

# Estimating Public and Private Sector Missouri Workers' Lack of Access to Paid Leave: Summary



Prepared by:  
**MU Institute of  
Public Policy**



Authors:

**Rachel Dicke, PhD**

**Adrienne Ohler, PhD**

**Adam Thorp, MPA**

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Authors: Rachel Dicke, PhD, Adrienne Ohler, PhD, Adam Thorp, MPA

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.

- Among public and private sector Missouri workers who live and work in the state, 345,777 are estimated to lack access to paid leave (189,183 females and 156,594 males).
- The estimated lack of access to short-term paid leave among all public and private sector Missouri workers and Missouri essential workers differs by sex, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, occupational prestige, and household income.
  - Lack of access to paid leave was higher among females than males.
  - Lack of access to paid leave was highest among American Indian/Alaska Natives and other and lowest among whites and Asians; Black and Hispanic workers were in between.
  - Among public and private sector Missouri workers, lack of access to paid leave was highest among those with the lowest educational attainment, those with service-oriented occupations, and those with the lowest household income.
- The estimated lack of access to short-term paid leave among Missouri public-facing essential workers revealed discrepancies between management and front-line workers.
  - For individuals employed in education and child care, lack of access to paid leave was highest among those employed in child care compared with those employed in education and as education and child care managers.
  - Nurses had higher lack of access to paid leave than doctors and medical managers.
  - Emergency medicine directors and front-line workers had approximately equivalent lack of access to paid leave.
  - Retail and food service workers had greater lack of access to paid leave than retail and food service managers.

## Background

Past research demonstrates favorable health and economic outcomes for workers with access to paid sick leave compared to workers without access. Access to paid sick leave in the United States, however, is highly uneven. This brief summarizes a study of all Missouri public and private sector workers and a select group of public-facing essential workers who lack access to paid sick leave. The research utilized the [U.S. Department of Labor Microsimulation Model on Worker Leave \(Worker PLUS\)](#) and incorporated a range of socio-demographic (e.g., sex, age, race/ethnicity, education, household income) and employment characteristics (e.g., employer size, industry, occupation) to produce a fine-grained analysis of Missouri workers who lack access to paid leave.

## Worker PLUS Model: Population of Interest

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](#).

The Worker PLUS model utilized the 2018 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 to produce estimates of formally employed Missourians who lack access to paid leave. The populations of interest included 1) all public and private Missouri workers of all wage rates, part-time and full-time workers, and all employer sizes and 2) Missourians employed as public-facing essential workers in the public and private sector. For this study, only people who live in Missouri and work in the public and private sectors were included and those who commute across-state borders for work were excluded. Estimates were weighted accordingly to be representative of the state's population.

For this brief, results focus on Missouri's public and private sector workers who lack access to short-term paid leave. This category of paid leave includes both short-term leave for one's own needs and short-term leave to care for a family member's needs. The full report presents estimates that address these subsets of short-term paid leave.

## Formally Employed Missourians Who Lack Access to Paid Leave (both public and private sector Employees)

Tables 1 through 5 present estimates of the characteristics of Missourians formally employed in the public or private sector who were predicted to lack access to paid leave in 2018. The full report includes comparable estimates for Missouri workers classified as essential. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, 45% of employed Missourians were classified as essential. Comparing the predicted lack of access for all employed Missourians to that of essential workers employed in Missouri shows that the predicted need for paid leave is approximately 1 to 2 percentage points higher for essential workers. Table 6 presents estimates of lack of access to paid leave for a select group of public-facing essential workers.

## Demographic Characteristics Associated With Lack of Access to Paid Leave

### *Across All Employed Missourians*

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of individuals who live and work in Missouri and lack access to paid leave. Fourteen percent of Missouri employed females and 11.25% of Missouri employed males lack access to paid leave. The model estimates revealed some disparities in access to paid leave on the basis of race and ethnicity. Those with the highest lack of access to paid leave are American Indian and Alaska Native Missouri workers at 23.08%, followed by 18.25% for Black Missouri workers, 13.59% for Hispanic Missouri workers, 11.78% for white Missouri workers, and 11.01% for Asian Missouri workers. The model estimates also show differences in lack of access to paid leave on the basis of worker age. Those younger than 30 are predicted to have the highest rates of lack of access to paid leave (20.36%). Employed Missourians without children are the least likely to lack access to paid leave (9.80%) compared to Missourians with one child (18.43%). The Worker PLUS model also estimated lack of access to paid leave on the basis of U.S. citizenship status; lack of access to paid leave varies slightly between U.S. citizens (12.70%) and non-citizens (13.17%). We note that non-citizens constitute 3% of the Missourian workforce.

| Table 1: Percent of Public- and Private Sector Missouri Workers Estimated to Lack Access to Paid Leave: Demographic Characteristics |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
|   | Lack Access to Paid Leave |
| <b>Sex</b>  |                           |
| Female  | 14.25%                    |
| Male  | 11.25%                    |
| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>   |                           |
| American Indian/Alaska Native   | 23.08%                    |
| Asian   | 11.01%                    |
| Black   | 18.25%                    |
| Hispanic  | 13.59%                    |
| Other   | 22.46%                    |
| White   | 11.78%                    |
| <b>Age</b>  |                           |
| Under 30  | 20.36%                    |
| 30-59   | 10.47%                    |
| 60 and over   | 8.38%                     |
| <b>Number of Children</b>   |                           |
| 0   | 9.80%                     |
| 1   | 18.43%                    |
| 2   | 16.73%                    |
| 3+  | 16.72%                    |
| <b>Citizenship Status</b>   |                           |
| Citizen (all designations)  | 12.70%                    |
| Not a citizen   | 13.17%                    |

Source: Worker PLUS Model, ACS 2018, FMLA 2018

## Socioeconomic Characteristics Associated with Lack of Access to Paid Leave

### *Across All Employed Missourians*

Table 2 presents Worker PLUS estimates of lack of access to paid leave by household income and worker education and marital status. <sup>1</sup> Households making less than \$50,000 per year lack access to paid leave at higher rates than all other income categories (15.76% versus 10.25% to 13.09%). A similar trend appears for employed Missourians with lower levels of education; 18.44% of Missourians with less than a high school education lack access to paid leave and 6.91% of Missourians with a bachelor’s degree or more lack access. Worker PLUS estimates also indicate that Missouri workers who have never married lack access to paid leave at higher rates than workers who are married, widowed, or divorced/separated (17.81% versus 10.00% to 12.42%). This finding could be illustrative of the age at which individuals marry; recall that lack of access to paid leave was highest among workers aged 30 years and younger.

| Table 2: Percent of Public- and Private Sector Missouri Workers Estimated to Lack Access to Paid Leave: Socioeconomic Characteristics |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
|   | Lack Access to Paid Leave |
| <b>Household Income Categories</b>  |                           |
| Less than \$50,000  | 15.76%                    |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999   | 13.09%                    |
| \$75,000 - \$149,999  | 10.73%                    |
| \$150,000 or more   | 10.25%                    |
| <b>Highest Level of Education</b>   |                           |
| Less than high school   | 18.44%                    |
| High school   | 17.02%                    |
| Some college  | 14.69%                    |
| Associate   | 11.41%                    |
| Bachelor’s  | 6.91%                     |
| More than a bachelor’s  | 6.42%                     |
| <b>Marital Status</b>   |                           |
| Married   | 10.00%                    |
| Widowed   | 10.49%                    |
| Divorced/separated  | 12.42%                    |
| Never married   | 17.81%                    |

Source: Worker PLUS Model, ACS 2018, FMLA 2018

## Employment Characteristics Associated with Lack of Access to Paid Leave

### *Across All Employed Missourians*

Table 3 shows estimates of lack of access to paid leave for workers by employment characteristics, including health insurance and employer size. Employed Missourians without health insurance are more likely to lack access to paid leave than employed Missourians with health insurance (16.85% vs. 12.20%, respectively) and lack of access to paid leave is greater among employees working for employers with fewer than 50 employees (13.73%) than for larger employers (11.93% and 12.37%).

| Table 3: Percent of Public- and Private Sector Missouri Workers Estimated to Lack Access to Paid Leave: Employment Characteristics |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
|  | Lack Access to Paid Leave |
| <b>Health Insurance</b>  |                           |
| Yes  | 12.20%                    |
| No   | 16.85%                    |
| <b>Employer Size</b>   |                           |
| 1-49 employees   | 13.73%                    |
| 50-999 employees   | 12.37%                    |
| 1,000 or more employees  | 11.93%                    |

Source: Worker PLUS Model, ACS 2018, FMLA 2018

## Employer Industry and Employee Lack of Access to Paid Leave

### *Across All Employed Missourians*

Table 4 shows estimates of lack of access to paid leave by employer industry as classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The table lists employer industries in order from highest predicted lack of access to paid leave to lowest predicted lack of access to paid leave. Industries that employ workers who lack access to paid leave at the highest rates include mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (25.11%) and arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services (22.56%). Industries with the lowest rate of access to paid leave include public administration (8.56%), agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (8.48%), and professional, scientific, and management, and administration, and waste management services (8.17%).

| Table 4: Percent of Public- and Private Sector Missouri Workers Estimated to Lack Access to Paid Leave: By Industry |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| Industry  | Lack Access to Paid Leave |
| Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction   | 25.11%                    |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services  | 22.56%                    |
| Information   | 16.31%                    |
| Other services except public administration   | 15.40%                    |
| Transportation and warehousing  | 13.89%                    |
| Construction  | 13.49%                    |
| Wholesale trade   | 13.46%                    |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance   | 12.59%                    |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate, and rental and leasing  | 9.29%                     |
| Manufacturing   | 9.07%                     |
| Public administration   | 8.56%                     |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting   | 8.48%                     |
| Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative, and waste management services                         | 8.17%                     |

Source: Worker PLUS Model, ACS 2018, FMLA 2018

## Employee Occupation and Lack of Access to Paid Leave

### *Across All Employed Missourians*

Table 5 shows lack of access to paid leave by employee occupation and, similar to Table 4, lists occupation in order from highest predicted lack of access to paid leave to lowest predicted lack of access to paid leave. Missouri workers with the highest predicted lack of access to paid leave include service occupations (21.26%), installation, maintenance, and repair (14.55%), construction and extraction (14.34%), and sales (14.30%). Missouri workers with the lowest predicted lack of access to paid leave have occupations in office and administrative support (10.72%), arts and sciences (8.62%) and management, business, and finance occupations (7.33%).

| Table 5: Percent of Public- and Private Sector Missouri Workers Estimated to Lack Access to Paid Leave: By Occupation |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| Occupation  | Lack Access to Paid Leave |
| Services  | 21.26%                    |
| Installation, maintenance, and repair   | 14.55%                    |
| Construction and extraction   | 14.34%                    |
| Sales   | 14.30%                    |
| Production  | 13.33%                    |
| Farming, fishing, and forestry  | 13.24%                    |
| Transportation and material moving  | 12.71%                    |
| Office and administrative support   | 10.72%                    |
| Arts and sciences   | 8.62%                     |
| Management, business, and financial   | 7.33%                     |

Source: Worker PLUS Model, ACS 2018, FMLA 2018

## Public-Facing Missouri Public and Private Sector Essential Workers

Table 6 presents Worker PLUS estimates of lack of access to paid leave for a select group of public-facing essential workers. Five categories of occupation are included: education and child care, medical professions, emergency medicine, retail, and food service. These occupations are further divided into management positions and non-management positions.

Overall, Missouri public-facing essential workers in non-managerial positions are predicted to lack access to paid leave at a higher rate than those in managerial positions. This difference is most pronounced between child care workers, and education and child care managers, where 26.72% and 6.72% lack access to paid leave, respectively. About 25% of food service workers and 17.40% of food service managers are predicted to lack access to paid leave. Although the medical professions are estimated to lack access to paid leave at lower rates, nurses are more likely to lack access to paid leave than medical managers and doctors (13.58% versus 8.26% and 8.19%, respectively). Missourians working in emergency medicine are more likely to lack access to paid leave than some of their peers in the above-mentioned medical professions; 11.30% of EMTs and 12.03% of emergency management directors lack access to paid leave compared to 8.19% of doctors and 13.58% of nurses.

| Table 6: Percent of Public- and Private Sector Missouri Workers in Public-Facing Essential Occupations Estimated to Lack Access to Paid Leave |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
|   | Lack Access to Paid Leave |
| <b>Education and Child Care</b>   |                           |
| Education and child care managers   | 6.72%                     |
| Education   | 8.23%                     |
| Child care  | 26.72%                    |
| <b>Medical Professions</b>  |                           |
| Medical managers  | 8.26%                     |
| Doctors   | 8.19%                     |
| Nurses  | 13.58%                    |
| <b>Emergency Medicine</b>   |                           |
| Emergency management directors  | 12.03%                    |
| EMTs and paramedics   | 11.30%                    |
| <b>Retail</b>   |                           |
| Retail managers   | 10.88%                    |
| Retail workers  | 18.96%                    |
| <b>Food Service</b>   |                           |
| Food service managers   | 17.40%                    |
| Food service  | 24.65%                    |

Source: Worker PLUS Model, ACS 2018, FMLA 2018

## Equity Summary: Worker PLUS Estimates of Access to Paid Leave in Missouri

Worker PLUS estimates of lack of access to paid leave among public and private sector Missouri employees revealed disparities on the basis of sex and race/ethnicity and followed similar trends for education, occupation, and household income. For example, lack of access to paid leave was higher among women than men and showed wider variation for different racial and ethnic groups. Specifically, the lack of access to paid leave was highest among American Indian/Alaska Natives and other races and lowest among whites and Asians; Black and Hispanic workers were in between.

Among public and private sector Missouri workers, lack of access to paid leave was highest among those with the least educational attainment, those with service-oriented occupations, and those in the lowest household income category. The Worker PLUS estimates of Missourians employed in public-facing essential occupations yielded sharp contrasts in lack of access to paid leave on the basis of those in “managerial” positions versus those on the front-line. About 27% of child care workers were predicted to lack access to paid leave versus those in education (8.23%) or education and child care management (6.72%).

The direct provision of child care is a notoriously low-paying service occupation that requires limited educational attainment to enter the field. For those who want to pursue child care as a career, advancement often takes the form of child care managerial or administrative positions that require more education, and offer better pay and, on the basis of this analysis, more benefits such as paid leave. Worker PLUS estimates revealed similar disparities between managers and front-line workers in retail and food service, also low-paying occupations that require little educational attainment prior to employment. These discrepancies in lack of access to paid leave between front-line workers and back-office managers underlie the structural inequalities associated with lower prestige occupations within the same industry and represent the likely beneficiaries of a paid leave mandate in Missouri.

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**References** - Click [here](#) to read the full report and see the full list of citations.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Subject Definitions*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/subject-definitions.html#householdnonfamily>; Missouri Census Data Center (n.d.). *Measures of Income in the Census*. <https://mC.D.C..missouri.edu/help/measures-of-income/#:~:text=The%20total%20of%20the%20income,referred%20to%20as%20family%20income>.