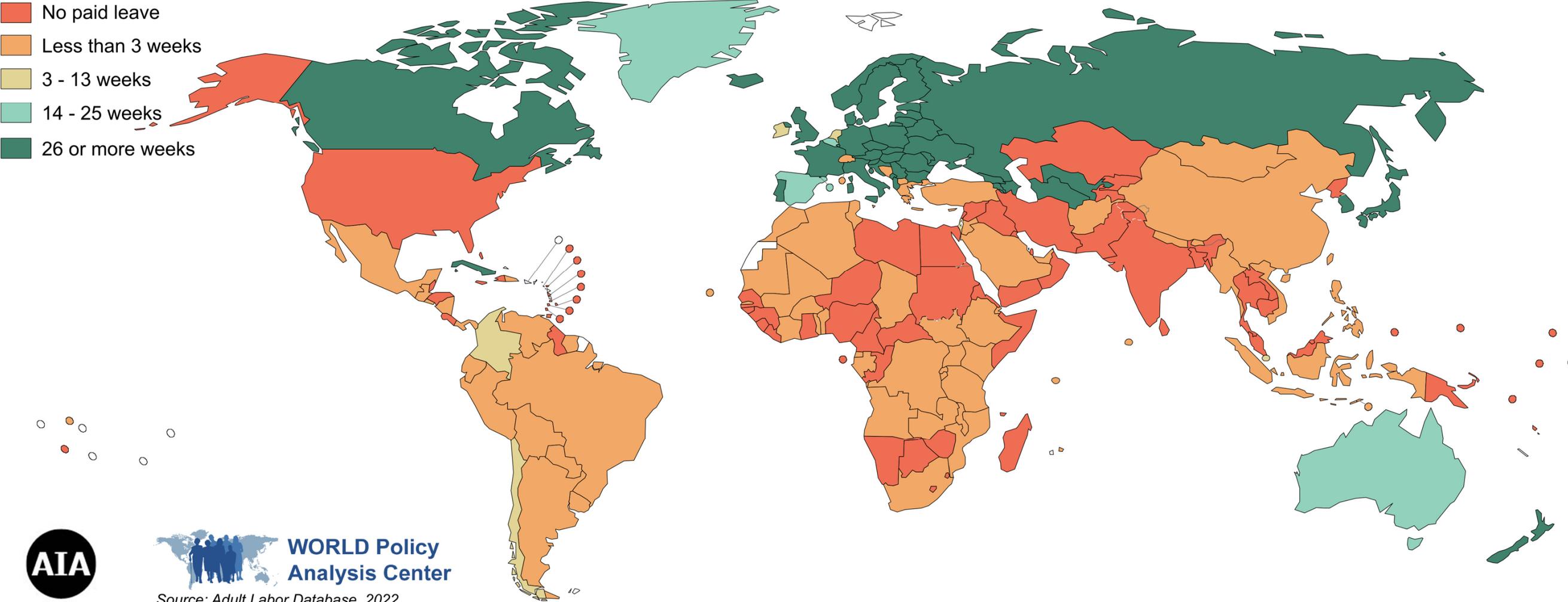
Source: Adult Labor Database, 2022

Global Policies



Is paid leave available for fathers of infants?

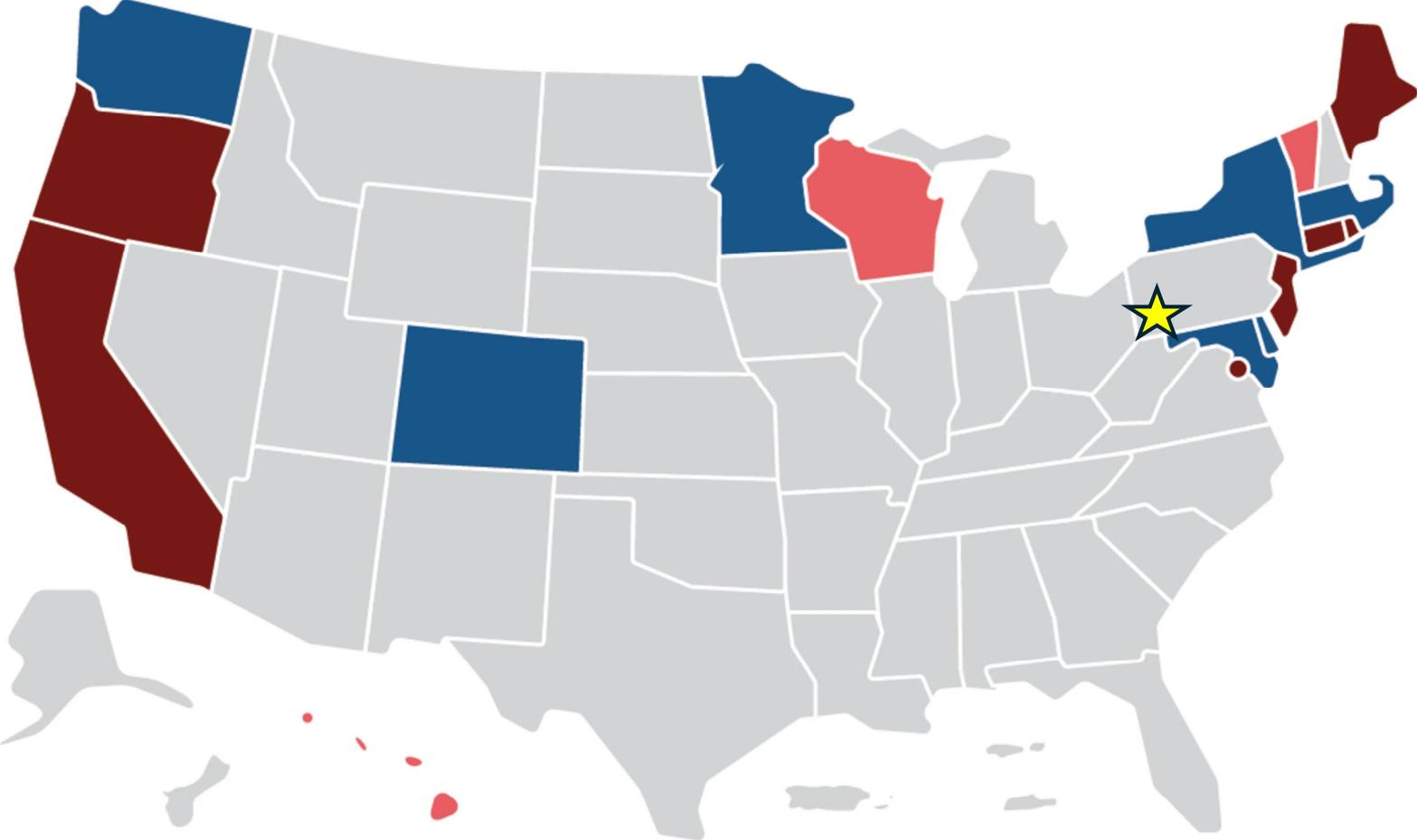
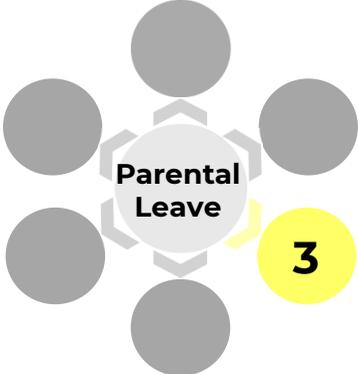
- No paid leave
- Less than 3 weeks
- 3 - 13 weeks
- 14 - 25 weeks
- 26 or more weeks



WORLD Policy Analysis Center

Source: Adult Labor Database, 2022

State Policies



UNPAID

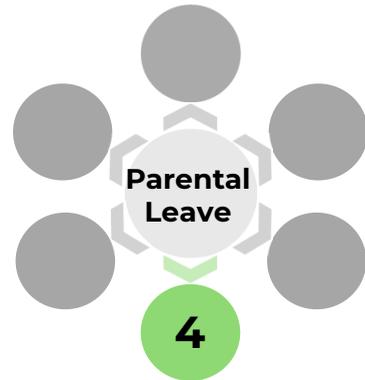


BOTH



PAID

Metrics and Benchmarking – JUST.



LEVEL ONE

1. Organization has written policy on family and medical leave.

LEVEL TWO

1. Organization provides **at least 6 weeks** of paid leave.
2. Organization has a policy allowing for **flexible work arrangements**.

LEVEL THREE

1. Organization provides **at least 12 weeks** of paid leave.
2. Organization has a policy allowing for **flexible work arrangements**.

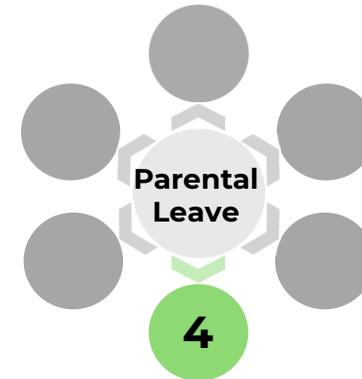
LEVEL FOUR

1. Organization provides **at least 24 weeks** of paid leave.
2. Organization has a policy allowing for **flexible work arrangements**.



| Compliance Path | Just 3.0 Level | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------|----------|----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| General | | | | |
| Policy | X | X | X | X |
| Minimum Leave Benefit | | 6 weeks | 12 weeks | 24 weeks |
| Flexible Work Arrangements | | X | X | X |

Metrics and Benchmarking - WELL



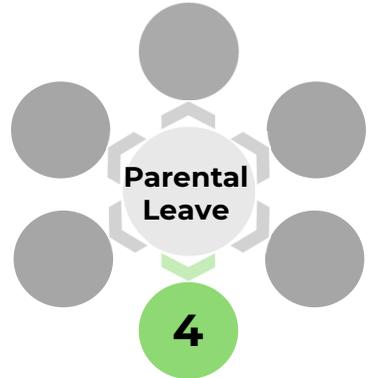
Parental leave policy is available for **all** eligible employees

- At least **40 weeks of parental leave** is offered to the **primary care giver**. Of this, at least a portion must be paid at **75% or higher of the employee's full salary**.
- Parental leave is offered to the **non-primary caregiver**, of which at least a portion is paid at **75% or higher of the employee's full salary**.
- Leave must be **separate from other types of leave** and may be used consecutively or non-consecutively during any 12-month period during pregnancy or after birth or adoption.

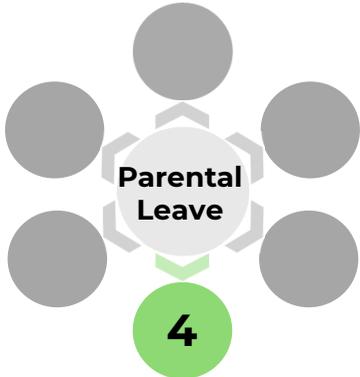
| Tier | Weeks of Paid Leave for the Birthing Parent and/or Primary Caregiver | | Weeks of Paid Leave for Non-Primary Caregiver | Point Value |
|------|--|-----|---|-------------|
| 1 | At least 12 weeks | AND | At least 2 weeks | 1 point |
| 2 | At least 18 weeks ^{5,17} | AND | At least 3 weeks | 2 points |
| 3 | At least 30 weeks ^{4,11} | AND | At least 4 weeks | 3 points |



Parental Policies Survey



Parental Policies Survey



16 Firm Policies Analyzed



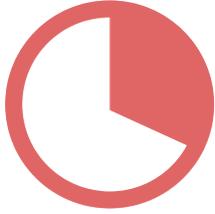
**5.5
weeks**

Average
parental leave



93%

Policies received
100% compensation
for set duration



38%

Policies had distinctions
between birthing and
non-birthing parent

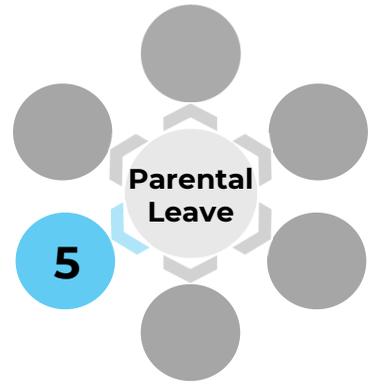


13,000

Employees impacted
by the policies



AIA National Young Architect Forum

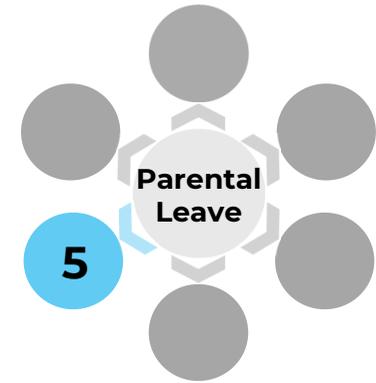


What is YAF?

- A distinct member group with AIA
- Serving recently licensed architect members in the **first 10 years of licensure**
- Around **20% of AIA's 96,000 members**
- Initiatives include:
 - Now YA Know
 - National Webinars
 - Future Forward Grant
 - Mini-MBA: Taking Care of Business
 - ALIGN Mentorship
 - Open Mic Nights
- **Advocacy Director from 2023-2024**



YAF Webinar – Humans at Work



Humans at Work Webinar

- Representatives in both large and small firms
- **Employee Benefit Consultant**
- Highlight success stories of implementing inclusive and equitable firm policies
- Such as:
 - Salary transparency
 - Inclusive firm policies for LGBTQ+
 - **Equitable and inclusive parental leave**
 - Support for early career professionals

• **Still Available on AIAU!** →



Scan Me!



MEL PRICE AIA, LEED AP, PRINCIPAL PRINCIPAL & CO-FOUNDER WORK PROGRAM ARCHITECTS

ERIN AGDINAOAY AIA, NOMA ARCHITECT & PROJECT MANAGER WORK PROGRAM ARCHITECTS

HUMANS AT WORK
WHERE PROGRESSIVE FIRM CULTURES AND POLICIES INTERSECT
OCTOBER 3, 2023 | 4-5:30 PM EST
AIAU | 1.50 LU

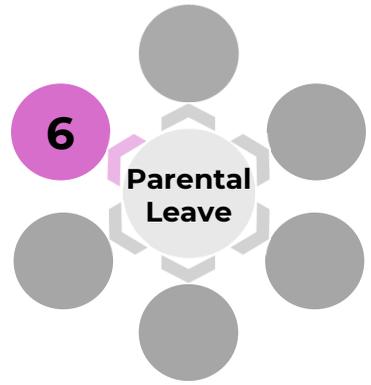
EMILY PIERSON-BROWN
AIA, AICP, NOMA, LEED GA SENIOR ASSOCIATE AND PEOPLE CULTURE MANAGER PERKINS EASTMAN

YISELLE SANTOS RIVERA
AIA, NOMA, LSSYB, LEED AP BD+C, WELL AP PRINCIPAL, GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION HKS

TY REID CBWA PARTNER, VICE-PRESIDENT EMPLOYEE BENEFITS CONSULTANT USI INSURANCE SERVICES

Young Architects Forum
AIA Member group

AIA DC WIELD Presentation



Designing Parenthood Webinar

- Partnered with QCity and Pride by Design
- **Last public outreach before Baby Markiw**
- Focused on all aspects of family planning and parenting as LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Such as:
 - Fertility journey and treatments
 - Surrogacy
 - Adoption process and requirements
 - **Equitable and inclusive parental leave**



Designing Parenthood

Presented in collaboration by the
AIA DC Equity Committee by WIELD, QCity, and Pride by Design



Megan
Hottel-Cox



Rosalie
Howell



Dennis
Daisy



Anastasia
Markiw



Parva
Markiw

Moderated by Sarah Nelson-Woynicz
Co-organized with Yiselle Santos Rivera



Comprehensive Approach



Baby Dimitri



WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
an AIA Leadership Event
#AIAWLS

Legal Adoption



DesignGroup Policy Implemented



Inclusive Paid Parental Leave policy

- Have given birth to a child, or
- Be a spouse or committed partner of an individual who has given birth to a child, or
- Have adopted a child
- Have accepted care of a foster child

Summary:

- 80 hours paid at 100% salary
- Supplement Short-Term Disability
 - Increased benefit to receive maximum of \$2000
- Effective 01/01/25

Next steps : Policy will be released through Paycom.

Continue to review cost and value add in the coming years.

Family Policy Recommendations



A multi-phase, multi-year, adaptable guiding plan

Phase One

- Expand birth leave STD Insurance
 - 60% of wages / weekly max **\$2,000**
- Introduce inclusive parental leave policy
 - **2 weeks at 100% paid**

Phase Two

- Expand birth leave STD Insurance
 - **80%** of wages / weekly max \$2,000
- Expand inclusive parental leave policy
 - **3 weeks at 100% paid**
- Introduce family leave policy
 - **1 week at 100% paid**

Phase Three

- Expand family leave policy
 - **2 weeks at 100% paid**
- Introduce Adoption Assistance
 - **\$2,000 max stipend per child per year**
- Introduce Daycare Assistance
 - **\$2,000 max stipend per child per year**

Phase Four

- Introduce Family Planning Assistance
 - **\$2,000 max stipend per year**

Lessons Learned



Personal Lessons

- Start now and start early
- Policy delays are deeply human
- It takes **emotional resilience** to advocate for something you need
- Lean on your support circles

Organizational Lessons

- Change moves slower than life
- Stay in frequent communication with HR and Leadership
- When firms delay, they exclude
- People remember how they were treated in their most **vulnerable seasons**

Key Takeaways



Building a Better Future

- A strong paid family leave policy can improve the health of employees, children, and families and support greater equity in the workplace.
- Paid family leave also **strengthens employee loyalty and retention and boosts morale**, according to the Boston Consulting Group
- For new or updated policies related to major life events, consider offering a **window of retroactive eligibility** as a sign of good faith.
- Inclusive and gender-neutral leave policies empower all types of people to care for their loved ones and themselves.

Mentimeter



Join at [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) | use code 4441 5205

 Mentimeter

Go to
www.menti.com

Enter the code

4441 5205



Or use QR code



Mentimeter



Join at menti.com | use code 4441 5205

 Mentimeter

1. Where are you in your parental journey?

0

Not for me

0

Thinking about it

0

In the thick of it

0

Been there done that

0

Prefer not to share



Mentimeter



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 Mentimeter

2. Where is everyone from?



Mentimeter



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 Mentimeter

3. Select your firm size

Fewer than 10 employees

10-49 employees

50 or more employees



Mentimeter



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 Mentimeter

4. What is your role at your firm?



- Technical Staff
- Management
- Senior Leadership



Mentimeter



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5. Does your firm have an EDI Committee/ERG?



- Yes
- No
- Not sure



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 Mentimeter

6. Does your firm have a parental leave policy?

0

Yes, and it's offered to both
parents

0

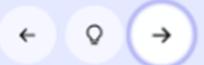
Yes, but it's only offered to the
primary parent

0

No we don't have a formal policy

0

I'm not sure



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 Mentimeter

7. For those whose firm have a parental leave policy, what is it?



Questions



A woman with braids, wearing a white fuzzy sweater and a blue lanyard, is smiling and looking towards the right. She is seated at a table with a white water bottle in front of her. The background shows a blurred audience of people in a conference or meeting room. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

THANK YOU!

