AbsenceSoft

How to Modernize and Automate FMLA Management

Reason for Case

- [ ] Pregnancy/Maternity
- [x] Illness or Injury
- [ ] Bonding
- [ ] Voting
- [ ] Military
- [ ] COVID 19

Expected Case Dates

May 13 to June 20

Calculate Eligibility

Introduction

Leave requests are on the rise—and HR needs to find a way to keep up.

According to AbsenceSoft's **2025 State of Leave and Accommodations Report**, HR leaders saw an increase in the number of employees asking for a leave of absence. Today's workforce is also willing to ask for leave when they need it—in a recent survey, we found that 85% of respondents felt comfortable requesting and taking a leave of absence.

This rising tide of inquiries has left leave managers facing many challenges related to leave management, from calculating employee eligibility to managing intermittent leave. However, one challenge stood out from the rest in our report: HR professionals report that managing Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was their biggest struggle last year.

This news may not come as a shock. After all, the FMLA has a lot of finicky eligibility rules, regulations about notices and posters, and a lot of paperwork. When you multiply all that administrative work with rising leave requests, HR needs a lifeline. That's where modernization comes in: using leave technology to reduce administrative work, automate complex calculations, and simplify compliance.

This guide will show you how you can leverage technology to create similar outcomes at your own organization. With the right technology, you can modernize your FMLA process to be more compliant, efficient, and personalized for both your business and your employees.

The Importance of a Positive Leave Experience

Our 2025 report also revealed how deeply the leave experience impacts employees. When a leave experience is positive, it improves employee morale and productivity—55% of employees said they returned to work feeling more motivated because of their high-quality leave experience.

A negative experience creates the opposite effect. Nearly half (42%) of respondents who encountered poor leave experiences returned to work feeling less motivated. But the consequences of a negative leave experience extend beyond productivity costs. A whopping 50% said their experience caused them to start looking for a new job or quit before coming back.

The following statements come from two employees who encountered profoundly different leave experiences, one positive and one negative.

"The process was flawless and helped with the mental stress of the circumstances."

"The paperwork process was horrible and paperwork kept getting lost. And then I would have to get it and fill it out again. Awful."

Transforming the FMLA Process

From the initial request to return to work, manual FMLA management is filled with time-consuming administrative work. HR teams must not only manage a lot of paperwork, but also adhere to regulatory timelines throughout the process. Employees today also expect a modern experience, and employers will need to take advantage of the right solutions to deliver a personalized, convenient, and transparent leave process.

Leave Intake

HR and leave management teams are fielding more leave requests every year. That's why it's critical to find ways to streamline leave intake. With growing case volumes, there's no time for emails, calls, and asking for the same employee details over and over again.

Leave management platforms give HR teams a much faster, more streamlined way to intake leave requests. Let's take a look at how leave intake can be transformed.
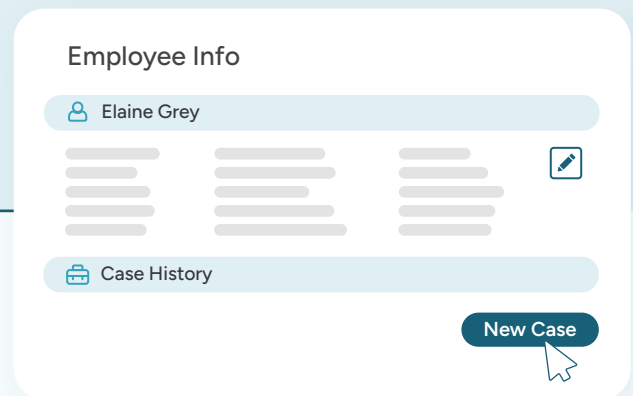
When a request is received via email or phone, you can instantly look up an employee in a leave platform and open a case in seconds. Leave platforms are integrated with HR systems to ensure accurate and comprehensive employee data.

Employees can also create their own request through a self-service portal, from any device, at any time. They are guided through entering all the pertinent details in a few easy steps. Once the request is submitted, you can immediately see the case in the platform to review it.

New Leave Request

Absence Reason	Employee Health Condition
Case Type	Consecutive
Is this work related?	Yes **No**
Duration Start Date	07/15 End Date 08/30

Submit Request

If an employee follows up with a question, you can pull up any case you need in a matter of seconds. Employees can also check their case status in the portal. Leave management platforms can streamline leave intake for even the most complex organizations and leave types, reducing errors and saving HR teams a lot of time.

Calculating Eligibility and Entitlements

Knowing what and how much leave an employee is eligible for is critical for compliance, but also very hard to get right, especially for large workforces. Understanding important eligibility factors such as when employees have reached 1,250 hours, how many employees are at a worksite, and when calendar years reset is a lot to keep up with—especially for complex workforces such as schools, retail chains, and hospitals.

With today's evolving leave landscape, technology is essential for helping HR teams make FMLA eligibility and entitlement decisions accurately and compliantly. Leave platforms can seamlessly integrate with your HR systems to automatically sync and update detailed employee information, incorporating it into eligibility calculations so even the most complicated decisions can be made instantly and accurately.

Reason for Case

- ☑ Pregnancy/Maternity
- ☐ Illness or Injury
- ☐ Bonding
- ☐ Voting
- ☐ Military
- ☐ COVID 19

Expected Case Dates

June 3 to August 19

Calculate Eligibility

Policy	Eligible
Family Medical Leave Act	Yes
California Pregnancy Disability Leave	Yes
California Family Rights Act	Yes
California Disability Insurance	Yes
California Paid Family Leave	Yes
ABC Company Parental Leave	Yes

You can instantly calculate eligibility for the FMLA, taking into account worksite location, specified calendar year, work history, and more.

You also have the ability to calculate additional policies that apply, including state, local, and company leave.

🕐 Time Tracker

Policy	Time Used	Time Available
Family Medical Leave Act	2.00 weeks	10.00 weeks
Wisconsin Bone Marrow or Organ Donation	0.00 weeks	6.00 weeks
Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave for Employee Health	0.00 weeks	2.00 weeks
Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave for Family Health	0.00 weeks	2.00 weeks
Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave for Parental Leave	0.00 weeks	6.00 weeks

Remaining entitlement amounts for FMLA and other leaves are instantly calculated. Time taken is tracked automatically against full entitlement. With intermittent leave, time can be tracked down to less than a minute of leave used.

The AbsenceSoft Compliance Engine™ (ACE) was built for HR teams to take the guesswork out of leave compliance. It provides accurate, instant calculations for more than 200 federal and state leave laws in the ACE Policy Library. AbsenceSoft's in-house compliance and legal experts monitor the landscape of leave laws to inform timely updates , helping HR teams stay compliant from day one.

ACE

Paperwork and Communications

With the FMLA, paperwork is a huge headache, due largely to the volume and complexity of the process itself. HR teams must adhere to strict timelines, which means sending and receiving the right paperwork at the right time, as well as keeping comprehensive records of communications sent and received.

Leave technology can streamline paperwork management, ensuring forms and notices get sent out within mandated timelines. Follow-up communications can be automatically generated to remind employees what forms need to be returned by when. Incoming faxes and completed forms sent via text are automatically attached to a case for easy access.

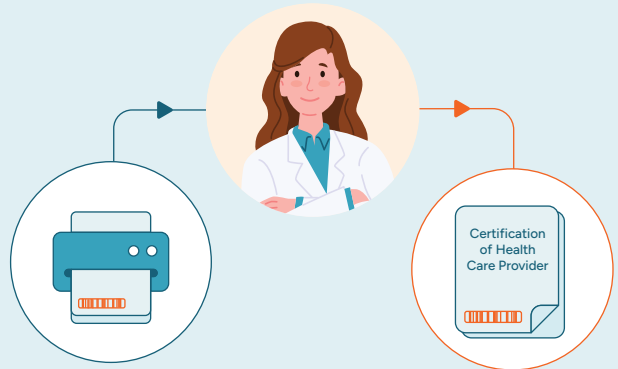Send by: ● Email ○ Text ○ Print/Mail

To:

CC:

Subject:

Dear Leanne,

Please review the following communication in its entirety, as this notice addresses your eligiblity to take time away from work.

...

📎 Attachments

Certification of Health Care Provider
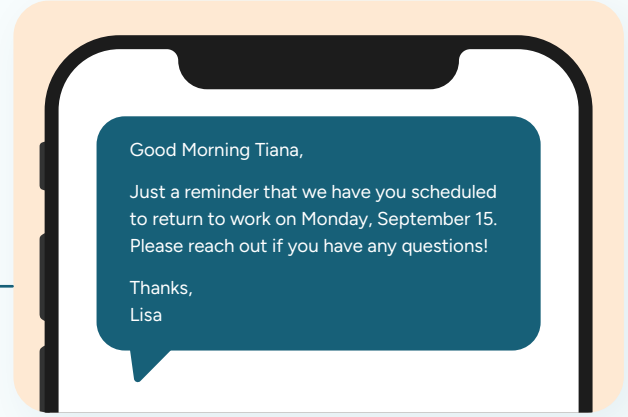
📎 Case Attachments

Date	Description	File Name

Required forms are instantly and automatically attached to pre-generated communications based on employee eligibility and entitlements.

Incoming faxed medical forms, as well as forms sent via text, are automatically attached to employee cases, instantly viewable through the platform.

Good Morning Tiana,

Just a reminder that we have you scheduled to return to work on Monday, September 15. Please reach out if you have any questions!

Thanks,
Lisa

Schedule automated communications, notifications, and reminders to employees via email and text throughout the leave process. You have the option to personalize any message before sending.

New Communication

Return to Work ⌄

Hi James,
I hope your recovery is going well!
...

Send

Case Notes

Phone call on 3/10 at 2:00PM regarding leave request.

Employee Conversation ⌄

Save

Case Activity

3/15	HR Communication
3/13	Send Eligibility Packet
3/12	Mgr. Communication
3/10	Leave of Absence Requested

A leave platform securely and centrally stores all paperwork, forms, case notes, and communications, retrievable instantly in the case of a complaint or audit.

The ACE Packet Generator automates the process of providing employees with all the necessary documents, forms, notices, and communications related to their leave, such the FMLA Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities (Form WH-381). Forms are automatically updated as legislation changes, so everything you need is generated instantly and accurately.

To:
Subject:

📎 **Attachments**

☑ Authorization to Release Medical Information

☑ Notice of Eligibility and Rights and Responsibilities under the FMLA (WH-381)

☑ Designation Notice (WH-382)

Case Management

Managing a leave end to end involves a lot of coordination and communication. With rising volumes of leave cases, it's easier than ever for tasks to get overlooked, and requests to fall through the cracks. Leave platforms allow you to proactively manage leave cases with dynamically generated lists of "to-do" tasks for every open request. A consolidated dashboard and instant reporting give you real-time insights into your program, enabling strategic decision-making and better team management.

ToDo Items

| ToDo Items | Cases | Employees |

| Employee	ToDo	Due ↑	Status
Tina Mason	HR Communication	11/02	Overdue
Tina Mason	Mgr Communication	11/03	Processing
Tiffany Baker	Send Eligibility Notice	11/03	Completed
Tiffany Baker	Enter Work Restrictions	11/03	Completed
Jose Martin	Return to Work	11/03	Completed

Automatically generated to-do lists are prioritized by urgency, allowing a leave administrator to quickly see what they should focus on that day.

HR teams can view to-do items in aggregated windows and reassign tasks as needed.

Data and reports are easily and instantly created as needed. Managers can easily see how many employees are on leave, when employees will be going on leave, caseload volume per leave manager, and much more.

This allows managers to optimize workloads, identify trends, and make other data-driven decisions.

Employees Absent by Work State

Oregon
Employees absent next 30 days: 6
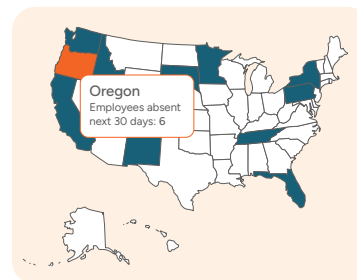
Current Employees
7,982

Absent Today
37

Absent Next 30 Days
51

Return to Work

The last part of the FMLA process is also one of the most commonly overlooked. In many organizations, HR doesn't have full visibility for every employee who is on leave, so it's hard to ensure a seamless return to work. But how an employee returns to work deeply colors their leave experience. What's more, a team's readiness for a colleague's timely return drives productivity.

The return-to-work process is especially important — and complicated — in industries with roles where fitness for duty requirements apply. HR must manage additional paperwork, including communicating with healthcare providers, before an employee returns to work.

🔄 **Scheduling Automated Email**

Subject: Grace Nielson Return to Work, Case #19380572
To: IT Team

Good Morning,

Grace Nielson will be returning to work on Monday, January 13. Please restore all building and technical access prior to her arrival.

Thank you!

Deliver on Monday, January 6 at 11:15am

Hi Grace! Please complete the attached Request for Fitness for Duty form and return by 1/10. Thanks!

📎 **Grace Nielsen Fitness for Duty**

Get automated reminders whenever an employee is about to return from leave. Schedule notifications via text and email about return to work to be sent to employees, managers, IT, building administrators, and more.

The platform automatically tracks return to work dates and deducts from remaining entitlements.

If fitness for duty or other medical certifications are required, you can automatically generate and send a packet prior to an employee's return to work date.

Employees can text or email digital forms to streamline return to work processes, and incoming provider faxes are automatically attached to cases.

Managing the FMLA, ADA, and PWFA in One Platform

Leave managers know leave management is about more than the FMLA. Employees using leave benefits under the FMLA often also have needs for accommodations that could be covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA), or sometimes both.

When an employee takes leave for an injury, they may need a temporary job accommodation as part of their return to work. Occasionally employees who have exhausted FMLA leave may require additional time away for a medical disability under the ADA. When these requests are handled with separate processes or solutions — or if FMLA is outsourced and the ADA is kept in-house — you may not have all the information you need to make accurate, informed decisions.

Carvana used to outsource their FMLA, but managed accommodations in house. However, their lack of access to FMLA medical documentation caused major issues when employees asked for accommodations related to the same condition.

"We would try to ask as many questions as possible. But because we were not actually managing it ourselves or had the medical documents ourselves, there was very little that could take place because of HIPAA and things of that nature," said Celeste Moreno, Leave and Accommodations Specialist at Carvana.

Today, Moreno manages everything in house with AbsenceSoft. She can efficiently handle requests for leave under the FMLA, as well as Carvana's own company policies, all in a single platform. She also uses AbsenceSoft to manage requests for job accommodations.

Moreno can quickly view any related medical documentation the employee has already submitted — even if it was related to FMLA — to help make more accurate determinations and better inform the interactive process. With AbsenceSoft, Moreno and her team have a holistic way to view and efficiently manage every request that comes in.

Employee Info

Kay Halson

Case Attachments | Select Files

Date	Description	File Name
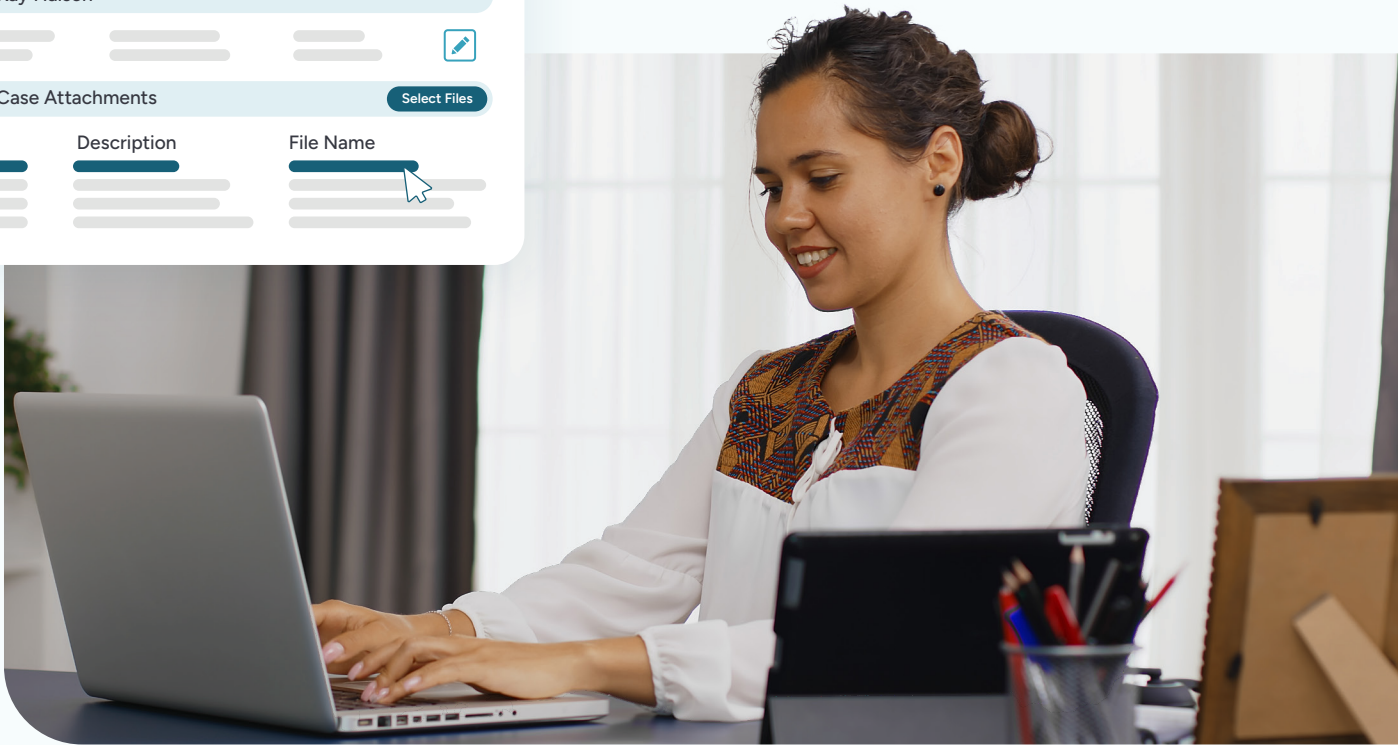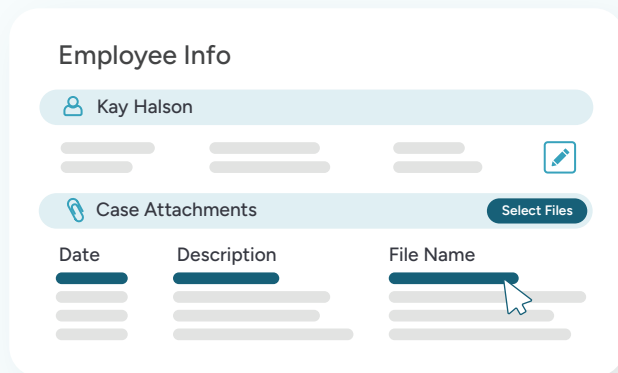
"AbsenceSoft stores everything so we're able to see active cases and go back and see the historical cases for each employee. This helps us show our leaders why we're going to do what we're going to do or why we're moving forward with an entitlement or why it should be covered under a different policy."

Celeste Moreno

Leave and Accommodations Specialist at Carvana

The Benefits of Modernizing FMLA Management

When HR uses a leave platform to modernize FMLA management, the transformation is powerful for the department, its organization and its employees. Cases can be handled **66% faster**, giving HR valuable time back to support employees during challenging times in their lives.

Employers that have modernized their process with AbsenceSoft report significant time savings and productivity gains.

The Cypress-Fairbanks school district in Texas **saves HR 13 work weeks of time every year** now that the leave team uses AbsenceSoft.

A national healthcare provider experienced similar time savings when it swapped its manual leave management process for a technology-forward approach. After implementing AbsenceSoft, its team was able to take on **174% more cases**.

With AbsenceSoft, Purdue University saw huge efficiency gains across their entire leave process:

- Time for leave intake is **reduced by 1-2 hours** for every case
- To-do lists generated by AbsenceSoft **saves 35%** vs using a manual checklist
- Time spent on reporting went from 5-6 hours every month to **15 minutes**

These time savings are critical for helping HR teams keep up with increasing leave requests while staying compliant. Leave managers also get valuable time back to spend supporting their co-workers and providing a positive leave experience. From self-service to text messaging, every part of your FMLA process can be modernized to reduce administrative overhead and drive a great employee experience for everyone—including HR.

If you'd like to see how AbsenceSoft can transform your FMLA processes, **schedule a demo with a CLMS-certified specialist today.**