

## 5 Facts About Chosen Family

Families in the United States come in many forms but all too often public policy fails to adequately recognize and support the needs of all families. In recent years cities and states have taken action to rectify policy shortcomings by providing the legal right to sick time that covers not just people related by blood or legal ties but also chosen family.

Chosen families form when two or more individuals form a close, family-like relationship. Such families might be long-term partners, friends who have become like siblings, or a neighbor who provides regular care to an elderly individual. By recognizing the critical role chosen family plays in caregiving and support, policy makers are taking essential steps forward to ensure that all families thrive.

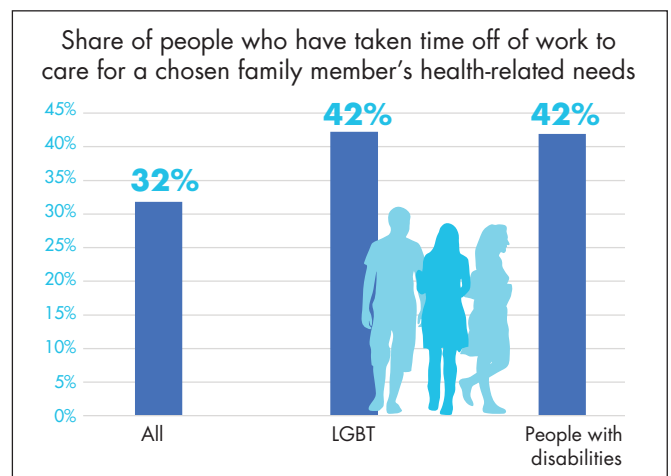
### FACT 1:



State and local victories since the last half of 2016 will provide **more than 10 million people** the legal right to sick time with a family definition that includes chosen family.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For information regarding people covered by sick leave policies in Arizona, Chicago/Cook County, Los Angeles, and Saint Paul, MN see Moira Bowman and others, "Making Paid Leave Work for Every Family" (Washington: Center for American Progress, A Better Balance, Family Values @ Work, and Forward Together, 2016), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2016/12/01/292886/makingpaidleave-work-for-every-family/>. Estimates for New York City's sick time law based on Shira Gans, "NYC's Paid Sick Leave Law: First Year Milestones" (New York City: Department of Consumer Affairs, 2015), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dca/downloads/pdf/about/PaidSickLeaveLawFirstYearMilestones.pdf> (adjusted for employment growth and the federal workforce). Estimates for Rhode Island's sick time for nongovernment workers based on July 2017 data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Rhode Island, available at [https://www.bls.gov/regions/new-england/rhode\\_island.htm#eqg\\_r1.f.3](https://www.bls.gov/regions/new-england/rhode_island.htm#eqg_r1.f.3).

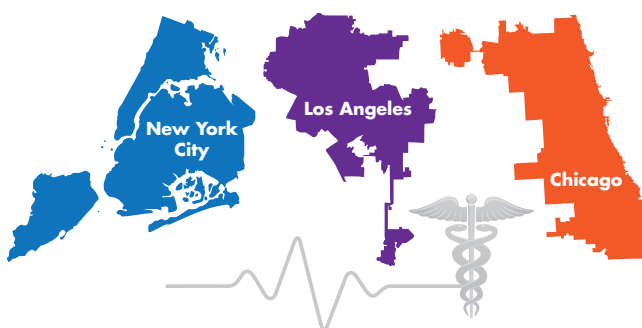
### FACT 2:



Nearly **one-third of people** in the United States report having taken time off of work to care for a friend or chosen family member for a health-related reason—and figures are significantly higher for LGBT individuals and people with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Katherine Gallagher Robbins and others, "People Need Paid Leave Policies That Cover Chosen Family" (Washington: Center for American Progress 2017), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2017/10/30/441392/people-need-paid-leave-policies-that-cover-chosen-family/>.

### FACT 3:



The **three largest cities** in the U.S.—New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago—have all passed paid sick time laws that provide workers with the legal right to care for their chosen family.

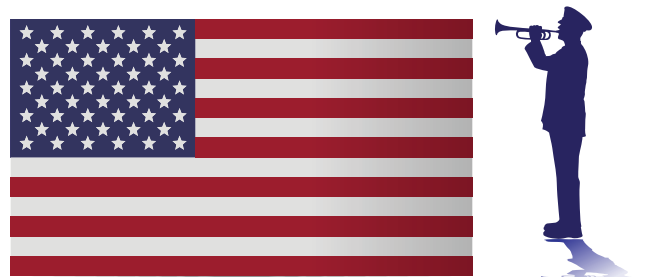
### FACT 5:



Nearly **1.5 million Arizonans** vote in favor of a 2016 ballot measure that guarantees paid sick time with a family definition that includes chosen family.

Arizona Secretary of State, Ballot Measure Races, Results for Proposition 206, available at <http://results.arizona.vote/2016/General/n1591/ResultsState.html#ballo>.

### FACT 4:



**1969:** The first time the federal government uses an inclusive family definition, permitting employees to take funeral leave for chosen family who died while serving in the armed forces in a combat zone.

Moira Bowman and others, "Making Paid Leave Work for Every Family" (Washington: Center for American Progress, A Better Balance, Family Values @ Work, and Forward Together, 2016).

### For More Information:

A Better Balance

[www.abetterbalance.org](http://www.abetterbalance.org)

Family Values @ Work

[www.familyvaluesatwork.org](http://www.familyvaluesatwork.org)

Center for American Progress

[www.americanprogress.org](http://www.americanprogress.org)