

October 27, 2021

Hancock County Government Employees

Dear Employee,

On **November 1, 2021**, FMLASource began administering Family and Medical Leaves for Hancock County Government. This new process ensures that leaves are properly filed and administered to protect your benefits and ensure that qualified claims are approved. Any leave of absence request that was previously approved by the Hancock County Government Benefits Department will not be interrupted.

**If you are going to be late or absent for any condition that has been approved for FMLA, you must personally notify your supervisor and FMLASource, which can be reached at 877.GO2.FMLA (462.3652).**

If your continuous leave request is approved, you must contact your manager and FMLASource as far in advance as possible to report your return to work date. You must also submit a fitness-for-duty form to your supervisor once you return.

Employees who are currently on a continuous leave of absence must contact FMLASource and their supervisors if they:

- Require an extension of their current leave;
- Do not expect to return to work at all;
- Will be returning to work earlier than anticipated; or
- Have circumstances that have changed in any other respect.

Feel free to contact FMLASource toll free at 877.GO2.FMLA (462.3652), Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. central time regarding any other questions that you may have about your leave. You can also contact us after hours and leave a voicemail and a representative will contact you upon your request. We are working to provide you with excellent service during your leave.

Best regards,

FMLASource

Employees with an approved leave of absence must note the following:

- The requested leave will be counted against your state and/or federal leave entitlement.
- You will be required to use any accrued, unused Paid Time Off (PTO) in conjunction with your leave, so as to be paid for, all or a portion of the leave. FMLA will run concurrently with any other disability leave that you may be eligible for such as Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability or Workers' Compensation until your FMLA leave exhausts or you return to work.
- To maintain your benefits while on leave, you are required to pay your share of the premium payments for health insurance and other voluntary benefits on the same basis as during active employment. Your portion will continue to be deducted from your pay while using approved paid leave benefits; if your leave is unpaid you must make arrangements with your Benefits Manager to submit payments at the same time as they would normally be made through payroll deductions.
- If you are absent on a continuous basis for your own serious health condition you will be required to present proof of your fitness-for-duty to your Benefits Department before you can return to work. If certification is not received, your return to active employment may be delayed until such certification is provided.
- If you are returning to work earlier than anticipated you must notify FMLASource and advise your Benefits Department two days prior to your expected return date; failure to provide notification may delay your return to active employment.
- If your leave is an FMLA approved leave and you return within the protected period, you will be entitled to return to the same job or an equivalent position offering equivalent pay, benefits and working conditions. However, you have no greater right to reinstatement or other benefits than if you had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period. For example, if your job is impacted by a reduction-in-force, you will not be entitled to reinstatement.
- Any false answers or statements knowingly made in connection with your application for leave will be sufficient grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- If you are absent for the birth or care of your newborn or newly placed child and would like to add your new family member to your medical coverage, please do so within 30 days of the date of birth or placement to prevent delays in your claims processing. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your Benefits Manager.

# Announcing Leaves of Absence Now Administered by FMLASource

**Effective Date: November 1, 2021** - We are pleased to announce that Family Medical Leaves will be administered by FMLASource on behalf of Hancock County Government. This new process will ensure that your leave decisions are made promptly, properly, and administered to protect your benefits and ensure that qualified claims are filed.

## Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993

FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave to “eligible” employees for certain family and medical reasons. You are eligible if you have worked for Hancock County Government for at least 12 months and worked for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months.

### Reasons for Taking Leave

Unpaid leave must be granted for any of the following reasons:

- To care for your child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care
- To care for your spouse, son, daughter or parent who has a serious health condition
- For a serious health condition that makes you unable to perform your job
- In situations of qualifying exigency to be with a employee’s spouse, parent or child if said person is an active servicemember or has an impending call to active duty in support of a contingency operation
- For the care of an injured service member if the servicemember is the employee’s spouse, child, parent, or “next of kin.” FMLA taken for this reason includes an entitlement of up to 26 weeks in a 12-month period.

### Advance Notice and Medical Certification

You may be required to provide advance notice and medical certification. Taking leave may be denied if requirements are not met:

- You ordinarily must provide 30 days advance notice when the leave is foreseeable.
- Hancock County Government may require medical certification to support a request for leave because of a serious health condition, and may require second or third opinions (at the employer’s expense) and a fitness-for-duty report to return to work.

### Job Benefits and Protection

- For the duration of FMLA leave, Hancock County Government must maintain your health coverage under any “group health plan.” You will continue to be responsible for your portion of the cost sharing of the premium payments.
- Upon return from FMLA leave, employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits and other employment terms.
- The use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee’s leave.

## What You Should Do

**Any time you are missing work due to your own serious medical condition or the care of a family member’s condition, please contact FMLASource.**

- Contact your Supervisor or Human Resources Representative.
- Call **877.GO2.FMLA (462.3652)** or log on to [www.fmlasource.com](http://www.fmlasource.com).

Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.

- Your information will be verified by a Benefits Specialist who will initiate the FMLA and/or STD leave process and answer any questions you may have.
- You will be notified of the status of your FMLA leave once it has been processed.

# Leave of Absence Claim Submission Checklist

## Hancock County Government Employees

The following are step-by-step instructions on what you need to do to apply for a leave of absence.

### Step #1:

Contact FMLASource by either the FMLASource website or by phone:

- Website: [www.fmlasource.com](http://www.fmlasource.com)
- Phone: **877.GO2.FMLA (462.3652)** Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m. CST

### Step #2:

Receive the Medical Certification Form from either your Leave Notification Packet sent by FMLASource or download from [www.fmlasource.com](http://www.fmlasource.com).

- The Medical Certification Form is time-sensitive material. Be certain to check for the certification due date on your initial request letter provided in your FMLA Notification Packet.

### Step #3:

Take the blank Medical Certification Form to either your or your family member's Health Care Provider.

- If your leave is not for medical reasons, please follow the instructions provided by the FMLASource Specialist and/or your Leave Notification Packet.

### Step #4:

Ensure that FMLASource received the completed Medical Certification Form prior to the certification due date. It is your responsibility to ensure paperwork gets returned in a timely fashion. If there are delays completing your forms, be sure to contact FMLASource prior to your certification due date:

Return the completed Medical Certification Form to FMLASource:

- Fax: 877.309.0218
- E-Mail: [FMLACenter@FMLASource.com](mailto:FMLACenter@FMLASource.com)
- Address: FMLASource, NBC Tower – 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, 455 N. Cityfront Plaza Drive, Chicago, IL 60611-5322

### Step #5:

Receive and review the Decision Letter from FMLASource. Please note that the decisions are based on the certification completed by the health care provider. Notify FMLASource if your leave was denied and you need clarification on next steps.

### Step #6:

If approved for the leave, you will be responsible for keeping track of your available entitlement:

- **Intermittent Frequency Leave:** Be sure to report each intermittent FMLA absence to FMLASource by midnight of the date of absence and follow your department's call-off procedures. All prescheduled appointments need to be tracked ahead of time with both FMLASource and your company. Failure to call off to both parties may be subject to disciplinary action.
- **Continuous Frequency Leave:** Pay close attention to the date range on your decision letter. Your position at your company is only protected during that date range. To keep your entitlement accurate and to ensure protection, please notify FMLASource if your leave is different than what was provided on the decision letter.

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Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.

# Communication Touchpoints

**BEGIN:** Leave of Absence Requested

**END:** Employee Has Returned to Work

## Request Packet

**What:** Provides a summary of employee's request for leave of absence and includes notice of eligibility, relevant forms and instructions, and any supplemental material.

**When:** Within up to 5 business days of the request.

## Reminder of Documentation Due

**What:** Reminds the employee that the due date for their documentation is coming up

**When:** 6 and 10 days from the original request and on the day before the due date to submit.

## Notification of Document Received

**What:** Notifies employee that a document has been received and is being reviewed.

**When:** Each time paperwork is received and uploaded into our system.

## Decision Packet

**What:** Provides a summary of a decision made on employee's request for leave of absence and includes any additional forms, instructions, or supplemental material.

**When:** Within up to 5 business days of receipt of sufficient and complete documentation.

## Maternity or Parental Date Confirmation

**What:** Seeks confirmation of actual date of delivery or placement for Maternity or Parental Bonding Leaves.

**When:** After the original estimated date of delivery or placement has passed.

## Return to Work Date Confirmation

**What:** Notifies employees and requests confirmation that the end of their leave is approaching and a request for confirmation that they intend to return to work as scheduled.

**When:** 2 weeks, 1 week, and 1 day before their estimated return to work date.

## Additional Notifications

### Undeliverable Email

**When:** Daily each time an email comes back as "undeliverable".

### Unprotected Absence

**When:** Daily upon receipt of tracking that is not protected.

### Failed Fax

**When:** Daily each time an attempted fax to a health care provider comes back failed.

## HOW IT'S SENT

Employees have the option to receive Request and Decision Packets by email or postal mail.

All other notifications are sent via email, phone, or text depending on the type of notice and the employee's preference.

# Questions and Answers About the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

## What is the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?

FMLA is a federal law that entitles employees to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for qualifying medical and family reasons. This time can be used over the course of 12 months for qualifying medical and family reasons. If taking leave to care for an injured service member, an employee is eligible for a one-time allotment of 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period.

## When can an employee take FMLA?

You are eligible to take FMLA when you are facing:

- The birth of a child
- Adoption or foster care
- Care for your own serious health condition
- Care for a child, spouse or parent with a serious health condition
- Care for a child, spouse, parent or next of kin who is an injured service member
- The need to be with a child, spouse, parent or next of kin who is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation

## How do I know if I am eligible for FMLA?

An employee must meet two requirements to be eligible for FMLA:

1. You must have worked for your employer for at least 12 months, and
2. You must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the last 12 months

## Will an employee be paid for hours protected under FMLA?

No. FMLA does not require your employer to pay you during your leave. In some circumstances, accrued paid sick leave or vacation time may be used.

## Here when you need us.

Call: 877.GO2.FMLA

TDD: 800.697.0353

Fax: 877.309.0218

Online: [fmlasource.com](http://fmlasource.com)

## How is “family” defined under FMLA?

Family members are defined under FMLA as:

- The employee’s parent
- The employee’s child, including adult children who are incapable of caring for themselves
- The employee’s spouse when he or she has a serious medical condition
- The employee’s “next of kin,” but only in situations of caring for an injured service member

## Can an employee take a few hours every week to take a family member to a medical appointment?

Yes. Family leave may be taken intermittently when medically necessary. An employee may take leave in blocks of time such as an hour, a half-day, a day, a week, four weeks or 12 weeks to care for a family member.

## Will an employee have the same job when he or she returns from FMLA leave?

The employer must reinstate an employee to the position held before leave began or must provide a position that has the same benefits, pay, working conditions and seniority.

## Will an employee have insurance while on leave?

The employer must continue to pay for the employee’s health insurance coverage as it normally would. If an employee contributes to the health insurance plan he or she is required to continue making payments while on leave.

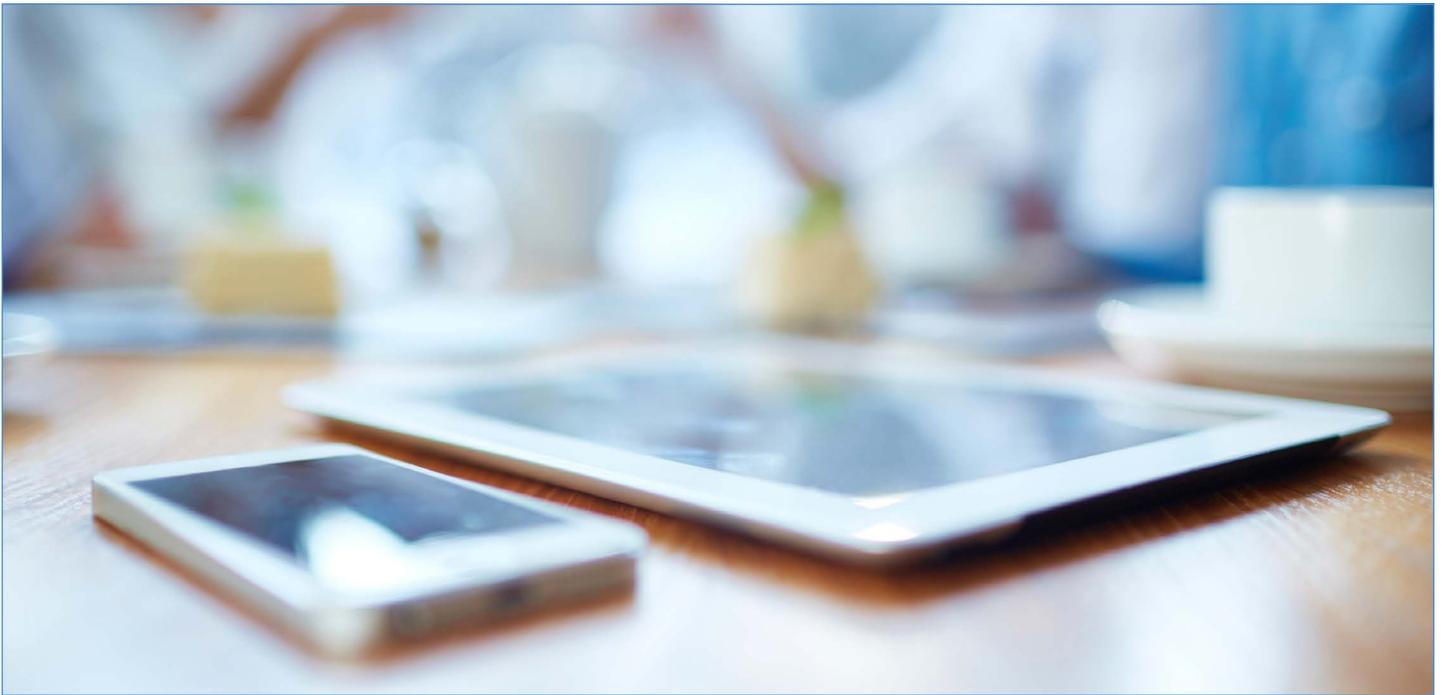
## Can my employer stop making insurance payments?

Yes. If an employee does not return to work after 12 weeks or if an employee tells the employer that he or she does not intend to return to work, the employer can stop making insurance payments. If an employee does not return from leave, the employer may require the employee to pay back the money paid to maintain the employee’s health insurance during leave.

## For More Information

FMLASource provides you with quick access to experts who will answer questions, review guidelines and provide information regarding a job-protected medical or family leave of absence. Please contact FMLASource for information and forms required for your leave.

Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.



## FMLASource On The Go

With the new FMLASource mobile platform you now have anywhere, anytime access to FMLASource.com and its most important features. The mobile platform is free, easy to download, easy to navigate and simple to use. Download it today to:

- Open a new leave request
- View leave request details and decisions
- Generate absence reports
- Update current approved leaves
- Learn about federal FMLA regulations
- Contact FMLASource directly

To get started today, simply register on [fmlasource.com](http://fmlasource.com) and download the free mobile platform.

### Check it out!

#### Register as a first-time user on [fmlasource.com](http://fmlasource.com)

- Go to [fmlasource.com](http://fmlasource.com)
- Click Register
- Enter Employee Number/Social Security Number and ZIP code
- Enter a Username (must be 6 characters and no spaces e.g., joesmith) and password
- Answer the other questions as accurately as possible

#### Download the app

- Search FMLASource (no space, one word)
- Select Install

### For More Information

FMLASource provides you with quick access to experts who will answer questions, review guidelines and provide information regarding a job-protected medical or family leave of absence. Please contact FMLASource for information and forms required for your leave.

Call:

TDD: 800.697.0353

Fax:

Online: [fmlasource.com](http://fmlasource.com)



Scan the QR code for easy access from your smartphone.