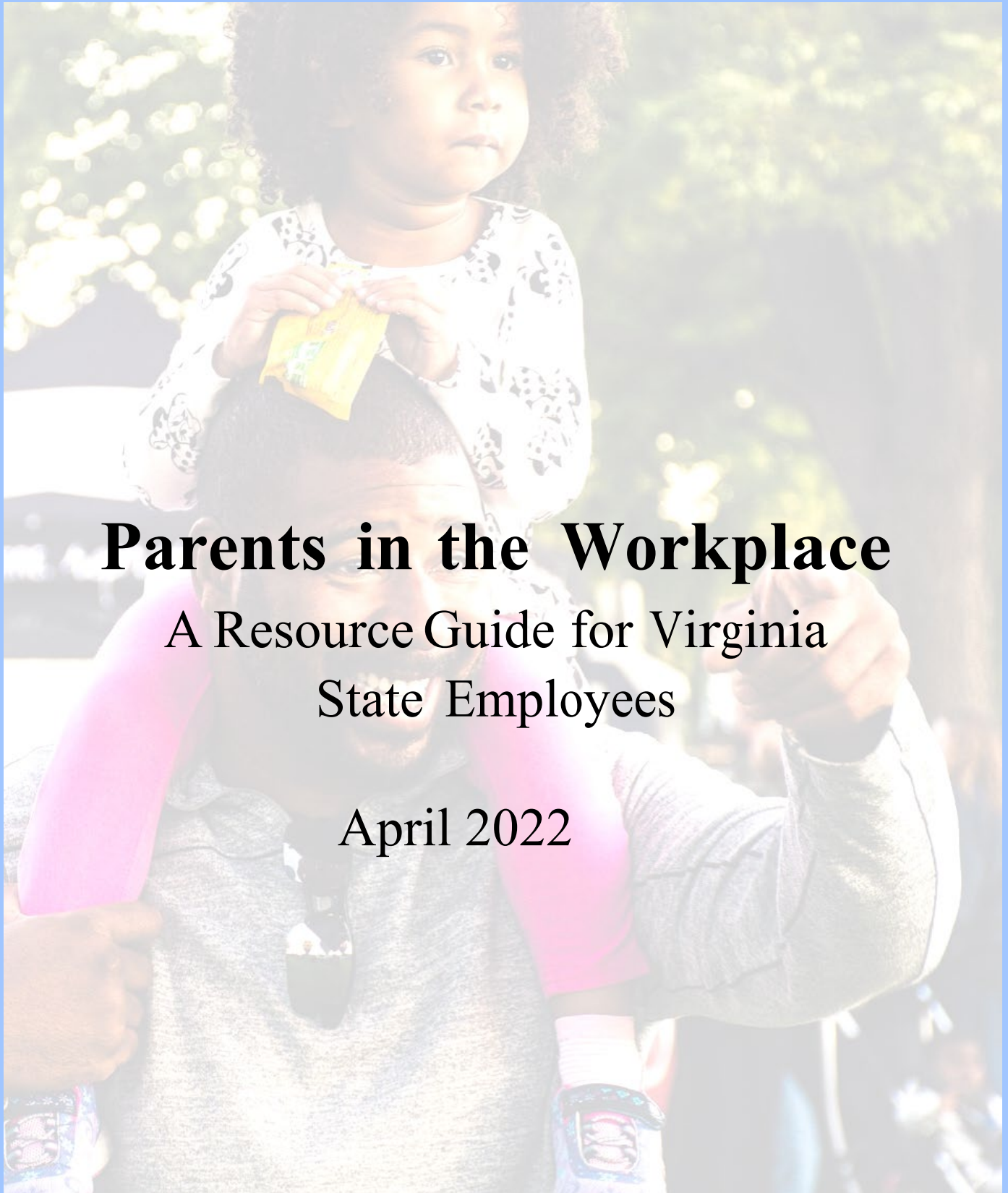




**Virginia Department of Human Resource Management**



# **Parents in the Workplace**

**A Resource Guide for Virginia  
State Employees**

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# Introduction

Virginia State Government proudly employs thousands of people in diverse careers. We recognize that work/life balance plays an important role in an individual's success on the job, and how challenging it can be for those juggling both a career and children.

The decision to start or expand a family changes the dynamics of life. It presents immeasurable joy and expected and unexpected challenges. Whether you are about to become a first-time parent, adding a new child to the family, or have a completed family, we are committed to a family-friendly culture that offers benefits that help working parents succeed at work and at home.

This guide provides a broad overview of employee benefits and resources geared towards working parents. It does not include information on all of the generous benefits available to eligible classified employees. Your best source for more detailed information is your agency's Human Resource Representative or Benefits Administrator.



# Parents in the Workplace

## Parental Leave

State government is committed to helping employees prepare for parenting and for their return to work. The Commonwealth of Virginia is the best place to work, live, and raise a family because of this commitment to parents in the workplace.

Parental Leave, Code of Virginia § 2.2-1210, provides up to 8 weeks (320 hours) of paid time off to enable employees to care for and bond with a newborn or child under the age of eighteen (18) newly-placed for adoption, foster, or custodial care. Parental Leave provides vital support for employees to thrive in the workplace and at home.

## Disability Leave

During pregnancy, employees may use Sick Leave, Family Personal Leave, or Annual Leave to attend regular visits with the physician or midwife in preparation for the birth of their child.

The [Virginia Sickness and Disability Program](#) provides eligible employees supplemental replacement income during periods of partial or total disability. Under this program, short-term disability includes pregnancy and complications from pregnancy. Coverage normally includes up to six weeks of post-partum income replacement following a normal delivery or C-section.

If you are pregnant, please call the Commonwealth's program administrator, the Reed Group, at 877-928-7021 to initiate your short-term disability claim. In an emergency, or if you are unable to contact Reed Group, your human resource office or a family member or friend may contact them on your behalf to provide the following:

- Job title and agency name
- Date of birth
- Current mailing address
- Your due date
- Last day you were or will be able to work
- Name, address, phone number and fax number of your doctor or other licensed treating healthcare professional.

## **Breaks for Nursing Mothers**

The Commonwealth is committed to providing a comfortable and family-friendly return to work experience for nursing mothers following the birth of a child. State agencies are required to provide reasonable breaks for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for up to one year after the child's birth. Please review our [Breaks for Nursing Mothers Guide](#) and FAQs for detailed information. We recommend that you advise your Human Resource office of your needs as early as possible to allow time for reasonable arrangements to be made prior to your return to work.

## **Telework and Flexible Schedules**

Many state employees have experienced the work/life balance benefits of teleworking and flexible work schedules.

Flexible or "Alternate Work Schedules" enable employees to have work schedules that deviate from the typical 8:00 – 5:00 business hours. An alternate work schedule helps working parents meet work requirements and at the same time address home life demands. Teleworking from an alternate work location, such as your home, achieves the same goals while also reducing commuting time and costs.

Telework and Flexible Scheduling policies are unique to each agency and type of job an employee holds. For this reason, you should talk directly with your supervisor and Human Resource office.

## **Family Medical Leave**

The Commonwealth's [Family and Medical Leave Policy](#) provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid family and medical leave per leave year because of their own serious health condition or the serious health condition of an eligible family member, or up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of the servicemember. While this is unpaid leave, employees may use personal leave to receive pay while absent.



# Health and Wellness Programs

Employees have the opportunity to enroll in an array of benefits and participate in programs and services that support healthy lifestyles for themselves and their families. Employees can expect comprehensive medical and prescription-drug coverage, parenting programs, and top quality providers as well as personalized support to help navigate the health care system. Employees may enroll their legal spouse, natural or adopted children, stepchildren, and children placed for adoption up to age 26, or older if disabled. Five health plan options available (below) provide comprehensive medical coverage for new and expecting parents.

## Health Benefits

Insurance	COVA Care Anthem	COVA HDHP Anthem	COVA HealthAware Aetna	Optima Vantage HMO Plan Hampton Roads	Kaiser Permanente Virginia, Washington, D.C. and Maryland
Program	Future Moms	Future Moms	Aetna Maternity Management	Partners in Pregnancy	Healthy Pregnancy
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>Free Mayo Clinic Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy book.</p> <p>Health screenings to identify risk for depression or early delivery.</p> <p>Useful tools to help you, your doctor and your Future Moms nurse keep track of your pregnancy and help you make healthier choices.</p> <p>Free phone calls with pharmacists, nutritionists and other specialists, if needed.</p> <p>Information on labor and delivery, including options and how to prepare.</p> <p>Delta Dental offers one additional cleaning and exam during pregnancy</p>	<p>Free Mayo Clinic Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy book.</p> <p>Health screenings to identify risk for depression or early delivery.</p> <p>Useful tools to help you, your doctor and your Future Moms nurse keep track of your pregnancy and help you make healthier choices.</p> <p>Free phone calls with pharmacists, nutritionists and other specialists, if needed.</p> <p>Information on labor and delivery, including options and how to prepare.</p> <p>Delta Dental offers one additional cleaning and exam during pregnancy</p>	<p>Pregnancy risk survey to identify health issues that may need special attention.</p> <p>One-on-one support and advice from specially trained nurse case manager.</p> <p>Educational materials on prenatal care, labor and delivery, new born care and more.</p> <p>Programs designed for women who smoke and at risk for early delivery.</p> <p>Delta Dental offers one additional cleaning and exam during pregnancy</p>	<p>Develop a healthy nutrition and activity plan.</p> <p>Locate important resources, classes, and services.</p> <p>Coordinate prenatal care and appropriate risk screenings.</p> <p>Understand timely health tips, mailed directly to your home.</p>	<p>Kaiser Permanente, offers a breadth of connected services for pregnancy and beyond. These services include pre-conception planning, prenatal care, prenatal testing, high-risk pregnancy support, labor and delivery care, routine newborn screening, lactation consultants and breastfeeding support, postpartum care, partner's corner, and pediatrics.</p> <p>Online pregnancy classes</p>
<b>Incentive</b>	You can earn a \$300 hospital copay waiver if you enroll in Future Moms within the first 16 weeks of pregnancy and meet additional program criteria.	N/A	You can earn a \$300 towards your HRA if you enroll within the first 16 weeks of pregnancy and meet additional program criteria.	You can earn a \$300 inpatient waiver if you enroll within the first 16 weeks of pregnancy and meet additional program criteria.	N/A
<b>Contact Information</b>	1-800-828-5891	1-800-828-5891	1-855-414-1901	1-866-846-2682	1-800-777-7902

## **Flexible Spending Accounts**

### **Health Care Spending Account**

The Health Care Spending Account is a pre-tax savings account to be used for unreimbursed healthcare expenses for you and your eligible dependents. Such expenses include coinsurance and deductible amounts, office visit and prescription drug co-pays, prescribed prenatal vitamins, folic acid, etc. The program carries an annual plan maximum as well as a "Use It or Lose It" provision, where all claims must be incurred by June 30th of your plan year. You can contribute pretax dollars from your paycheck, up to the Internal Revenue Service limit of \$2,850 for the 2022-2023 plan year.

### **Dependent Care Spending Account**

The Dependent Care Spending Account allows you to be reimbursed for expenses relating to the care of your dependents while you (and your spouse) are at work or attend school full-time. The Dependent Care Spending Account can be used for daycare expenses for children under the age of 13. The program carries an annual plan maximum as well as a "Use It or Lose It" provision, where all claims must be incurred by June 30th of your plan year. You can contribute pretax dollars from your paycheck, up to the Internal Revenue Service limit of \$5,000.

## **Families with Special Needs**

If you are the parent, caregiver or representative of a child younger than 18 who has special needs, there are many possible benefits that you and they could be eligible to receive. In addition, an adult who became disabled in childhood prior to age 22 might also be eligible for benefits as well. Please contact your local social services department for additional information.



# Future Focused

Career aspirations vary, but all require training and education. Paying for higher education out-of-pocket can be a challenge, and student loans can burden you or your child with substantial debt for years. Fortunately, saving with [Virginia 529](#) lets time and planning work to your advantage.

For more than twenty years, Virginia529 has helped millions of families and individuals plan and save for the cost of higher education. Their three tax-advantaged 529 savings programs can help you save today and prepare for the future

## Virginia529 Savings Plan

- A 529 plan is a savings plan that helps families save for future qualified higher education expenses.
- In a 529 account, your money can grow free from federal taxes and be used to fund qualified higher education expenses at eligible educational institutions nationwide. Virginia taxpayers enjoy the additional benefit of a state income tax deduction on contributions to their Virginia529 accounts.
- You can also use up to \$10,000 per year in 529 funds toward a beneficiary's private or religious K-12 school tuition.
- A 529 account can be established for anyone, including yourself – and you can change the beneficiary to another family member without penalty at any time.
- The maximum savings amount is substantial, with Virginia529's total contribution limit set at \$500,000 for a single beneficiary. For additional information call 1-888-567-0540 or visit [Virginia 529](#). The sooner you start, the more your investment will grow.

The logo for invest529, featuring the word "invest" in blue and "529" in green, all enclosed in a rounded rectangular border.The logo for CollegeAmerica, featuring the word "CollegeAmerica" in black, all enclosed in a rounded rectangular border.



# Job Protection

## Related Federal and State Laws

- The Pregnancy Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for any employer in the U.S. with 15 or more workers to discriminate against employees due to pregnancy.
- The Virginia Human Rights Act also bans pregnancy discrimination, and covers workplaces with more than 5 but less than 15 employees. The law additionally states that pregnant women and women giving birth must be treated the same as others with similar abilities or disabilities.
- The Family Medical Leave Act provides that new parents (including new adoptive and foster parents) may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, provided that the new parent worked 1,250 hours during the 12 months prior to the start of the leave.
- The Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act makes it illegal for employers in the U.S. with 15 or more employees to discriminate against workers with disabilities. Some pregnancy-related conditions, such as preeclampsia or gestational diabetes, are considered disabilities under the law.
- Parental Leave, Code of Virginia § 2.2-1210, provides eligible employees with up to 8 weeks (320 hours) of paid parental leave. Employees may use parental leave to supplement their income replacement levels following the birth of a child or may use the leave to receive pay while bonding with a new baby by birth or a child under the age of 18 by foster, adoptive, or custodial care.

If you think you are being treated unfairly as a result of a pregnancy, contact your Human Resources office to discuss concerns or the Department of Human Resource Management's Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI) Hotline to speak with a Consultant at 800-533-1414.



# Additional Resources

[Text 4 Baby](#) is an educational program that sends free messages each week to your cell phone to help you through your pregnancy and your baby's first year. For more information, or to sign up, visit the [Text 4 Baby](#) web site.

[Capitol Square Healthcare](#), conveniently located in downtown Richmond, gives state employees, their covered spouses, and covered children ages two and older, access to high-quality and affordable health care. For additional information visit [Capitol Square Healthcare](#) online, or call 1-844-342-1791 between 7:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.

[Virginia Department of Social Services Adoption and Foster Care](#) is there to help. Making the decision to become a foster parent or adoptive parent is one that may take time and consideration before you commit to the process. Employees interested in becoming a foster or an adoptive parent should contact the Social Services Office in their city or county to learn more about each agency's process.

[North American Council on Adoptable Children \(NACAC\)](#) provides advice on parenting children in adoption and foster care, information on adoption assistance and adoption tax credit, and training for parents during the process.

[FedEx Cold Shipping for Moms](#) offers temperature-controlled delivery services that let mothers ship breastmilk home during overnight travel.

[Bon Secours Breastfeeding and Lactation Consultants](#) offer lactation and breastfeeding education and support and a chance to connect with other nursing mothers. Breastfeeding helps build a lasting bond between mother and child. It's a health practice that's been shown to protect babies against ear infections, lower the mother's risk of breast cancer, and help moms lose pregnancy weight.

[Child Passenger Safety](#) provides important resources for learning to keep your child safe while travelling. For a child safety seat to work correctly, it must be appropriate for the child's age and size, installed properly in the vehicle, and adjusted to fit the child securely. Let the Virginia Department of Health help keep your child safe!

[Virginia Department of Social Services](#) offers helpful information about different types of child care options and early learning centers licensed by the agency. Finding the right place that meets your needs can take time, so be sure to start this process early.