

In summary, employees new to state government are eligible, on a yearly basis, to earn 15 days of vacation, 12 sick days, 10-11 holidays (depends on election cycle) as well as full health and dental benefits, life insurance and retirement.

SALARY PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Legislative Branch pays employees every two weeks. You will receive your check within 10 business days following the close of the payroll period. This delay permits the processing of an actual, not estimated, payroll. There are 26 pay periods in each year. Standard deductions, such as insurance are halved each month and deducted from 24 pay periods. During the year there are two pay periods without standard deductions.

RETIREMENT

Membership in the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) is mandatory and begins on the first day of employment. Mandatory contributions to PERS are tax deferred and may not be refunded for any reason before termination of covered employment.

HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE GROUP BENEFITS

The Legislative Branch is part of a comprehensive group insurance benefits program including medical plan options with prescription drug and vision exam coverage, dental plan, an employee assistance program (EAP), life insurance options, flexible spending account options, and long term care insurance. The current state contribution covers the cost of your "core" medical, dental and basic life insurance; you may obtain optional coverage for yourself or your eligible dependents at additional costs. A health promotion program designed to reduce overall insurance costs by offering wellness and prevention classes and biannual health screening is also available.

DEFERRED COMPENSATION

The Legislative Branch offers a deferred compensation program, which is a voluntary supplemental retirement program authorized by Internal Revenue Codes and Montana law. The program allows you to defer, through payroll deduction, specified amounts of current income pre-tax before state or federal taxes are calculated. The amount you defer, and any resulting investment income, is not taxable until you begin receiving the money, usually at retirement.

ANNUAL VACATION LEAVE

You earn annual vacation leave credits from your first day of employment, but you must be employed for six calendar months before you can use them. If you are a full-time employee, you earn credits at a yearly rate calculated according to the following schedule, which applies to the total number of years you have been a state or local government employee in Montana, whether or not your employment was interrupted. If

your employment status is something other than full-time, your leave credits will be calculated on a prorated basis. Under certain conditions, military service time may count toward the rate earned. Rate earned schedule is:

Years of Employment	Working Days Credit Per Year
1 day through 10 years	15
10 years through 15 years	18
15 years through 20 years	21
20 years or more	24

PRIOR SERVICE CREDIT

Prior service as a public employee, whether it was from another state agency, the university system, or other "local" public employment, may be eligible for transfer to the state. If you feel you have prior service eligible for transfer you should contact your HR office to discuss the Prior Service Certification Form.

SICK LEAVE

You earn sick leave credits from your first day of employment, but you must be employed for 90 days before you are eligible to use them. Full-time employees earn one day of sick leave credit a month and benefits for other employees are prorated.

HOLIDAY LEAVE

Holidays for state employees are:

1. New Year's Day, January 1
2. Martin Luther King Day, the third Monday in January
3. Lincoln's and Washington's Birthday, the third Monday in February
4. Memorial Day, the last Monday in May
5. Independence Day, July 4
6. Labor Day, the first Monday in September
7. Columbus Day, the second Monday in October
8. Veteran's Day, November 11
9. Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November
10. Christmas Day, December 25
11. State General Election Day, on even numbered years.