



TASKFORCE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE

HOUSE MEMORIAL 1 FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES FOR NEW MEXICO WOMEN AND FAMILIES

FINAL REPORT

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Objectives

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the University of New Mexico's bureau of business and economic research be requested to convene a task force to define family-friendly policies and practices and to study policy options related to paid maternity leave, paid time off, part-time employee benefits, policy incentives for family-friendly small businesses, employment-based child care and other issues that will improve the health of women and families by addressing economic security.

Task Force Members

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The Task Force met monthly from June-September 2011 and from April-August 2012.

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Review Year 1- 2011

1. Definition of Family-Friendly Employer Policies
1. Year One Overall Conclusions
2. Profitability of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices in the Workplace
4. Social Outcomes of Family Friendly Policies and Practices in the Workplace
5. Family-Friendly Business Awards

Definition of Family-Friendly Employer Policies

Family-Friendly Employers (FEEs) acknowledge and respond to the work and personal/family responsibilities of employees by developing and implementing policies and practices that allow employees to balance work and personal/family responsibilities effectively. Family-Friendly Policies and Practices (FFPPs) include but are not limited to:

- Personal, Family and Parental Leave
- Maternity/Paternity Leave and Lactation Programs
- Childcare/Eldercare/Dependent Care
- Flexible Scheduling
- Telecommuting
- Job Sharing and Part-Time Options
- Healthcare
- Wellness Programs
- Higher than Average Wages within an Industry
- Asset Building and Retirement Programs
- Training and Advancement Opportunities

FFPPs benefit both employees and employers. They positively impact the health, education, economic stability and job satisfaction of employees and their families while increasing sales, share value, and productivity and lowering costs by reducing absenteeism, turnover, and health-related expenses for employers.

Year One Overall Conclusions

This has been the deepest and longest recession in the Post World War II period. New Mexico employment declined by 4.1% in 2009 and by a further 1.1% in 2010, with overall job losses peak to trough in the neighborhood of 50,000. Thousands remain out of work.

Women workers now comprise roughly 50% of total nonfarm employment in the US, and a child today is as likely to have a working mother as a working father. In NM in 2010, about 60% of children under 6 had all parents in the labor force.

Yet few employers have made efforts to accommodate the family responsibilities of today's workforce. The one significant federal law, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), gives parents job protected rights to take off time before and after the birth of a child and keep their health insurance. Unfortunately, the law only applies where the employer has 50 or more employees. And the leave is unpaid and cannot exceed 12 weeks per year.

The benefits to employees and their families and the larger community of adopting family friendly policies are numerous and the effects far-reaching. Interestingly, employers may have much to gain as well – in increased productivity, lower costs, increased sales and higher share value.

Profitability of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices in the Workplace

In today's economy, employers everywhere are looking for ways to save money and boost their bottom lines. In New Mexico, many employers have laid off employees or reduced their hours. Simultaneously, the need to remain competitive has meant maintaining or even increasing operations. As a result, everyone has been forced to accomplish more with less. But even before the economic downturn, U.S. employers were spending an average of \$300 billion in lost productivity, recruitment and retraining costs each year. This makes the cost-effectiveness of employee retention, efficiency and productivity an urgent matter.

With examples of small and large employers from a variety of industries that employ both high and low-skilled workers, the Task Force prepared a matrix that demonstrates real strategies for boosting the bottom line through increased sales, share value, productivity and reduced costs.

Social Outcomes of Family Friendly Policies and Practices in the Workplace

For workers in all industries and income levels, striking a balance between their work and personal/family responsibilities is extremely important. Whether an employee is raising a family, caring for aging or sick family members, or attending to his or her own personal needs, the ability to achieve work-life balance is both challenging and vital in ensuring productivity in the workplace and well-being in the home. Considering the health, education, and economic outcomes that are linked to work-life balance, employers play a pivotal role in the lives of their employees and in society at large.

The Task Force prepared a matrix highlighting examples of Family Friendly Policies and Practices and demonstrating the impact these have on families and communities.

Family-Friendly Business Awards

Awards for companies that have family-friendly policies can impact the award recipients and their employees, as well as entire communities.

- Companies recognized with awards gain stature and can use their award status in recruiting and marketing.
- When they do so, employees and other companies are educated to the advantages of family-friendly workplaces.
- Award recipients can experience a competitive advantage in recruiting.

Family-friendly workplace awards are given by governments, business organizations, civic clubs, foundations and other groups all over the country.

Their criteria typically include items such as:

- Flexible work schedules, including job sharing and telecommuting
- Health insurance and wellness programs
- Paid vacations and sick leave
- Employee growth and development
- Profit sharing and 401k retirement planning

Expanded programs may also offer child care and elder care benefits, lactation programs, employee growth and development.

Year Two Strategic Planning: *Results Based Accountability*

1. Start with population result statement:
All workers in New Mexico achieve work–life balance.
2. Choose an indicator we can use to measure achieving the result: the number of employers in NM offering FFPPs (and/or workers covered by FFPPs, workers participating in FFPPs.)
3. Run “Turn the Curve” exercise (story behind the indicator baseline, partners, three best ideas)
4. Prioritize strategies for our work.

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Goals for Year 2- 2012

1. Develop an awards program
2. Work with NM Workforce Solutions Department to update the 2010 NM Employee Benefits Survey.

Other ideas that came up but were not undertaken by the task force due to lack of resources included:

- Focus groups
- Employer outreach and education
- Large employer survey
- Paid leave for NM workers

Awards Program

1. Recognize New Mexico employers and businesses that offer family friendly employee benefits
2. Promote increasing the number of businesses with family centered policies and work force access to them.

The Awards Program is designed to offer family friendly businesses a recognizable seal which will come to symbolize to employers, employees and their customers that this is a family friendly work place.

Year one development (2012-2013): criteria for awards, instruments for applying for awards and promoting the award.

Awards Program: Application Categories

Paid Leave

Personal leave (school involvement, sick employee, training/professional development, vacation)

Maternity/Paternity leave

Family leave (caring for aging parents, children, domestic partner)

Health Support

Breastfeeding/lactation support (designated area for pumping/breastfeeding)

Healthcare (employer subsidized health or dental insurance)

Wellness programs (such as physical fitness, immunizations, nutrition education, smoking cessation)

Work Schedules

Flexible work scheduling (such as 4 10-hour days or other adjustable scheduling)

Job Sharing (such as two or more part-time employees share one full-time position)

Telecommuting (work from remote location at least some of the time)

Economic Support

Higher than average wages in your industry

Employer subsidized training/educational assistance

Retirement/asset building available

Employer subsidized childcare or dependent care (such as aging parents)

2012 NM WSD Employee Benefits Survey

Using the infoGroup employer database, we identified over 3,000 employers across the state with e-mail addresses. The employers were then sent an initial request to respond to a 20-question survey regarding benefits on Survey Monkey, with a follow up reminder a couple of weeks later. Over 500 employers responded with over 80 percent of responding employers completing the survey.

Responses were received from business all across the state and from the broad spectrum of sectors. Most (87%) of those responding had 24 or fewer employees. Almost 60% had some part-time employees, and part-time workers accounted for 50% or more of the workforce for roughly a third of those with part-time staff.

66.5% of respondents offer paid leave other than for holidays. Such leave is more likely for full-time employees, with 96% indicating use for vacation, 88% for sick employees, 75% to care for a sick family member, and 72% for maternity. Other options that were ranked somewhat lower included training, aging parents, school involvement, paternity and domestic partners. Part-time employees received paid leave for these purposes in 25-30% of the cases where the employer responded. 90% of employers indicated they offer leave without pay.

62% allow full time workers to return to the same or an equivalent position after taking family leave.

Survey findings regarding other benefits offered by employers are summarized in the following table. 70 of the respondents indicated they have other benefits/family friendly policies not listed.

Answer Options	Full-time employees	Part-time employees	Response Count
Employer Subsidized Childcare	6	3	7
Employer Subsidized Dependent Care	6	2	6
Employer Subsidized Healthcare	236	51	238
Employer Subsidized Dentalcare	150	33	151
Health/Medical Savings Accounts	79	19	79
Breastfeeding Supports	31	18	34
Wellness Programs	75	18	75
Flexible Scheduling	139	84	153
Job-sharing	18	13	22
Telecommuting	70	25	73
Asset building/Retirement	156	41	156
Educational Assistance	116	33	120
<i>answered question</i>			327
<i>skipped question</i>			186

Over 50% of those answering the question indicated that 75% or more of their full time employees participate in at least one of the benefits listed.

In terms of wages, 71.4% of those answering the question indicated that their wages were “competitive”, while 20.6% said they were “higher” than those for similar companies in their area, and 8% said lower.

3% of those answering the question indicated they had been recognized for the benefits offered employees.

What's Next?

- Memorial to continue the Task Force in 2013-2014
- Memorial acknowledging the work of the Task Force and encouraging NM businesses to participate in the Awards Program.

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