

Paid Leave Grant

9/12/2024

Narrative

Building on more than 50 years of history, CLASP is unique among anti-poverty policy and advocacy organizations for its broad reach and expertise across issue areas such as labor and worker justice, access to and uptake of critical safety net programs including paid family and medical leave, immigration, child care and early education, postsecondary education access and affordability, and taxes, among other issues critical to addressing poverty and racial equity in the US. We also center gender and racial equity in all our work. CLASP has been a national leader in the fight for paid leave for over two decades, co-founding the national coalition Paid Leave for All and continuing our leadership role as members of the coalition's executive committee and co-chairs of its policy committee.

This project builds on CLASP's established leadership role as policy experts and trusted conveners, sponsoring the only active learning community of state paid leave administrators and agency staff among states that have enacted paid leave programs. In 2017, CLASP began working with state paid leave administrators to identify technical assistance needs, which included a convening in Tacoma, WA in 2019 to share ideas and view in person the development of WA state's new program. As a result of this convening, CLASP released a report on the importance of equity in paid leave administration. In 2023, recognizing growing momentum and responding to requests from state agencies, CLASP began to convene state paid leave administrators and created a learning community among the now 13 states and the District of Columbia with paid leave laws to discuss best practices, challenges, and lessons learned in implementing paid leave. Over the past year, CLASP has held bimonthly calls with state paid leave administrators and provided in-depth technical assistance, focusing on accessibility and equity in program implementation. As such, our role in this space is invaluable as a connector, facilitator, and source of expertise for state administrators, and is not replicated elsewhere.

The importance of this role was highlighted by the recent Paid Family and Medical Leave Collaborators Convening for States Leading the Way, co-hosted by CLASP in June 2024. The 2024 convening brought together more than 100 state administrators, advocates, researchers, academics, and national partners from 18 states and the District of Columbia, demonstrating the high demand for our expertise and network leadership. Over the two-day convening, advocates, and state administrators built and strengthened relationships and discussed challenges and successes in passing and implementing paid leave programs. Attendees provided highly positive feedback about the event and the opportunity to learn from each other. As one administrator shared of the experience, "I've never seen myself as a part of any movement, but after this convening I consider myself part of the movement for paid leave."

There is now a great demand from convening participants for CLASP to continue its role convening, connecting, and sharing expertise with, between, and among paid leave administrators. CLASP is the only organization with the established and strong requisite relationships, trust, and expertise to continue supporting the development and implementation of paid leave at the state and federal levels.

Project Description, objectives, and goals

Years of providing technical assistance to states with newly passed paid leave programs have

demonstrated that thoughtful implementation is crucial for ensuring racial and gender equity. To create a program that is accessible and safe for workers marginalized in the labor market, it's essential to establish strong and progressive rules that can be refined over time based on data and worker input. Through this grant, CLASP will build on our critical work to facilitate a learning community among paid leave agency staff. This effort will focus on building trust and a shared vision for equitable policy implementation, while also strengthening relationships among state agencies, between state agency staff and advocates, and between state agencies and federal officials. The conversations being led by CLASP are a critical intervention point for paid leave advocacy. We have seen firsthand how creating a community dedicated to sharing lessons to improve racial and gender equity leads to streamlined programs, faster benefit delivery, the overhaul of ossified user experience technology, and perhaps most importantly, a shift in perspective among administrators who are now actively considering how their program operations impact racial and gender equity. For decades, our work on issues like child care, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program have combined technical assistance to state implementers with a framework that centers the values of reducing poverty, addressing racial and gender inequities, and centering the most impacted individuals in program implementation strategies.

Objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of paid leave administrators to deliver programs that center gender and racial equity;
- Prepare state administrators in states with newly passed paid leave laws to effectively implement their programs;
- Foster collaboration between state and national officials to inform priorities for national paid leave.
- Identify and disseminate best practices for equitable implementation of PFML programs

Goals:

- Inform equitable policy implementation;
- Strengthen the learning community of state paid leave administrators;
- Begin to develop relationships between state administrators and federal officials.

Deliverables and Outcomes

Outcome 1: States adopt and implement adjustments to paid leave programs based on gender and racial equity, leading to more inclusive and equitable policies and programs that actively reduce racial and gender disparities in leave access and outcomes.

Activities and Deliverables under Outcome I:

- Regularly convene state paid leave administrators for bimonthly virtual meetings and hold one-on-one conversations with state administrators to continue to capture learnings from their individual programs and better understand the obstacles to effective and equitable program implementation;
- In collaboration with state administrators, work to document and memorialize some of the best practices and lessons learned and create a repository of information for new and current state administrators so that new states can learn from previous discussions and existing state programs can continuously improve;
- Offer comments and feedback on the development of state rules and regulations during the initial implementation process for new state programs;

- Support new states coming online with paid leave programs.
- Provide research and publications sharing the impact and outcomes of paid leave programs and highlighting the need for paid leave in states that have yet to pass paid leave policies.

Outcome II: State and national officials will establish regular communication channels and collaborative working groups, leading to aligned priorities and policies that reflect both state-level needs and federal objectives for paid leave.

Activities and Deliverables for Outcome II:

- Develop and disseminate information about the benefits of paid leave and lessons learned from existing paid leave programs to a broader audience of policymakers and the public.
- Create and strengthen channels of communication between state paid leave administrators and federal officials and policymakers to prepare for and evaluate a possible federal paid family and medical leave program;
- Create and strengthen relationships between state and national paid leave advocates and state paid leave administrators, with the goal of creating shared goals around access and equity. As capacity allows, host state site visits, bilateral state meetings, or regional in-person gatherings of state agency staff and advocates

Budget Narrative

Department of Labor Women's Bureau is providing \$249,900 for the proposed one-year scope of work.

PERSONNEL (\$131,714.18)

Personnel expenses director of education, labor, and worker justice \$155,925, 25 percent of time on project, \$39,306 DOL support; policy analyst \$81,620, 50 percent of time on project, \$41,150 DOL support, policy analyst \$75,000, 40 percent of time on project, \$30,250 DOL support. These individuals bring expertise on paid leave policies and will provide oversight, coordination, and research in support of this project. We have also budgeted for two communications team managers, each \$105,040, 10 percent of their time on this project, \$21,008 DOL support total. Our communications team provides editing, structure, design, and dissemination support for all publications, research, and project deliverables.

FRINGE (\$39,514.25)

CLASP's fringe benefits include health insurance, AD&D insurance, long-term disability, retirement, and others, calculated at 30% of full-time salaries for employees. These benefits allow CLASP to retain highly qualified talent and policy experts.

TRAVEL (\$56,000.00)

Includes the cost of airfare, bus fare, and metro/taxi fare to and from meetings with state paid leave administrators.

SUPPLIES (\$0)

CONTRACTUAL (\$0)

OTHER DIRECT COSTS (\$0)

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS: \$ 227,228.43

INDIRECT: \$22,671.57

CLASP's indirect recovery rate is allotted at the de minimis rate of 10% of direct costs (\$227,228) for this project and includes administrative support and overhead expenses.

TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$249,900.00