



USAID's Engendering Industries Best Practices Framework for Advancing Gender Equality in Male-Dominated Industries:

11.6 Provide parental leave (maternity and paternity leave) that meets or exceeds the requirements of national legislation

About Your Gender Equality Plan

The following Gender Equality Plan was generated using Engendering Industries' online tool: [The Best Practices Framework for Advancing Gender Equality in Male-Dominated Industries](#). The best practices listed in this plan were identified and included to fill gender equality gaps at your organization. The information included in your plan provides an overview of how to implement best practices, challenges to implementation, and markers of success. More information and resources for advancing gender equality at your company are available at EngenderingIndustries.org.

Description

Meet or exceed in-country legal requirements for maternity leave^[1], based in part on survey of employees' needs

Gold standard for parental leave policies provides equal paid time-off for both women and men; when this is equal, women face less discrimination in hiring and promotion, and men are able to enjoy their role as fathers and caregivers while enjoying better work/life balance

Provide equal maternity leave for mothers who do not give birth but instead have a child through adoption, surrogacy, or any other means

Include leave provisions for employees who experience a miscarriage, stillbirth, or other pregnancy-related complication; This does not have to be as long as standard maternity leave, but it should still be a benefit that exists

Implement additional leave or options to close the gap identified by the company's benefits analysis

Communicate these benefits to all employees

Train supervisors and managers about their role in creating a supportive climate in which employees feel comfortable and encouraged using leave

Encourage company leadership to take appropriate leave to encourage employees to do the same

Create and implement processes to maintain full staffing while employees are on leave

Provide information and counseling to expecting and returning mothers including information on the legal provisions, benefits provided by the company, support services provided by external agencies, NGOs, service centers, etc.

Foster formal flexible work arrangements as an agile and responsive way to enable workers to meet diverse personal and professional goals while maximizing individual

contributions to team targets

Challenges to Implementation

Company culture may discourage women from taking full maternity leave, particularly for women in leadership positions

Bias may discourage supervisors and managers from hiring women because they perceive that women will leave the workplace, especially if maternity leave benefits exceed paternity leave benefits

Business unit is short-staffed and remaining employees must pick up extra duties (which may result in resentment)

Company funds may not be available to pay for the additional leave or extra hours by other employees

What Success Looks Like

The company provides clear guidance to managers/supervisors to manage the preparation of an expected leave and re-entering of the woman after her leave

Mothers use available parental leave with full pay and other benefits

Women's careers are not penalized or stunted when they use their full maternity leave benefits

Managers/supervisors know it is their responsibility to manage the process and to provide a supportive environment for expecting and returning mothers

Business units are supported through such programs as job sharing, hiring temporary workers, and cross-functional training to maintain full staffing while employees take leave

Employees are more satisfied with better work/life balance and concern with their personal needs, resulting in improved retention and quality or output of work

Resources and Tools

Guide: [Integrating Gender into Workplace Policies](#) (USAID)

Report/Study: [Maternity and Paternity at Work: Law and Practice Across the World](#) (ILO)

Report/Study: [Parental Leave Systems](#) (OECD)

Report/Study: [Paid Parental Leave: A Detailed Look at Approaches Across OECD Countries](#) (WORLD Policy Analysis Center)

Report/Study: [Designing and Supporting Gender Equitable Parental Leave](#) (WGEA)

Article: [How Companies Can Ensure Maternity Leave Doesn't Hurt Women's Careers](#) (Harvard Business Review)

Article: [The Unequal Burden for New Mothers in the Caribbean](#) (World Bank)

Article: [How to Approach Inclusive Parental Leave in a Male-Dominated Industry](#) (HR Dive)

[1] **MATERNITY LEAVE.** Maternity leave is the period of time in which women are legally allowed to be absent from work in the weeks before and after birth. Some companies also grant a limited number of days in case of adoption of a child.