

# The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Access and Utilization in Missouri: Summary



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# THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (FFCRA) ACCESS AND UTILIZATION IN MISSOURI: SUMMARY

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This summary is an excerpt from *Research on Paid Leave in Missouri (2022)*. Click [here](#) to read the full report and see the full list of citations

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) was passed in March 2020 and remained in effect from April 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. This legislation was intended to expand access to paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave for reasons specifically related to COVID-19. This brief summarizes research utilizing the [U.S. Department of Labor Microsimulation Model on Worker Leave \(Worker PLUS\)](#) to estimate which groups of Missouri workers had access to this temporary benefit, based on expected employer size.

## FFCRA BACKGROUND

FFCRA applied to certain public employers not covered under FMLA and private employers with fewer than 500 employees and exempting some employers with fewer than 50 employees. It carried the following requirements for covered employers:

- Provide all workers with up to 80 hours of paid sick leave at regular pay when a worker was quarantined “and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis”
- Provide up to 80 hours of paid sick leave at two-thirds pay (~ 67%) for a worker who was caring for someone in quarantine, caring for a child whose school or child care provider was closed, and/or the worker themselves was experiencing a similar condition

For eligible workers who were employed for at least 30 days, employers were also required to provide up to 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at two-thirds pay (~ 67%) to care for a child whose school or child care provider was closed due to COVID-19. The employer’s cost of this mandate was recovered through a tax credit program. Qualifying wage reimbursements for employers were paid through tax credits under FFCRA.

As of January 1, 2021, employers were no longer required to provide paid sick leave through FFCRA but were incentivized to provide leave through the Consolidated Appropriations Act (2021), which extended the tax credits offered to employers for paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave to March 31, 2021.<sup>1</sup>

## FFCRA UTILIZATION

A national study of FFCRA utilization showed that about 45% of all workers and 15% of part-time workers were aware that they were eligible for FFCRA benefits.<sup>2</sup> Of workers surveyed, 5.4% used sick leave under FFCRA from April to December 2020, or approximately 8 million working adults in the U.S.<sup>a</sup> States that did not previously have paid leave mandates, but gained access through FFCRA, reduced their daily number of new reported cases of COVID-19 by over 400 cases, a decrease of 56%, between March and May 2020.<sup>3</sup> When paid sick leave was provided by employers voluntarily, similar decreases in workers coming to work while sick were reported.<sup>4</sup>

## WORKER PLUS ESTIMATES OF MISSOURI WORKERS PREDICTED TO HAVE ACCESS TO FFCRA (APRIL-DECEMBER 2020)

For extensive methodological detail about our utilization of Worker PLUS for this study, see the full report (*Research on Paid Leave in Missouri (2022)*); click [here](#).

Using *Worker PLUS*, the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and the U.S. Department of Labor 2018 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Employee Public Use File, we estimated private sector employer size for all working Missourians, and found that FFCRA applied to 44.6% of people employed in Missouri based on an employer size of fewer than 500 employees in the private sector. Excluding small businesses (<50 employees), this estimate decreased to 21.8%.

**Demographic Characteristics of Missouri Workers Predicted to be Eligible for FFCRA**  
Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of Missouri workers predicted to be eligible for FFCRA, based on private sector employment, an employer size fewer than 500 employees, and 2020 ACS data. To account for potential small business exemptions, Table 1 also includes estimates based on private sector employment, 2020 ACS data, and an employer size between 50 and 499 employees.

FFCRA eligibility varied by sex, race/ethnicity, and age. About 46% of FFCRA eligible workers were women

Table 1: Percentage of Employed Missourians Predicted to be Eligible for FFCRA Based on Employer Size (Private Employers): Demographic Characteristics		
	Employers with Fewer than 500 Employees	Employers Between 50 and 499 Employees
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	45.92%	48.03%
Male	54.08%	51.97%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Ind/AK Native	0.49%	0.44%
Asian	2.18%	2.20%
Black	9.15%	9.45%
Hispanic	4.80%	4.69%
Other	2.09%	2.11%
White	81.30%	81.11%
<b>Age</b>		
Under 30	27.09%	27.77%
30-59	59.86%	59.46%
60 and over	13.05%	12.77%
<b>Presence of Children in the Home</b>		
No children	64.32%	64.40%

Source: Worker PLUS Model, ACS 2020, FMLA 2018

<sup>a</sup> “The Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, fielded a nationally representative survey from 6 October to 7 December 2020, using a telephone survey with dual frame random digit dial and cell phone sampling. Analysis restricted to current employees ( $n = 371$ ).”

employed by companies with fewer than 500 employees (48.03% when excluding small businesses). Among workers predicted to be eligible based on employer size, 81.30% were white, 9.15% Black, 2.18% Asian, 4.80% Hispanic, and 0.49% American Indian and Alaska Natives.<sup>5</sup> Of all FFCRA eligible workers, 59.86% were between the ages of 30 and 59, and 64.32% did not have children. Eligibility estimates were similar when exempting small businesses.

**Socioeconomic and Employment Characteristics of Missouri Workers Predicted to be Eligible for the FFCRA**

Table 2 presents socioeconomic and employment characteristics of Missouri workers predicted to be eligible for paid sick leave under FFCRA, based on private businesses with fewer than 500 employees, and private businesses with between 50 and 499 employees. For all eligible individuals, 28.08% were living in households earning less than \$50,000; 20.97% resided in households earning \$50,000-\$75,000; 36.58% lived in households earning \$75,000 - \$149,000; and 14.37% with \$150,000 or more. These estimates are approximately similar to the estimates for FFCRA eligibility when excluding small businesses (i.e., employers with between 50 and 499 employees). In 2020, the median annual household income of Missourians was \$57,290, illustrating that FFCRA benefited households above the median income at a higher rate than households with lower incomes.<sup>6</sup>

Table 2: Percent of Missouri Workers Predicted to be Eligible for FFCRA Based on Employer Size (Private Employers): Socioeconomic and Employment Characteristics		
	Employers with Fewer Than 500 Employees	Employers Between 50 and 499 Employees
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	1.66%	1.49%
High school	38.83%	36.77%
Some college, no degree	34.35%	34.04%
Bachelor’s	18.52%	19.84%
More than a bachelor’s	26.82%	29.19%
<b>Household Income Categories</b>		
Less than \$50,000	28.08%	27.61%
\$50,000-\$74,999	20.97%	20.83%
\$75,000-\$149,999	36.58%	36.60%
\$150,000 or more	14.37%	14.96%
<b>Marriage Status</b>		
Married	50.54%	50.66%
Never married	26.64%	26.77%
Widowed	1.77%	1.67%
Divorced/separated	11.22%	11.13%
<b>Health Insurance Through Employer</b>		
Yes	73.05%	74.04%

Source: Worker PLUS Model, ACS 2020, FMLA 2018

Eligibility for FFCRA also varied across educational attainment. Most eligible workers had attained a high school diploma (38.83%), followed by those who had completed some college (34.35%). Relatively lower percentages of eligible workers had earned a bachelor's degree (18.52%). Again, the eligibility estimates are similar when excluding small businesses.

Just over half of workers predicted to be FFCRA eligible were married (50.54%) and 26.64% have never married, and 73.05% of FFCRA eligible Missourians had access to health insurance through their employer.

## SUMMARY

Worker PLUS estimates of Missouri workers' access to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) vary by Missouri workers' sex, race/ethnicity, education, and household income. However, as per findings from "*Estimating Lack of Access to Paid Leave and Use of Paid Leave Among Private Sector Workers Employed in Missouri: Summary*" ([click here](#)), there is no clear indication that those Missouri workers most in need of access to paid leave (e.g., those with less education and lower household incomes) had greater predicted access to FFCRA. For example, more males were predicted to be eligible for the FFCRA than females (54.08% versus 45.92%, respectively) and of those eligible, 81.30% were white. For those eligible for FFCRA, 28.08% were in households with less than \$50,000 in annual income, and 36.58% of those in households earning between \$75,000 and \$149,999.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. (2020). *Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights*. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employee-paid-leave>

<sup>2</sup> Jelliffe, E., Pangburn, P., Pichler, S., & Ziebarth, N. R. (2021). Awareness and use of (emergency) sick leave: US employees' unaddressed sick leave needs in a global pandemic. *PNAS: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 118(29). <https://www.pnas.org/content/118/29/e2107670118>.

<sup>3</sup> Pichler, S., Wen, K., and Ziebarth, N. R. (2020). COVID-19 emergency sick leave has helped flatten the curve in the United States. *Health Affairs*. 39(12), 2197-2204. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00863>.

<sup>4</sup> Schneider, D., Harknett, K., and Vivas-Portillo, E. (2021). Olive garden's expansion of paid sick leave during COVID-19 reduced the share of employees working while sick. *Health Affairs*. 40(8), 1328-1336. .

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *QuickFacts: Missouri*. [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Missouri](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/missouri); U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *2020 ACS 5-Year Data Tables: Economic*. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=United%20States&t=Income%20%28Households,%20Families,%20Individuals%29%3AIncome%20and%20Poverty&g=0400000US29&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables&tid=ACSDT5Y2020.B19013>