

PAID SICK LEAVE FOR EVERYONE: WHAT CITIES CAN DO

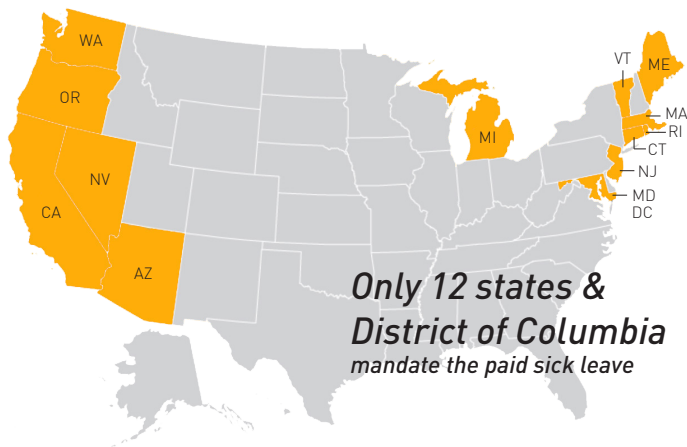
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Paid sick leave (PSL) allows employees to take time off when they or their family members get sick without losing pay or risking termination.

Executive Summary

Millions of American workers lack paid sick leave, and this has serious public health and social justice consequences. We conducted a comparative case study of pioneer cities such as San Francisco (SF) and Seattle, and late implementors such as Pittsburgh and Duluth, to analyze the key factors that enabled these cities to pass and implement the paid sick leave policy. Coalition building was central for cities to approve paid sick leave ordinances. By forming coalitions, these cities were successful in getting private employers to extend paid sick leave to all workers.



Why Is Paid Sick Leave Important?

- Over 40 million American workers do not receive paid sick leave from their employers.
- The absence of paid sick leave disproportionately burdens minorities and low-income workers.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of paid sick leave. New Jersey and New York City have partially implemented or extended paid sick leave since March 2020.

How Do Cities Promote Paid Sick Leave?

	San Francisco, CA	Seattle, WA	Pittsburgh, PA	Duluth, MN
Year of Approval	2006, took effect in 2007 - through public ballot	2011, took effect in 2012 - through City Council referendum	2015, took effect in 2020 - through City Council referendum	2018, took effect in 2020 - through City Council referendum
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 hour sick time for every 30 hours worked - Max. paid leave is 40 hours per year for small businesses, and 72 hours for larger business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 hour sick time for every 40 hours worked (5-249 employees) - 1 hour sick time for every 30 hours worked (more than 250 employees) - Exemption for new businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 hour sick time for every 35 hours worked - Max. paid leave of 40 hours per year (15 or more employees), and 24 hours (less than 15 employees) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 hour sick time for every 50 hours worked - Max. paid leave of 64 hours per year, but employers may limit to 40 hours
Main Actors/Coalition Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coalition for Paid Sick Days: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young Workers United (YWU) 2. Community organizations 3. University students 4. Young immigrant workers 5. Labor unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seattle Coalition for a Healthy Workforce: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic Opportunity Institute (Think Tank) 2. Community organizations 3. Elected officials 4. Small-business owners 5. Union & advocacy groups - City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pittsburgh United (Coalition) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community organizations 2. Union & advocacy groups - City Mayor & Council - State Supreme Court - National Advocacy Groups (e.g. National Partnership for Women & Families) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Council (<i>formed Task Force</i>) - Elected officials - Community organizations - Worker union
Notable Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First city in the US to implement paid sick leave - Ballot was the passing mechanism - State followed the city - Bottom-up initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First city in the state to implement paid sick leave - Active coordination between government and the coalition - State followed the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influenced by other city in the state - Implementation was delayed - Ordinance was challenged in court - Upheld & supported by the State Supreme Court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local-government-led initiative - Influenced by other city in the state - Regional concern as a central motivation

- 1** Cities have played a crucial role in pushing for & approving paid sick leave by leading independent efforts & inspiring states & other cities to approve it.
- 2** Coalitions are important to gain political power & visibility to support the initiative.
- 3** Governments & supporters should consider requirements that correspond to businesses' conditions & limitations.



Why Should Cities Care?

	Benefits	Contribution	Challenges
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lower transmission of diseases and improved public health. Paid sick leave reduced the number of employees who reported going to work while sick by 8% in Washington State. - Increased support for the ordinance after its implementation. 70% of employers in Seattle supported the Ordinance two years after it was implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiate/lead/administer the approval process. Paid sick leave initiative in Duluth, MN, was led and organized directly by the city council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of political influence and authority (preemptive forces from higher authority). In Seattle, the support from a councilman was crucial to introduce the initiative to the City Council. - Pushback from different city partners. Business owners in Pittsburgh challenged the ordinance in court, which delayed the enactment process.
Private Sectors (Employers/ Business Owners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased productivity. - Fewer workers get sick. - No increase in costs. 6 out of 7 employers in Seattle did not report impacts on their profits after the implementation. - City becomes more attractive for employees. Food service jobs in SF grew more rapidly than in neighboring counties two years after the introduction of PSL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead evaluation to improve the ordinance before it takes into effect. Several business owners in Pittsburgh agreed to implement the ordinance before it took into effect to test the feasibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extra costs to provide paid sick time. Seattle coalition's findings show that the extra cost is insignificant. - Benefit may be lower for small business (Levy, 2019).
Workers and Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lower transmission of diseases and improved public health. Sick workers are estimated to have infected 7 million of their co-workers nationwide during the H1N1 outbreak in 2009. - Workers have faster recovery times - Employees are more productive due to reduced absenteeism and turnover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form/organize coalition and movement. Seattle Coalition for a Healthy Workforce mobilized over 50 groups from different stakeholders to pass the ordinance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited resources and political network. Political and money influence from the business community in SF hindered the efforts of the worker coalition in fighting for the ordinance. - Limited skill/experience to organize movements
Non-Profit/ Research Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct research and advocacy to mediate stakeholders. Seattle's coalition released a study on the positive impacts of the ordinance to support the advocacy efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of financial resources and limited political influence/network. Business owners' strong political and financial influence over the SF Board of Supervisors hampered the advocacy initiatives.

Strategies

- 1 Form a coalition**

The coalition may consist of unions, workers, advocacy groups, small businesses, think tanks, government officials as well as community & faith organizations.

In SF, the labor coalition consisted of advocacy groups including the YWU, Chinese Progressive Association, Parent Voices and low-income & immigrant workers. They mobilized resources & created political pressure on the Board of Supervisor to put the ordinance on the ballot.
- 2 Build political power, visibility, & accountability**

Identify potential allies, conduct research, and utilize campaign strategies.

In Seattle, the coalition allied with a council member to introduce the proposal to the City Council. In SF, YWU surveyed 300 service sector workers to identify agenda priorities and to serve as a basis of proof for advocacy to the City. The coalition also utilized phone banking & door to door campaign to increase visibility.
- 3 Coordinate effort within & outside the government**

Mobilize social networks, held public hearings, & press conferences.

In Pittsburgh, the coalition worked together with the National Partnership for Women & Families to create petitions, provide data & reach out to the city officials. In Seattle, Council members & the coalition organized press conferences & public hearings according to the City Council's agendas to put the proposal in the spotlight.
- 4 Engage with critical stakeholders in early stages**

Provide enough time for proposal adjustments & negotiations.

In Duluth, the council gave ample time for small businesses to evaluate amendments & helped them navigate the new rules. In Seattle, the small-business owners' early involvement helped the coalition reduce the requirements for small businesses to make the proposal palatable for them [E.g., Businesses with less than 4 employees were not included].

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Cities can lead
Cities can inspire other cities to follow the initiative or upscale the initiative to the state/national level.

2 Public health benefits
as a driver to push for paid sick leave ordinance given the urgency to respond to COVID-19.

3 No one-size-fits-all approach
to pass and implement the paid sick leave policy. Local context matters.



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