

**Tier 2 Pilot Grant Letter of Intent: Establishing Proof-of-Concept  
Winter 2025**

<b>Proposed Project Title</b>	Exploring the effectiveness and implementation of paid leave programs for domestic violence
<b>Approximate Budget Request</b>	\$50,000 from PHI (plus \$10,000 in matching funds from School of Nursing)

**Applicant Information**

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**Overview of Proposed Research Plan**

Domestic violence (DV)—including physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, coercive control, and emotional/psychological harm most often perpetrated by an intimate partner—is prevalent and has substantial individual, community, and societal costs and consequences.<sup>1</sup> We critically need effective strategies to address DV, particularly those at the outer layers of the social ecology that strengthen economic supports for families.<sup>2</sup> Paid leave is one such intervention, which has been an area of active policy making at the state level in recent years. The United States is rare in not offering a national program to provide paid leave from work for serious medical conditions, but thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid leave into law since 2004.<sup>3</sup> In relation to DV, paid leave has been conceptualized as a primary prevention strategy through improved parent-child relationships, greater employment and financial stability, decreased financial stress, increased father engagement and household equality, and decreased relationship conflict.<sup>4,5</sup> Furthermore, several states with paid leave programs include DV as a qualifying reason for leave.<sup>6</sup> This leave could, for example, allow DV survivors to attend counseling or court hearings and seek medical treatment.

Despite paid leave programs gaining momentum, there is limited empirical evidence about how these programs relate to DV and, importantly, how these programs are used and implemented in the context of DV.<sup>7,8</sup> The overall goal of this project is to provide preliminary evidence about the potential effectiveness and implementation of paid leave programs for DV. Specifically, we will:

**Aim 1:** Conduct an in-depth policy landscape analysis of how the design of state paid leave programs allows for use in the context of DV;

**Aim 2:** Examine the association between state paid leave programs and physical DV before and during pregnancy using CDC’s Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) state-level data from 2000-2023 across 42 states and the District of Columbia using a difference-in-differences approach;

**Aim 3:** Conduct key informant interviews with 10-12 relevant legal and social service partners (e.g., state agency staff administering paid leave, DV advocates, legal experts in DV/employment law) to understand the use of leave for DV in two states, one where DV is explicitly listed as a qualifying event (OR or CO) and one where DV is not explicitly listed but paid leave exists (WA).

These multimethod findings will allow us to create a comprehensive conceptual framework for how paid leave programs could impact DV outcomes incorporating multiple levels of prevention. We will also establish key relationships with legal and social service partners to support future work. Overall, this project will lay the foundation for a large-scale, federally-funded, multi-state implementation study of paid leave programs to understand whether and how paid leave is being used to prevent DV. This project addresses the PHI pillars of human health and social and economic equity by examining an upstream economic support mechanism with important potential health impacts.

## References

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2. Niolon PH, Kearns M, Dills J, et al. *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices*. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2017.
3. A Better Balance. Interactive overview of paid family and medical leave laws in the United States. 2024. <https://www.abetterbalance.org/family-leave-laws/>
4. D’Inverno AS, Reidy DE, Kearns MC. Preventing intimate partner violence through paid parental leave policies. *Preventive Medicine*. 2018;114:18-23. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2018.05.024
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7. Tankard ME, Iyengar R. Economic policies and intimate partner violence prevention: Emerging complexities in the literature. *J Interpers Violence*. 2018;33(21):3367-3387. doi:10.1177/0886260518798354
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