



BUSINESS IMPACT PARTNER
FOSTER FRIENDLY HR BENEFITS POLICY
SUMMARY PAGE

The Tennessee Business Community is:

Creative. Well-Educated. Competitive. Diverse. Unique. Strong. Talented.

We need YOU as Tennessee Kids Belong Business Impact Partners.

With such a robust business culture on the cutting-edge of recruiting the best talent in the nation to live in a family-friendly community, we can afford to include Foster Care in HR Benefit Packages to support and care for the vulnerable children in our state.

There are over 8000 children in foster care in Tennessee. Over 350 are available for adoption. Their future foster and adoptive parents work within YOUR businesses. By creating a foster-friendly business environment, these parents feel seen, encouraged and equipped with the time and financial resources they need to stand in the gap for a vulnerable child. Some of these courageous foster parents may already exist in your organization. Do your benefits include them?

Why do businesses offer benefits for foster care and adoption through foster care?

- Low cost investment: *Less than 1% of employees take advantage of this benefit*
- Employee goodwill
- Increased employee retention
- "Family Friendly" company image
- More equitable by acknowledging unique ways employees build their families
- Community goodwill by supporting local vulnerable children and families
- Competitive recruiting advantage by joining the national trend to include foster/adoptive benefits
- Simply put, it's the right thing to do.



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IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

STEP 1: Review current HR policies. Do they include foster & adoptive families?

- Families are not only built through the birth of a child but also through foster care and adoption.
- Foster benefits allow employees to bond with their new child(ren), hopefully reducing their stress level at home and work.
 - *FMLA applies to foster families as well, but few employers actively support them by encouraging leave and/or providing paid leave.*
- Foster parents have a unique need for scheduling flexibility to address post-placement challenges, court dates, meetings, and transition periods.
- Have you considered financial reimbursement to help make fostering and adoption through foster care more affordable?

STEP 2: Add foster care & adoption HR benefits to existing policies.

- Provide paid or unpaid leave (in addition to FMLA) for foster families.
 - *FMLA includes unpaid leave for foster & adoptive families:*
<https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/fmla-faqs.htm#6>
 - *Keep in mind that FMLA leave can apply BEFORE a child is placed in the home.*
https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?type=simple;c=ecfr;cc=ecfr;rgn=div5;idno=29;q1=825.308;sid=c912eed1ac18853d4e3ee6a366484bd9;view=text;node=29%3A3.1.1.3.54#se29.3.825_1121
 - *If you provide paid maternity leave, please add paid leave for adoptive & foster parents, too. Each represents an additional child added to the family. The federal definition of parent and child includes foster parent and foster child.*
https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?type=simple;c=ecfr;cc=ecfr;rgn=div5;idno=29;q1=825.308;sid=c912eed1ac18853d4e3ee6a366484bd9;view=text;node=29%3A3.1.1.3.54#se29.3.825_1200
 - *New tax credit benefits employers who provide paid family and medical leave:*
<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/new-tax-credit-benefits-employers-who-provide-paid-family-and-medical-leave>
- Provide flexible work schedules/options for foster parents who must attend court dates, doctor appointments and other necessary meetings to foster. Employer support is crucial to creating a positive fostering culture.
 - https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?type=simple;c=ecfr;cc=ecfr;rgn=div5;idno=29;q1=825.308;sid=c912eed1ac18853d4e3ee6a366484bd9;view=text;node=29%3A3.1.1.3.54#se29.3.825_1202

- Consider a special reimbursement benefit for a new foster child placement to offset initial unexpected costs.
 - *Many children arrive with just the clothing on their backs.*
 - *Fostering is compensated by the government but meets very minimum standards. Families often need additional funding to care for the children.*
 - *Urgent needs when taking in a new child can be a financial strain for a family. (Vehicle size, clothing, baby gear, bedding, furniture & food needs increase **immediately.**)*
- Consider financial assistance/reimbursement for fostering and adoption fees.
 - *Adoption through foster care typically costs from \$0 to \$2500.*
 - *Fees can include travel, legal expenses, and home-studies.*
- Consider providing additional support for foster/adoptive families who have children with special needs, medical needs and/or need behavioral assistance.

STEP 3: Announce your new foster-friendly benefits!

- Once your company becomes foster-friendly, make a public press release announcement to staff, local media, and through social media channels.
- Be sure to promote this new benefit in all of your HR recruiting packages.
- Contact TKB so we can celebrate with you! (Email Business@tnkidsbelong.org)
 - *Include a copy of your foster care benefit policy, so we can have a record of what your business provides and promote you to the local foster care community.*
- Place a TKB “Foster Friendly” business sticker at your business entrance.
- Celebrate with any employees who are fostering! This will be a huge morale booster for them.

What else can my business do to be a part of the solution?

- Educate employees on the foster care crisis through a Lunch & Learn.
- Provide onsite Support Groups for foster parents.
- Launch employee giving campaigns dedicated to foster care.
- Sponsor community outreach projects benefiting foster youth.
- Become a TKB Corporate Sponsor to help give children in foster care a face and a voice.
- Offer discounts to foster families with your product/service as a part of our Business Impact Program.
- Partner with Tennessee Kids Belong to create an internship program designed to support youth aging out of foster care. (Coming soon!)

Interested in further reading?

- <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/2018%20Employee%20Benefits%20Report.pdf>
- <https://www.fmlainsights.com/fmla-faq-can-foster-parents-take-additional-bonding-leave-after-they-adopt-a-child/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/parental-leave-sweetgreen-now-5-months-nathaniel-ru/>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alankohl/2018/08/14/how-to-build-a-positive-company-culture/#23d23ac749b5>
- <https://www.davethomasfoundation.org/library/adoption-friendly-workplace-employer-toolkit-2/>