



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
Chief Administrative Judge**

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Chief Administrative Judge Announces Successful Implementation of Court System’s Paid Parental Leave Policy

NEW YORK—Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas and First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George are pleased to report the successful implementation of the court system’s Paid Parental Leave (PPL) policy, which provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of fully paid leave to bond with their newborn, adopted, or foster child. The policy was enacted in April 2024 with the advocacy and support of the Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin Committee on Women in the Courts, led by retired Justice Betty Weinberg Ellerin and Appellate Division, First Department Associate Justice Llinét M. Rosado. Since its rollout, 191 court employees across all job titles have benefited from the new policy, continuing to receive their existing insurance benefits, employer contributions, bi-weekly leave accruals, holiday pay, and retirement service credit while on parental leave.

“This policy, which promotes equity for working families, strongly aligns with the court system’s commitment to a fair, inclusive, and welcoming work environment that values employees’ well-being,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas. “The Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin Committee on Women in the Courts has long championed initiatives to foster gender fairness in the courts, identifying and addressing the needs of women and families in our court system. I am immensely grateful for the Committee’s support on this critical issue and proud of the PPL’s success to date.”

“I am greatly pleased that 191 UCS employees—98 women and 93 men—and their families have already benefited from this new policy, which is so pivotal to employees’ work-life balance, family stability and overall welfare,” said First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge St. George. “I can’t thank the Committee enough for its ongoing and tireless efforts in advancing fairness in the workplace and beyond. I also want to commend OCA Director of Human Resources Christy Bass and OCA Director of Labor Relations Carolyn Grimaldi and their respective staffs for their diligence in crafting the PPL policy, training personnel in the local courthouses, and disseminating this information to all employees.”

Justice Ellerin said, “I would like to thank Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson, Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas, and First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George for their leadership in formulating the Paid Parental Leave policy to enable court employees to bond with their babies and adopted or foster children. Research tells us that strong ties develop between parents and their child from the very beginning, which serve to foster a child’s sense of security and positive self-esteem, helping youngsters develop good relationships as they grow.”

Justice Rosado said, “We are delighted to see the positive impact of this policy on our employees' lives! It is stressful to be a new parent, and when court employees can take this extra time to care for their children and themselves without worrying about financial pressures, the entire family benefits. In addition, many day care facilities will not accept a baby until five or six months of age. This extra 12 weeks provides a valuable bridge. This policy demonstrates our commitment to supporting our employees during significant life milestones.”

“It was important for this administration to recognize the complicated issues surrounding family medical leave, to identify any gaps in coverage, to understand the differences between benefits for union-represented and unrepresented employees, to negotiate with the various bargaining units, and to devise a policy that was equal and fair to all employees. We're proud to be part of a court system that offers a benefit that promotes work-life balance and supports the well-being of our employees and their families. The court system's PPL policy is a significant step forward in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. We look forward to continuing to support our employees and their families through this valuable benefit,” said Acting Supreme Court Justice and FMLA Subcommittee Chair Marcia Hirsch.

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