

# eliminating racism empowering women

ywca press release

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## **YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Implements 6 Weeks of *Paid* Family Leave Ahead of 25th Anniversary of the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago walks the talk on women's empowerment by providing 6 weeks *paid* family leave to its employees. The oldest and largest women's organization in the region, with a workforce comprised of more than 150 employees, 90 percent being women, implemented the new policy on January 1, 2018. It gives FMLA-eligible employees their regular rate of pay for the first six weeks of the twelve job-protected weeks of leave covered under the FMLA.

*"We have gone a step further than FMLA requires by offering paid leave to our staff,"* stated YWCA Metropolitan Chicago CEO Dorri McWhorter. *"It is important for the YWCA, with its mission of eliminating racism and empowering women, to walk the talk and be a role model for the type of advancements and policies that we want to see employers adopt more broadly in the workplace."*

Signed into law February 5, 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal labor law requiring covered employers to provide employees with twelve weeks unpaid leave for qualified medical and family reasons. These include pregnancy, adoption, personal or family illness, or family military leave.

According to a 2016 Employee Benefits research report from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), only 17 percent of U.S. employers offered paid parental leave in 2016. Five states – California, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington – as well as the

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District of Columbia (D.C.), have enacted laws requiring paid family leave. There is no current federal legislation requiring paid family leave.

*“The YWCA would not be true to our mission to empower women if we were not honoring our own employees’ needs as parents, caregivers, and individuals. As we transform from a 140 year old social service agency to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century social enterprise, our business model continues to evolve to respond to the diverse needs of our workforce,”* adds McWhorter.

For more information on YWCA Metropolitan Chicago and the paid family leave policy, please contact Jacqueline Priego at 312-762-2712 or [jacqueline.priego@ywcachicago.org](mailto:jacqueline.priego@ywcachicago.org).

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**About YWCA Metropolitan Chicago:** *YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is the oldest and largest women’s organization in the region, with a mission to eliminate racism and empower women. For more than 140 years, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago has been committed to serving the evolving needs of women and families. Today, we help more than 200,000 individuals annually through programs focused around Safety & Wellness, Education & Training, and Economic Sustainability. We are the largest provider of sexual assault support services in the state of Illinois, offering crisis intervention, counseling, prevention education and medical and legal advocacy services. We administer the state’s largest Child Care Resource and Referral program offering services to families seeking child care and a variety of support resources for child care providers. We also offer career, financial management, digital literacy and business services to help youth and adult members achieve financial stability and obtain training to enter high-growth fields. To learn more, please visit [www.ywcachicago.org](http://www.ywcachicago.org).*