

# PROMOTING FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

## Landscape Analysis

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Work-life balance, often referred to as work-family balance or life-work balance, refers to an employee's ability to minimize stress by having an adequate balance between the responsibilities of work and home life. Family-friendly practices, policies, benefits and programs provided by employers increase the well-being of employees and enhance support for families. As the success of any organization depends on the stability and productivity of its workforce, it is important to understand how family-friendly policies impact employee stability and productivity and therefore create benefits for the employer. Research has found that well-implemented family-friendly workplace programs help reduce employee absenteeism and "presenteeism" (when employees are physically present at work, but mentally distracted), increase employee commitment and loyalty to the employer, and help improve recruitment and retention of high-performing employees. There is a wide range of organizational policies and practices to improve employees' work-life balance, and an organization's offerings often depend upon the employer's size, budget and workforce demands. According to the Society for Human Resource Management 2018 Employee Benefits survey, over one quarter of the organizations surveyed had increased their leave, family-friendly and flexible working benefits in the prior year. The most common family-friendly benefits include:

- *Parental and Family Leave Support*
- *Lactation-Friendly Workplace Policies*
- *Child Care Support*
- *Infant-at-Work Policies*
- *Workplace Wellness Programs*
- *Flexible Work Benefits*
- *Employee Community Engagement Programs*

Promoting family-friendly policies can be done in several ways — through advocacy, education and information sharing; rewarding and incentivizing family-friendly leaders; and contributing to what is known about the impact and effectiveness of various approaches. The following recommendations are offered as ways to encourage and support the expansion of family-friendly workplace policies and practices:

- Advocate for family-friendly workplace policies at various levels of government, and within organizations.
- Develop and share information, tools and other resources to support businesses in expanding family-friendly policies, and explore ways to connect business leaders with experts in family-friendly policies.
- Support and reward exemplary leaders in family-friendly workplace policies and practices, as a way of inspiring other businesses to follow in their footsteps.
- Contribute to the field by investing in research on the benefits and challenges associated with implementing family-friendly workplace policies.

Family-friendly workplace policies and practices that support work-life balance benefit everyone involved. Organizations that are family-friendly not only support children, parents and seniors, but ultimately support the health and well-being of the broader community. For the organizations themselves, their employees are more productive, they are able to recruit better employees and they can retain the best employees.



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