

Washington  
**Paid Family & Medical Leave**



**Employment Security Department**  
WASHINGTON STATE

# Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025

# Meeting structure

Only committee members and presenters will be unmuted during the meeting.

We ask members of the public to hold comments until Open Comment.

Comments and questions in chat will not be reviewed during Open Comment.

# Introductions

Advisory committee members will introduce themselves in-person or online.



---

# Agenda

Introductions and approval of October minutes

---

OPMA training

---

Advisory administration

---

Program experience and performance measures

---

Paid Leave Report Highlights

---

Program priorities

---

Open comment

---

# Approve October minutes



# OPEN PUBLIC MEETING BASICS



# We will cover:

- Purpose
- Scope (Who and what is covered)
- Types of Meetings
- Executive Session
- Rules on public attendance and conduct
- Penalties and remedies for violations



# Washington's Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)

- Passed in 1971
- Requires meetings to be open to the public, gavel to gavel.
- Agencies exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business
- Purpose is to allow the public to view the "decision making process."

Open Government Laws Like the OPMA are Often Called "Transparency Laws" or "Sunshine Laws" because they "shine light" on government.

Transparency builds public confidence in government.

*"Sunlight is the best disinfectant."*



U.S. Supreme Court Justice  
Louis Brandeis

# Interpreting the OPMA

---

Act is liberally construed.

---

Exceptions are read narrowly

---

Error on side of transparency

# *WHO IS COVERED BY THE OPMA?*

- The OPMA applies to “all meetings of the governing body of a public agency”
- **Public Agency:** state board, commission,, department, educational institution, or other state agency which is created by or pursuant to statute.
- **Governing Body:** multimember board, commission, committee, council, or other policy or rule-making body of a public agency, or any committee thereof when the committee acts on behalf of the governing body, conducts hearings, or takes testimony or public comment

RCW 42.30.020



# The OPMA Does Not Apply To

## These entities:

- Courts
- Legislature
- Agencies not defined as “public agency” in OPMA, such as agencies governed by a single individual
- Private organizations



## These activities:

- Licensing/permitting for businesses, occupations or professions or their disciplinary proceedings (or proceedings to receive a license for a sports activity, or to operate a mechanical device or motor vehicle)
- Quasi-judicial matters
- Matters governed by the WA Administrative Procedure Act, RCW 34.05
- Collective bargaining

# General requirements of the OPMA

- All meetings of the governing body must be open to the public
- No secret (anonymous) voting
- Decisions on motions, proposals, resolutions, orders, or ordinances (“final action”) must be adopted at a public meeting or they will be invalid



- A “meeting” of a governing body occurs when a majority of its members gathers with the collective intent of taking “action,” a.k.a. transacting the governing body's business.
- Quorum
  - Minimum number required by statute, rule or by-laws
  - Typically, a majority of members present

# What is “action” under the OPMA?

- “Action” means “the transaction of the official business of the public agency” and includes:
  - Taking public testimony
  - Deliberations and discussions
  - Reviews
  - Evaluations
  - Final actions – collective positive/negative decision. RCW 42.30.020.

# *COMMON ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE A MEETING:*



- Serial emails
- Group texts



- Social events
- Office gatherings



- Zoom/Teams
- Etc.

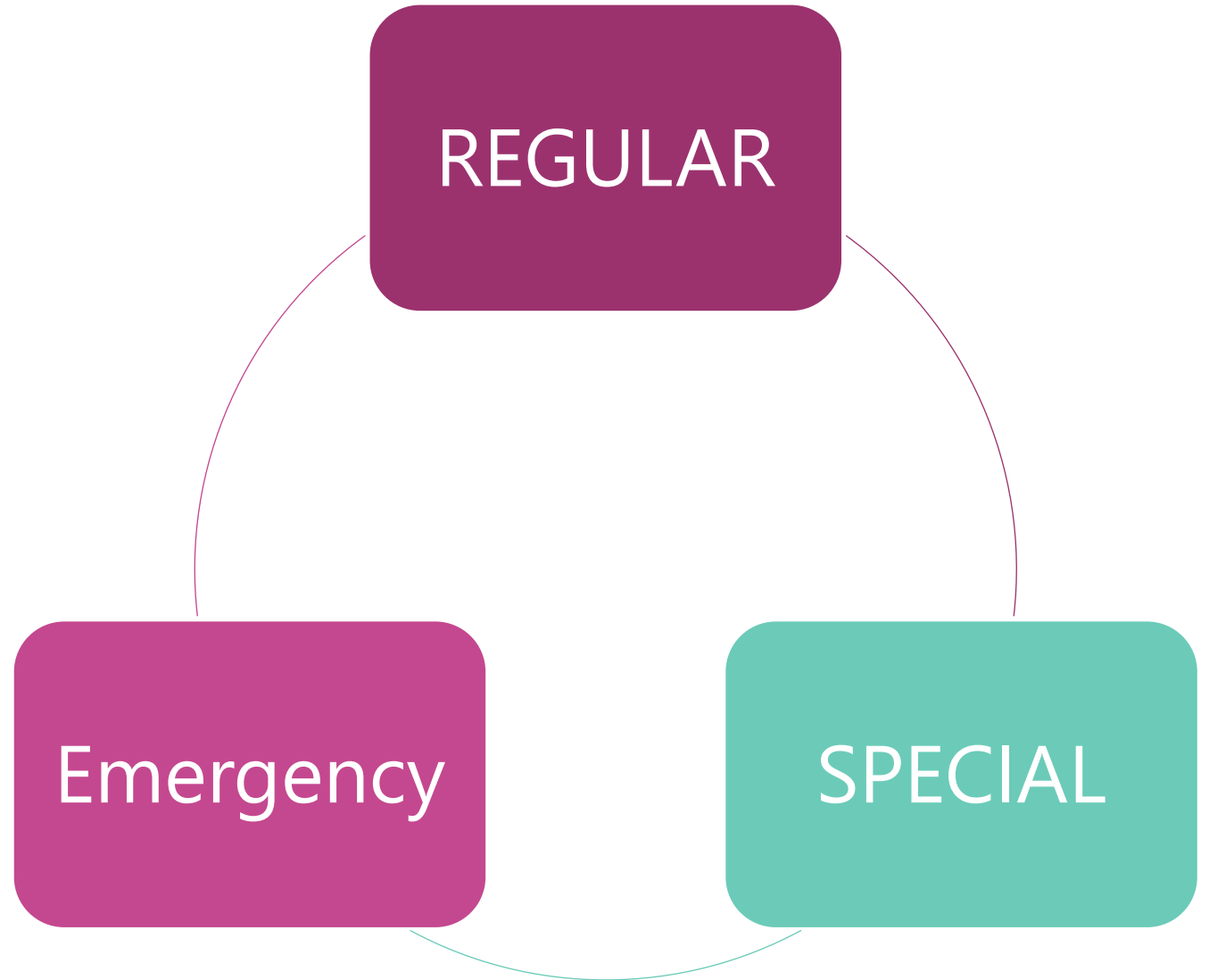
## Main Point:

- Collective intent by a majority to meet and transact business.

## What is a “serial” communication?

- Any chain communication in which less than a quorum is present, but the information is repeated such that a quorum has participated
  - Ex: A talks to B about agency business, B repeats what A said to C, etc.

# TYPES OF MEETINGS



# Regular meetings under the OPMA

- Recurring meetings held according to a regular schedule
- The governing body must establish the date and time of the regular meetings by resolution, order, or rule
- The agenda can be amended and final action can be taken on items on the agenda
  - **Governing body shall provide an opportunity at or before every regular meeting at which final action is taken for public comment** (new requirement effective June 1, 2022)

RCW 42.30.075.





# Special meetings under the OPMA

- Any meeting other than a regular meeting
- May be called by the presiding officer or a majority of the members of the governing body
- Notice requirements
  - Notice must specify the time and place and specific business to be transacted
  - Cannot take final action on a topic unless the topic was listed in the notice
  - Exception: No notice required for a special meeting that is called to deal with an emergency

RCW 42.30.080.

# Emergency Meetings

- Notice is not required when special meeting called to deal with an emergency
- Emergency involves injury or damage to persons or property or the likelihood of such injury or damage
- Where time requirements of notice make notice impractical and increase likelihood of such injury or damage



# Executive sessions

- Part of a regular or special meeting that is closed to the public.
- Limited to specific purposes set out in the OPMA, including:
  - Real estate selection, sale, lease
  - Publicly bid contracts
  - Evaluating complaints against a public officer or employee
  - Evaluating qualifications of applicant for public employment
  - Meet with legal counsel about enforcement actions, litigation, potential litigation
- Presiding officer must announce the purpose of executive session and time it will end; may extend time by further announcement.



# Public attendance and conduct during meetings

- Any member of public must be permitted to attend. Agency cannot require any conditions for attendance, such as signing in.
- Must allow public comment at regular meeting at which final action is taken, this can be accomplished orally at the meeting or by written comment before the meeting
- Governing body can impose “generally applicable conditions ... reasonably necessary to protect the public health or safety, or to protect against interruption of the meeting.” RCW 42.30.050.
  - E.g., remove disruptive attendees; clear meeting room; move meeting to new location.

RCW 42.30.040, .050.



# Minutes

- Minutes of all regular and special meetings must be promptly recorded and open to public inspection
- Law doesn't specify a format; agency has discretion on how detailed minutes must be
- Minutes of executive sessions aren't required, but agency must enter the announced *purpose* of the executive session in the minutes.

RCW 42.30.035; RCW 42.30.110(2).



# Penalties for violating the OPMA



- Any person” may bring action for an OPMA violation.  
Remedies:
  - Mandamus or injunction to stop or prevent violations ([RCW 42.30.130](#))
  - Void decisions adopted at meeting that violated OPMA
  - Costs and reasonable attorney fees
- Personal liability for members
  - \$500 civil penalty for first knowing violation
  - \$1000 civil penalty for successive knowing violations

RCW 42.30.120.

# Risk Management Tips

- Establish a culture of compliance with the OPMA.
- Receive training on the OPMA.
- Review available resources; institute best practices.
- Keep updated on current developments in OPMA; correctly apply law.
  - *Remember: the OPMA can change through amendments, or develop through case law.*
  - *Remember: other laws can govern an agency's meeting procedures.*
- Consult with agency's legal counsel.



# OPMA Training

- The “Open Government Trainings Act” requires OPMA training for every member of a governing body within 90 days of taking their oath or assuming their duties. Refresher training occurs no later than every 4 years.
- Training can be taken online, in person, or by other means.
- Training resources, videos, and more information about the Act (a “Q & A”) are available on the Attorney General’s Office Open Government Training Web Page:  
<http://www.atg.wa.gov/OpenGovernmentTraining.aspx>





# OPMA Resources

- AGO's Open Government page
  - Open Government Training (<https://www.atg.wa.gov/open-government-training>)
  - Open Government Resource Manual (<https://www.atg.wa.gov/open-government-internet-manual>)
  - AGO opinions about the OPMA ([Indices \(agportal-s3bucket.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://agportal-s3bucket.s3.amazonaws.com))
- Municipal Research and Services Center
  - One-page guides on OPMA topics (<https://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Legal/Open-Government/Open-Public-Meetings-Act/Open-Public-Meetings-Act-Basics.aspx>)

# Advisory administration

JR Richards, Director of Insurance Services

# Proposed 2026 meeting schedule

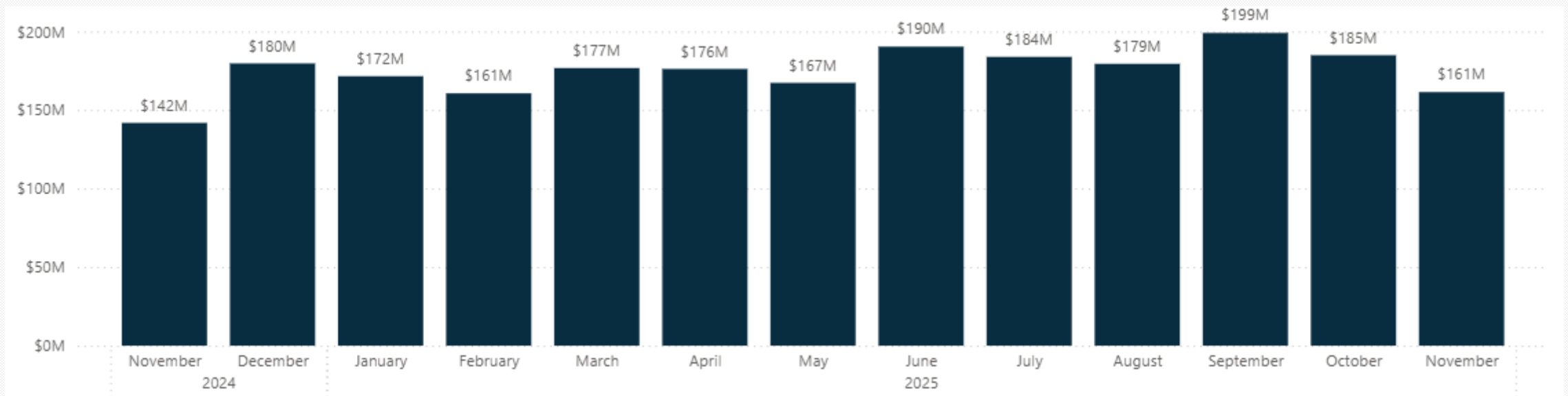
Date	Time & Notes
Friday, January 23, 2026	1:30 to 2:30 pm
Friday, February 27, 2026	1:30 to 2:30 pm
Friday, March 27, 2026	1:30 to 2:30 pm
Wednesday, May 27, 2026	1:30 to 3:30 pm
Wednesday, July 22, 2026	1:30 to 3:30 pm
Wednesday, September 23, 2026	1:30 to 3:30 pm
Thursday, October 29, 2026	1:30 to 3:30 pm <i>Moved to Thursday to avoid conflict with Long-term Services and Supports Trust Commission meeting</i>
Wednesday, December 16, 2026	1:30 to 3:30 pm

# Program experience and performance measures

Rebecca Grady, Data and Research Manager

# Monthly Benefit Payments

- **November 2025, \$161 million benefits paid**
  - 15% less than the prior month
  - 13% more than November 2024
- **\$176 million avg. monthly payments for previous 12 months**
- **November 2025, avg. weekly benefit for new claim years was \$1,116**



*Technical note: Data grouped by date financial transaction occurred in accounting database. If comparing to monthly approved benefits or account balance data published elsewhere there may be slight variations.*

# Monthly Premiums Remitted

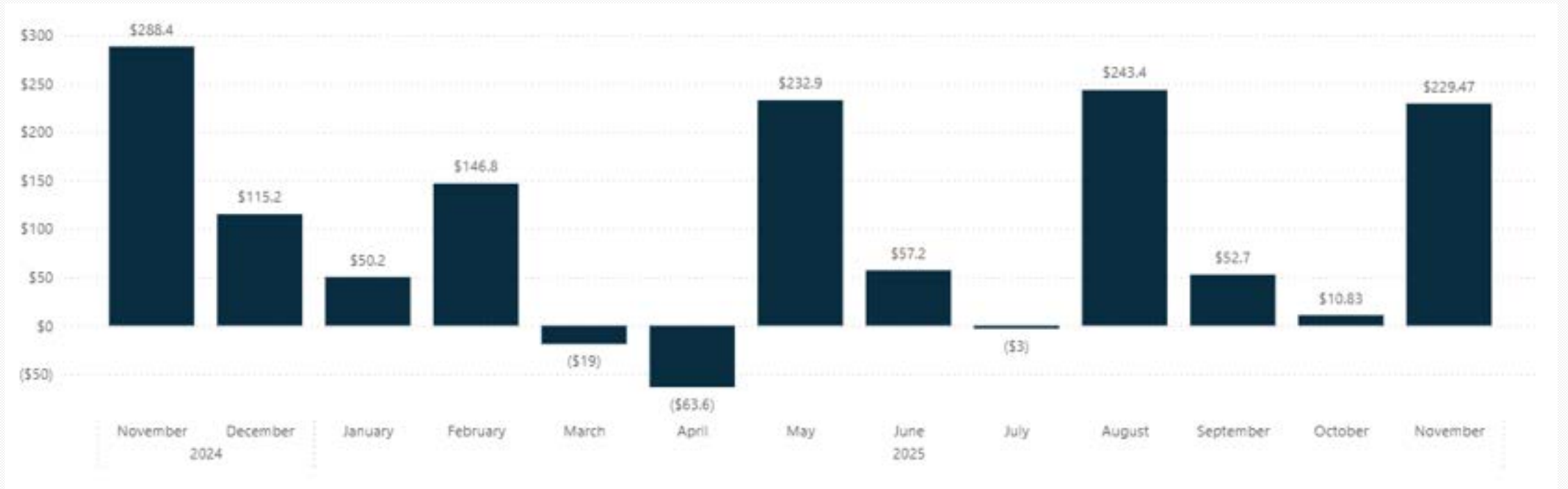
- November 2025, \$40 million in premiums remitted
- \$2.29 billion premiums remitted in the previous 12 months



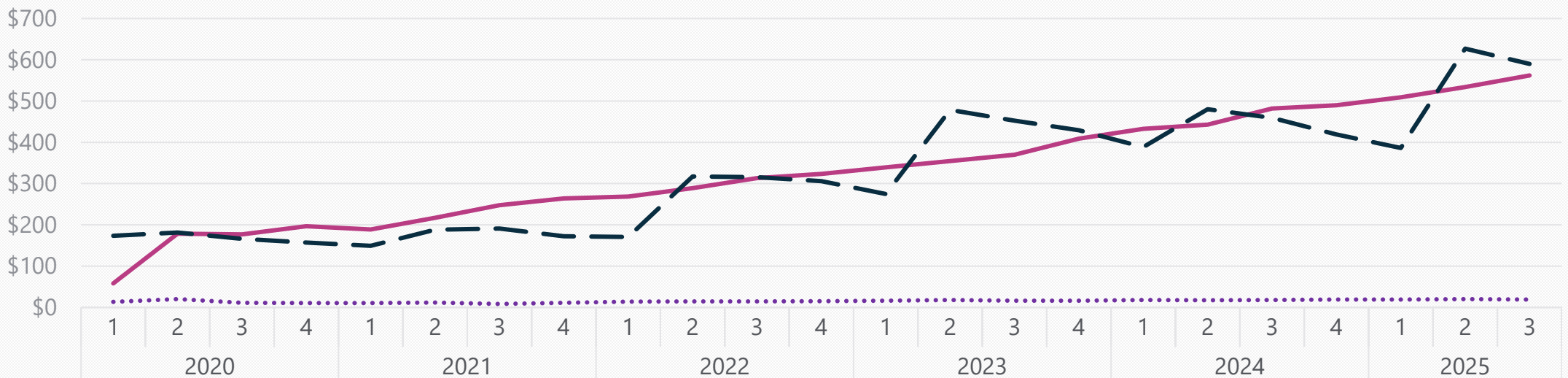
*Technical note: Data grouped by date financial transaction occurred in accounting database. If comparing to monthly invoiced premiums or account balance data published elsewhere there may be slight variations.*

# Monthly Account Balance

- Ending account balance for November 2025 was \$229.47 million
- \$219 million more than the prior month
- \$59 million less than November 2024



# Premiums, benefits, operating expenses, and account balance by quarter (millions)



	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
	2020				2021				2022				2023				2024				2025		
— Benefits	\$58	\$179	\$177	\$197	\$189	\$217	\$248	\$264	\$269	\$289	\$313	\$324	\$339	\$355	\$370	\$409	\$432	\$443	\$482	\$490	\$509	\$534	\$562
— Premiums	\$173	\$181	\$166	\$157	\$149	\$188	\$191	\$172	\$170	\$317	\$315	\$306	\$275	\$479	\$452	\$429	\$389	\$480	\$459	\$419	\$386	\$627	\$590
••••• Operating	\$13	\$20	\$11	\$11	\$10	\$12	\$8	\$11	\$14	\$15	\$14	\$15	\$16	\$18	\$16	\$16	\$18	\$17	\$18	\$19	\$19	\$20	\$19
Account Balance	\$467	\$454	\$427	\$376	\$327	\$287	\$222	\$123	\$19	\$32	\$17	-\$19	-\$98	\$211	\$278	\$284	\$222	\$237	\$209	\$97	-\$19	\$57	\$53

Technical note: Operating expenses in recent quarter are preliminary. Account balance, premiums, and expenses data are from different data systems so numbers will not exactly total within a quarter.

# Customer-focused performance goals

## Benefits wait time

- Time to application decision
- Time to first weekly claim processed

## Customer contact response time

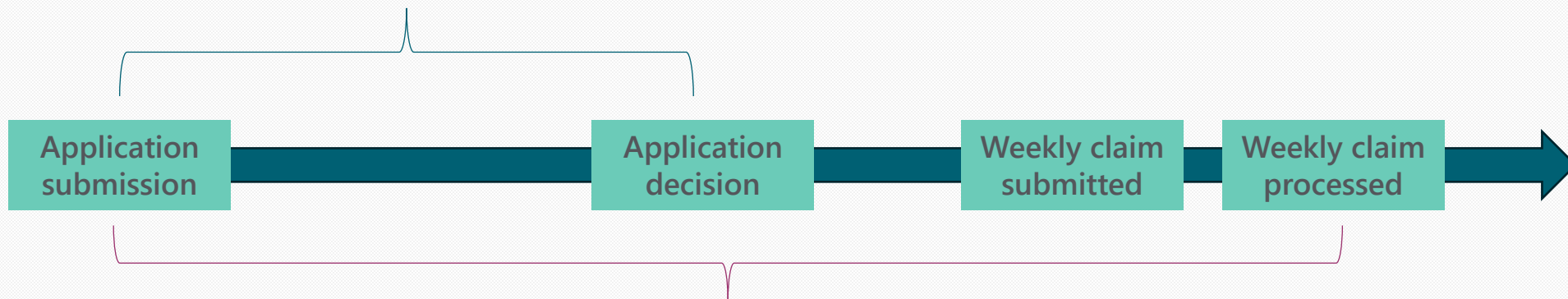
- Phone hold time
- Secure message & email response time

## Employer accounts

- Full account access

# Benefit wait time

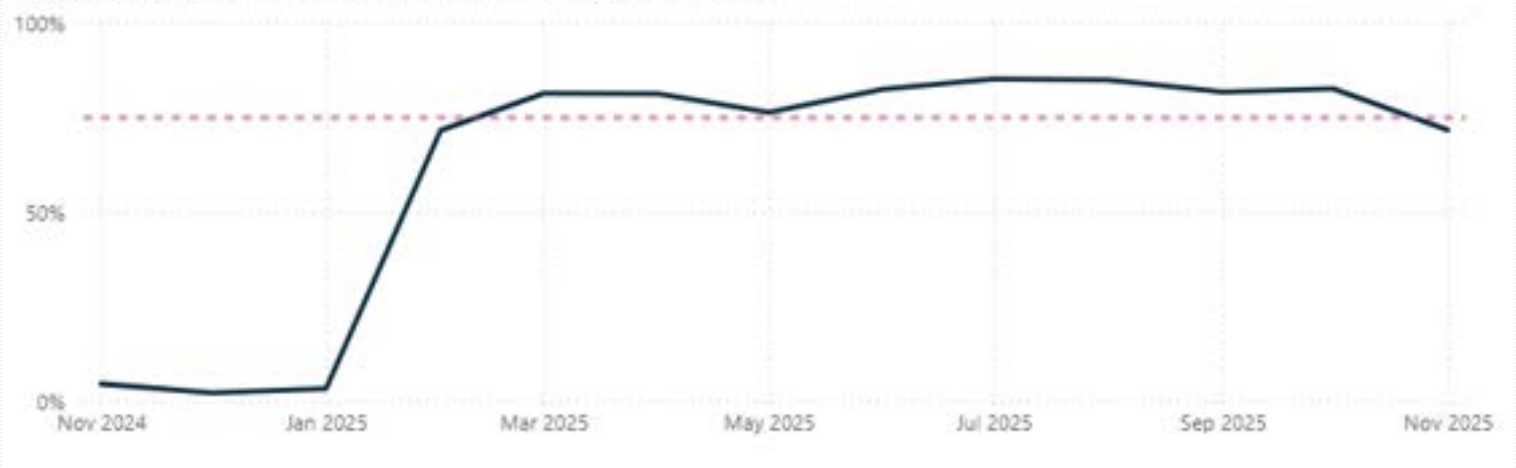
Time to application decision  
Goal: 75% within 14 days  
(historical "target two weeks")



Time to first weekly claim processed  
Goal: 75% within 21 days

# Leave processing times

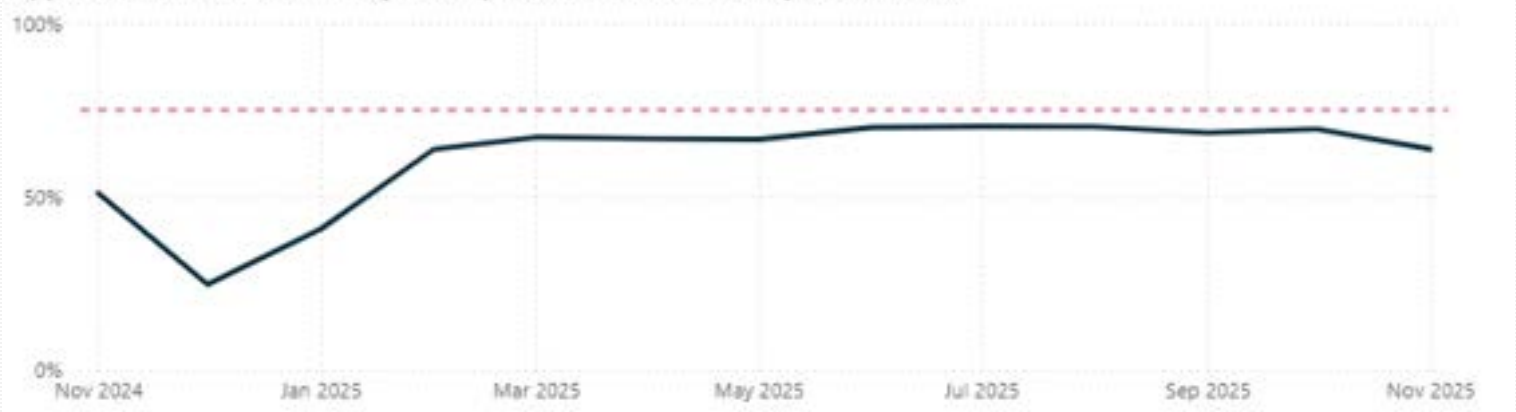
Applications with initial decision within 14 days (Goal: 75%)



**November 2025, short of goal with 72% of leave applications initially adjudicated within 14 days**

- 11 percentage points less than the previous month
- 67 percentage points more than November 2024
- November 2025, median processing time was 14 days

Applications with first weekly claim processed within 21 days (Goal: 75%)



**November 2025, under goal with 64% of applications having first weekly claim processed within 21 days**

- 6 percentage points less than the previous month
- 13 percentage points higher than November 2024
- November 2025, median time from application submission to first weekly claim processed was 18 days

# Customer contact response time



## Phone hold time

Goal: 80% within 10 minutes

With zero receiving "high call volume" message



## Secure message & email response time

Goal: 80% within 1 business day (or 2 calendar days)

Will need new tech functionality to track



## Overall responsiveness goal

80% of contacts meeting response time goals

Split out tracking by contact type and customer

# Phone responsiveness

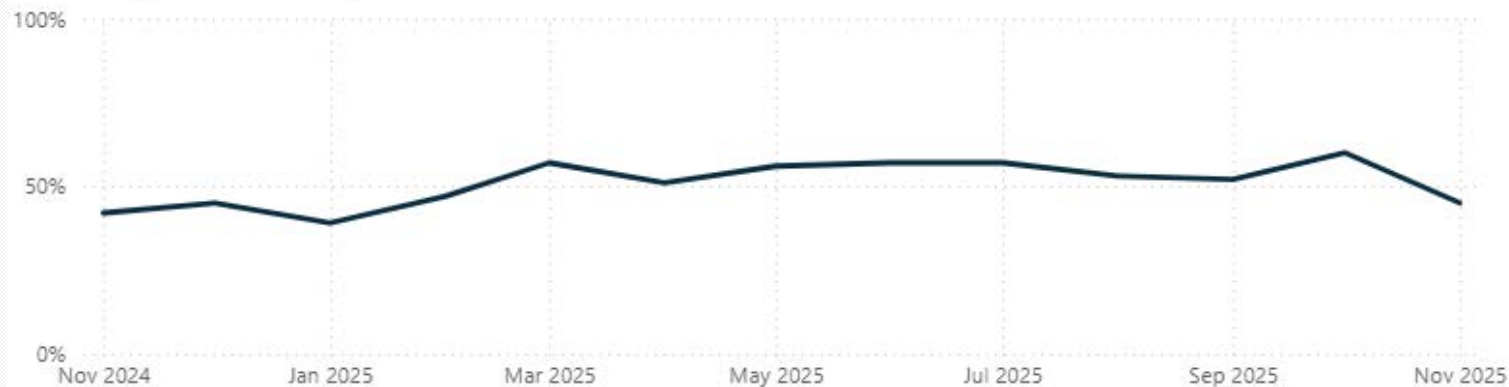
Phone hold time less than 10 minutes (Goal: 80%)



**November 2025, 43% of Paid Leave phone calls were answered within 10 minutes.**

- 2 percentage points less than the prior month
- 1 percentage point less than November 2024
- November 2025, avg. phone queue time was 32 minutes

Percentage of calls into queue



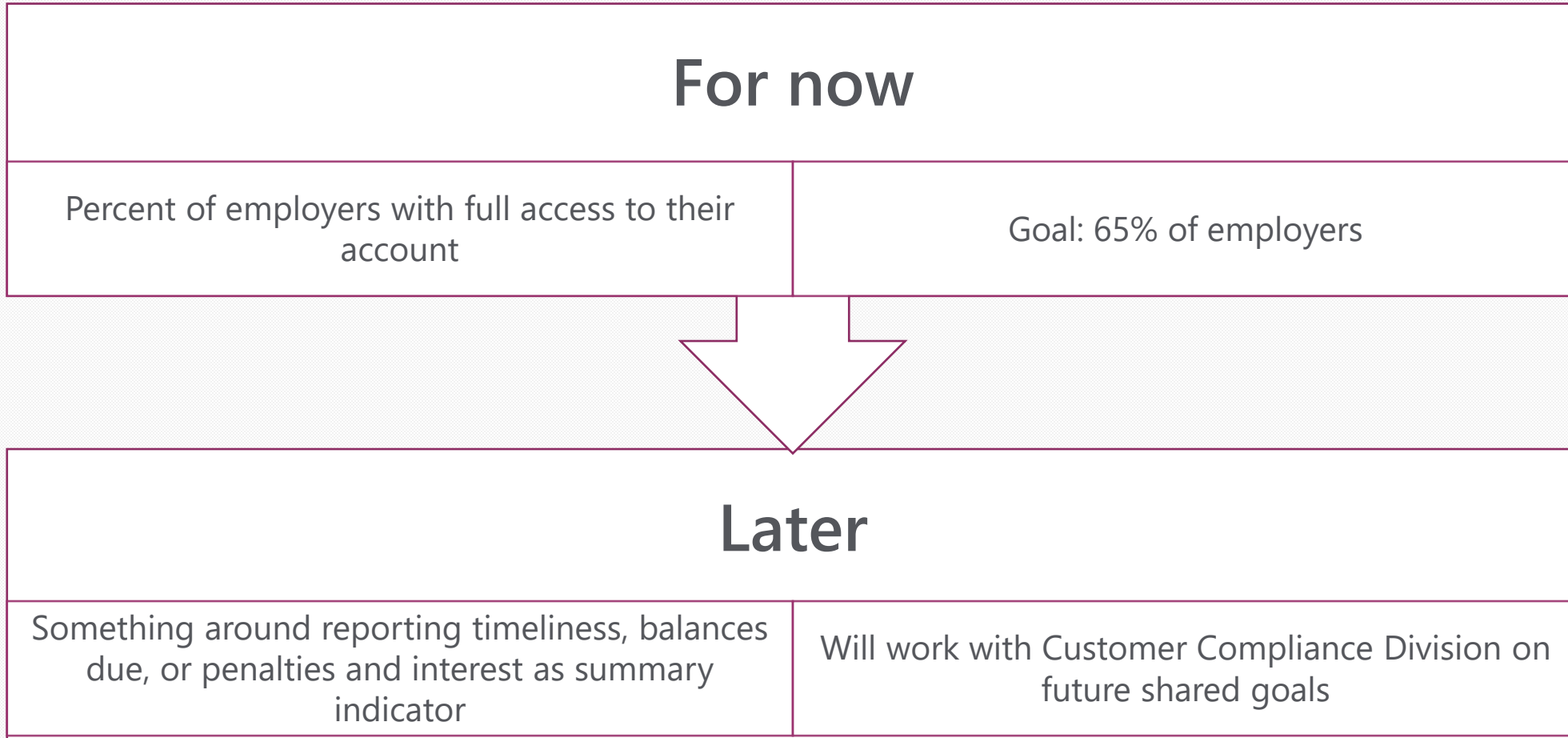
**November 2025, 45% of calls to Leave and Care went into a queue**

- 15 percentage points less than the previous month
- 3 percentage points more than November 2024

# Coming soon...

- Monthly tracking of progress toward
  - 80% of emails responded to within 1 business day
  - 80% of secure messages responded to within 1 business day

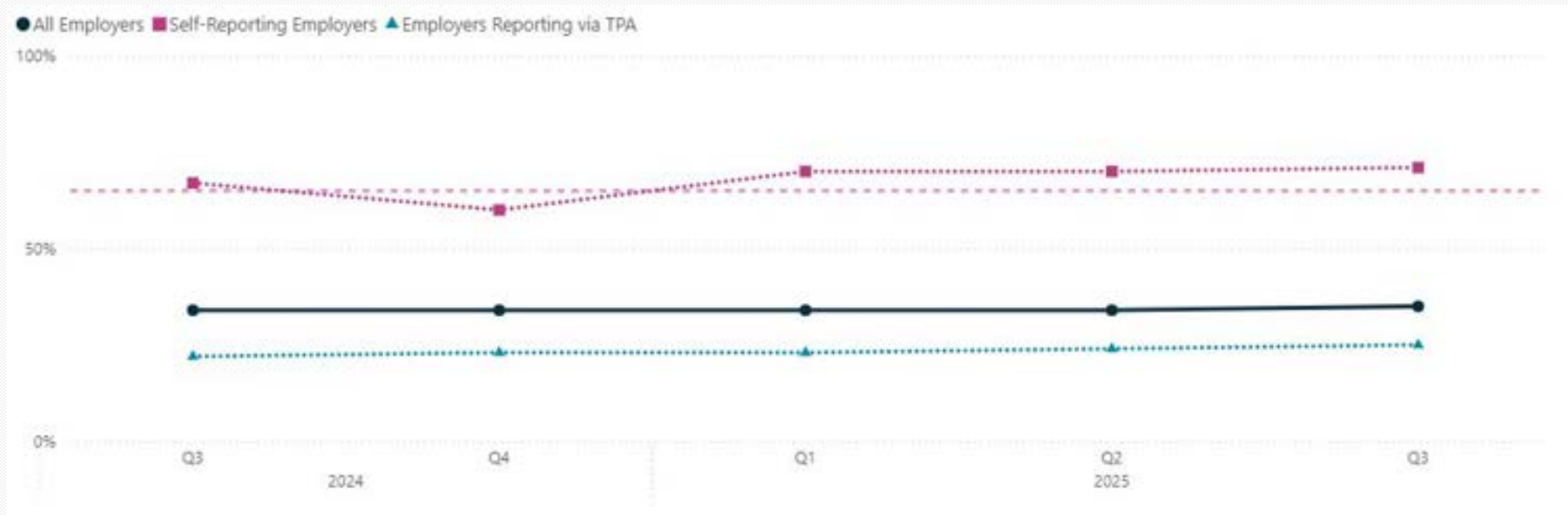
# Employer accounts



# Employers with full account access

**Goal: 65% of employers with quarterly reporting had full employer account access**

- Q3 2025, 35% had full access accounts
  - 1 percentage point more than previous quarter
- 71% of those employers reporting for themselves had full access
  - 1 percentage point more than previous quarter
- 25% of employers using a TPA had full access
  - 1 percentage point more than previous quarter



# Summary of program performance goals

Performance Metric	Performance Goal	Current Status
Time to application decision	75% of applications with initial decision within 14 days	<b>72%</b>
Time to first weekly claim processed	75% of applications with first weekly claim processed within 21 days	<b>64%</b>
Phone hold time	80% of customers with less than 10-minute hold time	<b>43%</b> met hold time goal, <b>45%</b> went into phone queue
Secure message & email response time	80% customers receiving a response in 1 business day	<b>TBD</b>
Full account access	65% of employer accounts with full access	<b>35%</b>

# 2025 Paid Leave Annual Report

Katie Geist, Research and Data

# Customer demographic analysis overview

## What customers were included?

- About 214,000 who used leave between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025
- 'Used leave' means customers had at least one approved benefit payment

## How were work-history eligible & total workforce comparisons constructed?

- Used Paid Leave wage report data where possible
- American Community Survey census data where needed

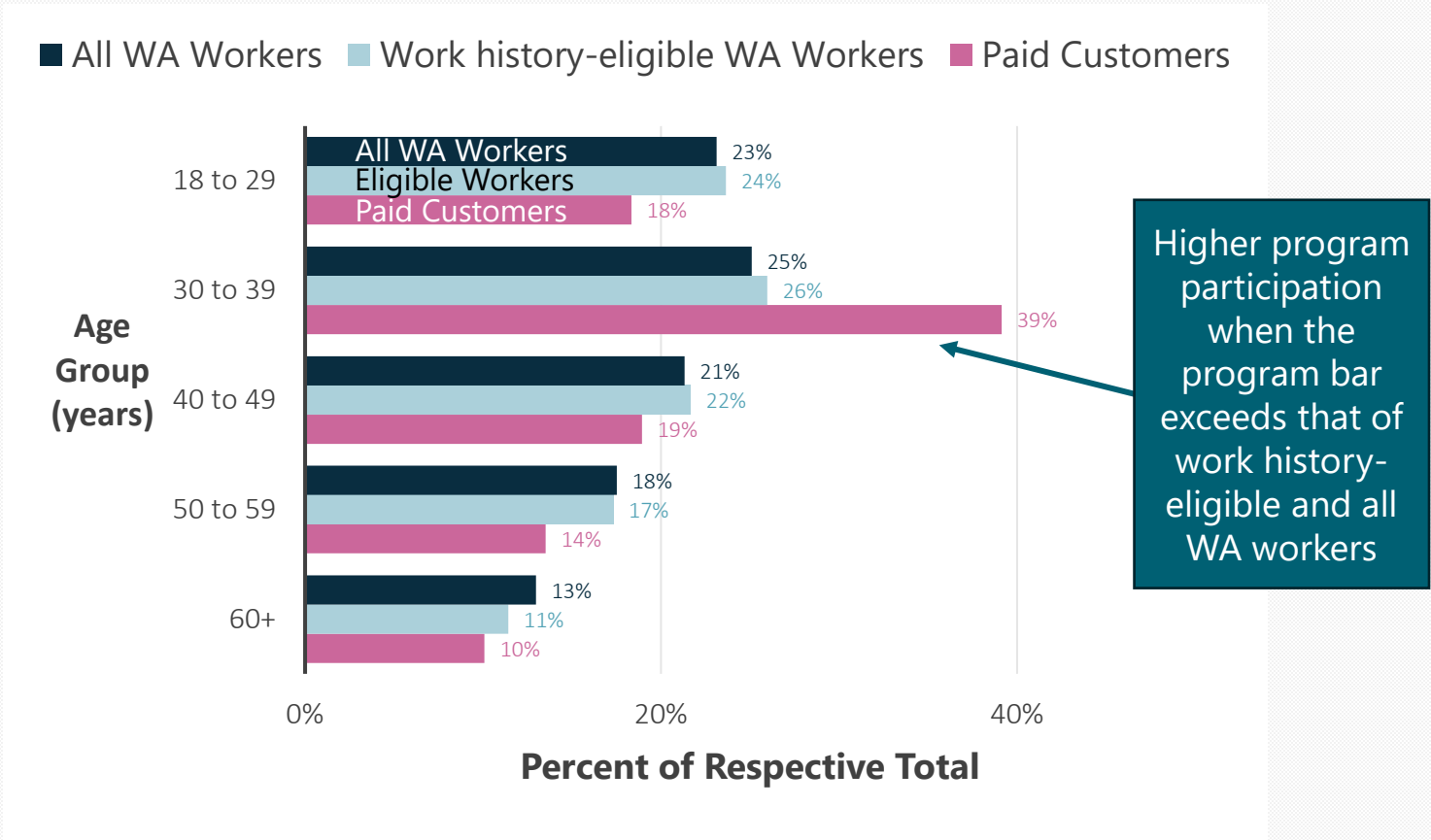
## What characteristics are included in the report?

- *Age*, gender, racial-ethnic identity, *language preference*, *average hourly wage*, employer *size*, employer *industry*, and *geography*

# Customers ages 30-39 appear to have the highest participation

- Workers aged 30 to 39 have much higher participation than other age groups
- Younger workers (under 40 years) have more Family Bonding and Medical Pregnancy claims, whereas older workers (40+ years) have more Family Care and Medical claims

***Paid Leave customer comparison to eligible and all workers by age***



Sources: American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

# Other demographics are consistent with past reports

## Gender

Female-identifying customers have higher participation (55%) compared to male-identifying customers (44%)

Female-identifying customers use more total leave around welcoming a new child to the family, though male customers have higher relative bonding claim use

Customers who identify as binary or prefer not to say use more leave for a serious medical condition

## Race-ethnicity

Workers who identify as Latina/o/x or Hispanic have higher participation in the Paid Leave program compared to their relative population size among eligible and all Washington workers

Participation is lower for workers who identify as Asian or Asian American, White, or another racial-ethnic identity relative to their share of the Washington workforce

Participation is similar to eligibility for workers who identify as Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or American Indian or Alaska Native

# Customer preference for non-English languages is increasing

- In FY25, **8.5%** of customers indicated they prefer a language other than English on their benefit application.
- The proportion of customers who prefer a language other than English is **steadily growing**
  - 5% in FY22
  - 6% in FY23
  - 7% in FY24
- More prefer English on the Paid Leave application than **spoken at home**

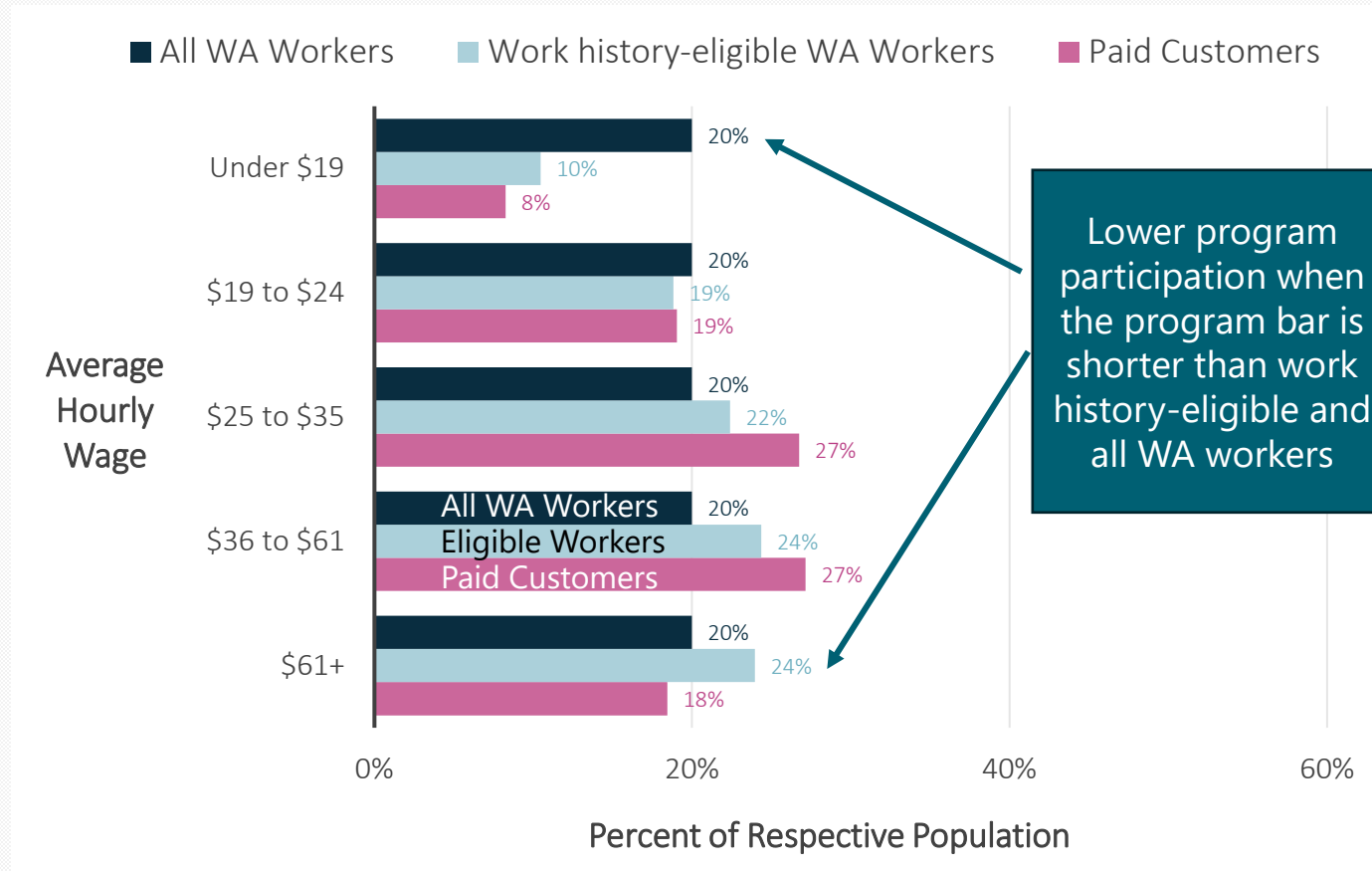
*Paid Leave customer comparison to eligible and all workers by language preference*

	Paid Customers	Work History-Eligible WA Workers	All WA Workers
Amharic	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Arabic	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%
Chinese	0.3%	1.4%	1.3%
English	91.5%	76.3%	76.3%
Farsi	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
French	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%
Japanese	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%
Khmer	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%
Korean	0.1%	0.7%	0.8%
Lao	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Marshallese	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Oromo	0.02%	0.01%	0.005%
Punjabi	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Russian	0.1%	0.8%	0.9%
Somali	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Spanish	6.4%	9.4%	9.5%
Tagalog	0.2%	0.8%	0.8%
Ukrainian	0.1%	0.8%	0.4%
Vietnamese	0.3%	0.4%	1.1%
Other / Not Specified	0.3%	6.7%	6.5%

Sources: American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

# Workers in highest and lowest wage groups have lower participation

***Paid Leave customer comparison to eligible and all workers by average hourly wage***



Sources: American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

- Workers in the lowest wage group (up to \$18) have lower participation and eligibility compared to middle-earners
- Workers in the highest wage group (more than \$60) also have reduced participation but slightly higher eligibility
- Lower-wage workers have more Medical Pregnancy claims
- Higher wage workers have more Family Bonding claims

# Employees of smaller employers have reduced participation

- 50% of all customers work for an employer with 250 or more employees
- The *biggest gaps* are seen for customers working for employers with:
  - fewer than 8 employees
  - 25–49 and 50–149 employees

*Paid Leave customer comparison to eligible and all workers by employer size*

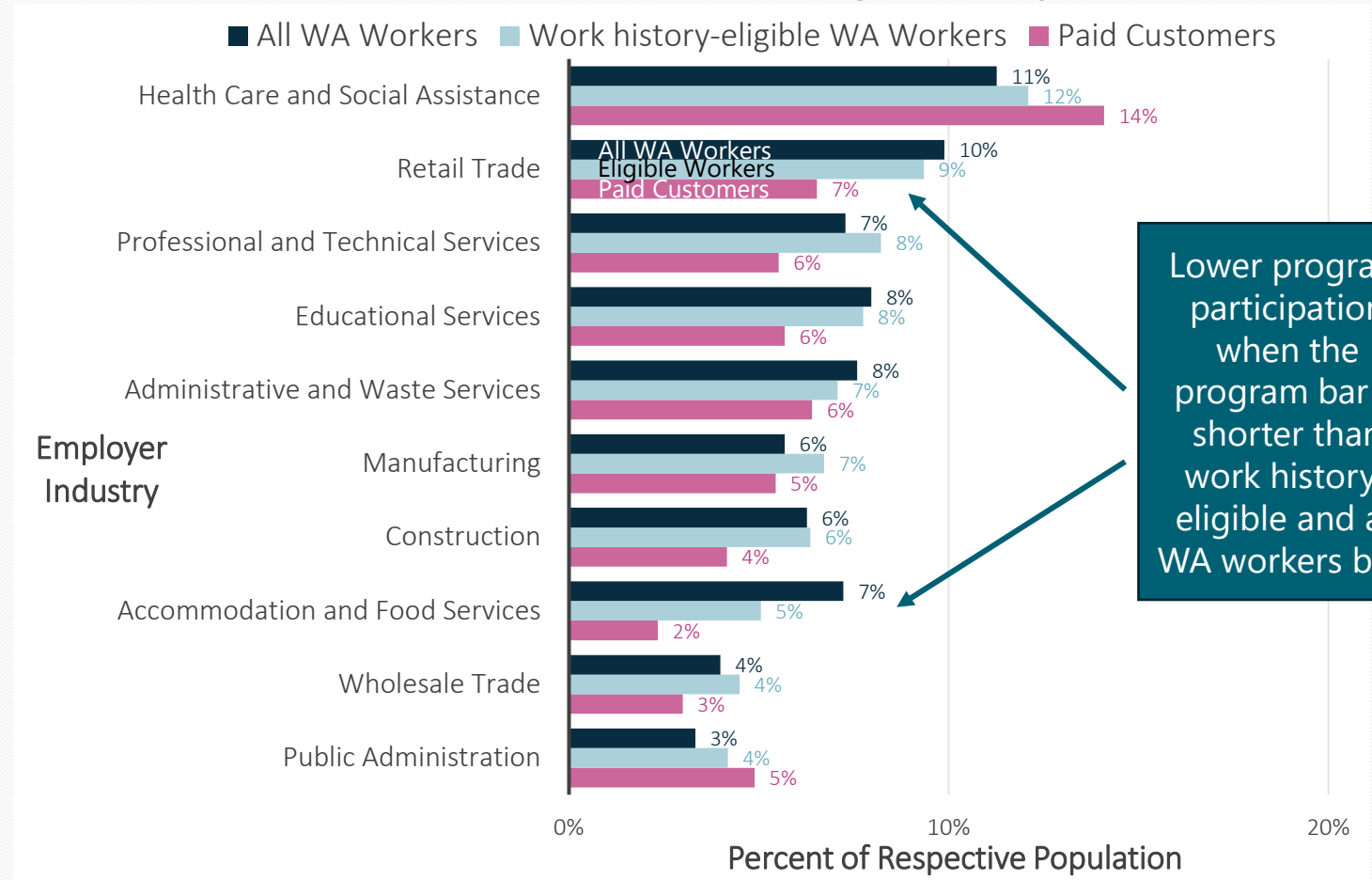
	Paid Customers	Work History-Eligible WA Workers	All WA Workers
Fewer than 8 employees	3%	8%	10%
8–14 employees	3%	5%	6%
15–24 employees	3%	5%	6%
25–49 employees	4%	8%	8%
50–149 employees	9%	13%	13%
150–249 employees	5%	6%	6%
250+ employees	50%	53%	50%

Sources: American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

# Workers in Accommodation & Food Services and Retail Trade have lower participation *and* eligibility

- Participation is lowest for those who work in Accommodation & Food Services and Retail Trade relative to other WA workers
  - Work history eligibility is similarly lower
- Highest participation for workers in Health Care & Social Assistance
  - Additionally, they have slightly higher eligibility relative to WA workers

**Comparison of Paid Leave customers to work history-eligible and all workers by employer industry  
(Top 10 industries of all Washington employers)**

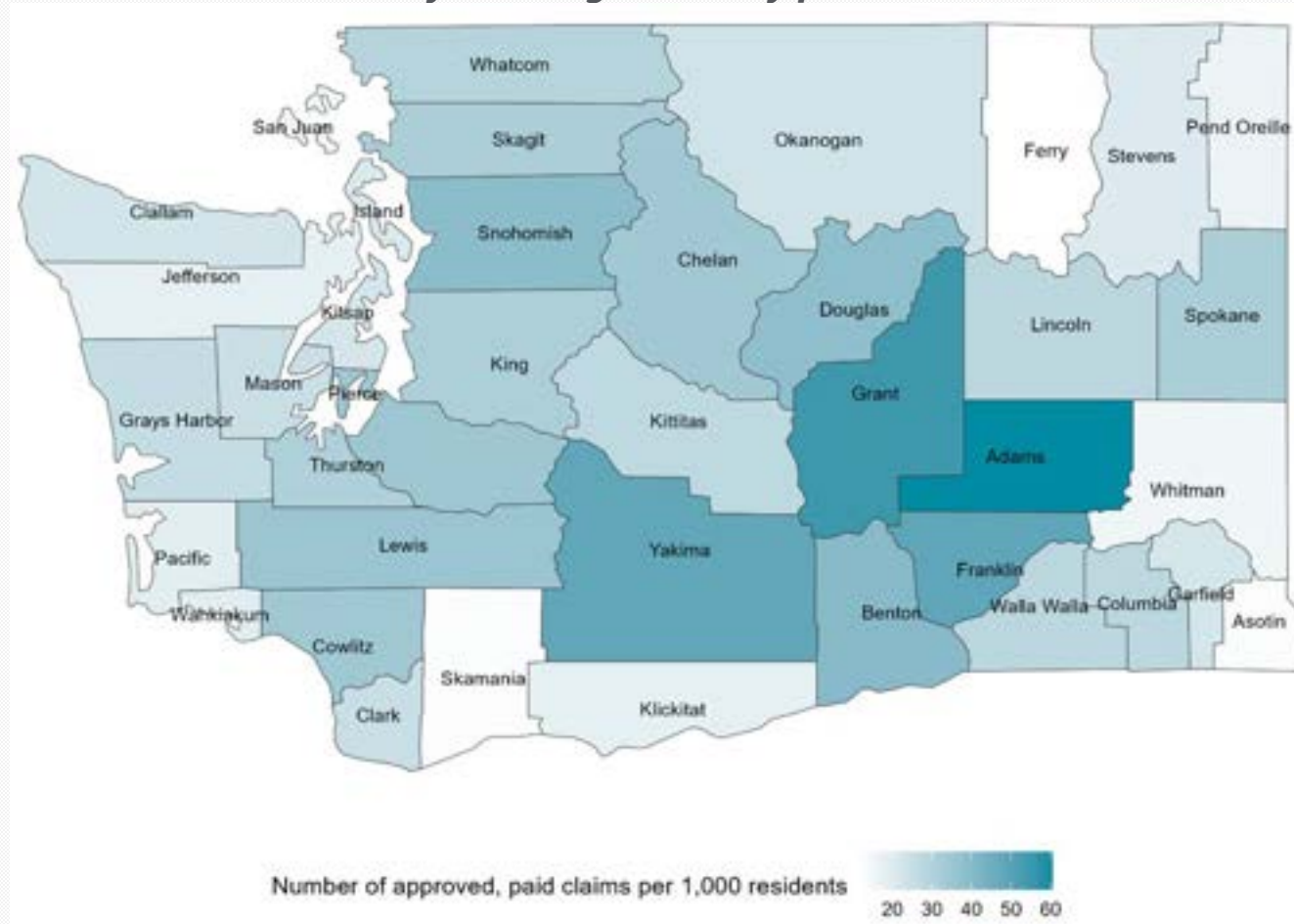


Lower program participation when the program bar is shorter than work history-eligible and all WA workers bars

Sources: American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

# Program participation varies across counties

*Paid claims by Washington county per 1,000 residents*



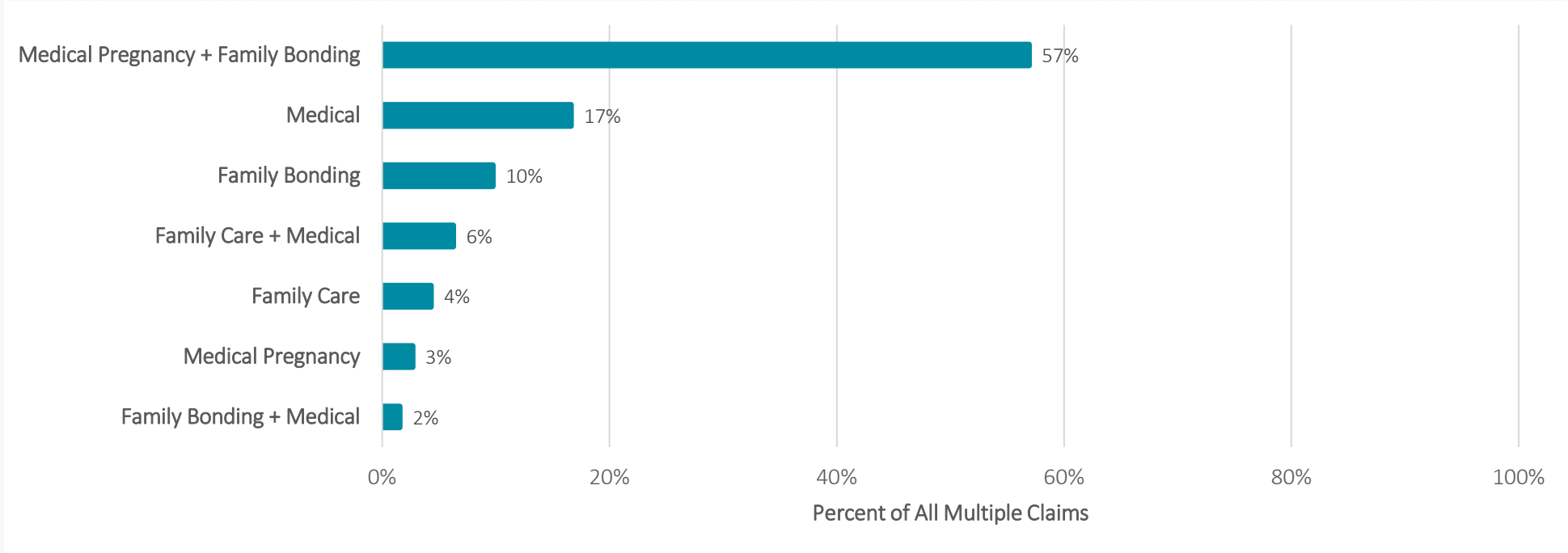
- Adams, Grant, and Franklin counties had the **most** claims paid per 1,000 residents
- Ferry, Asotin, and Skamania counties had the **fewest** paid claims per 1,000 residents

Sources: American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

# Customers may be paid for multiple claims within a claim year

- 20% of customers were paid on two or more claims within their claim year
- **Medical pregnancy + family bonding** has the most customer claim years (57%), followed by *multiple medical claims* (17%) and *multiple family bonding claims* in the same claim year (10%)

**Most common leave type combinations among Paid Leave customers paid for two or more claims in a claim year**



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

# FY25 changes and customer improvements

## Improved program equity and customer service

- Added an option to select preferred language dialect, which facilitates interpreter service
- Added graphics to the benefit approval letter to better explain next steps
- Improved operational processes enabling customers with ITINs to apply online
- Improved questions about leave dates and the application flow, laying some needed groundwork for future changes like simplifying the birth-to-bonding claim process
- Community engagement team has been busily developing sustainable partnerships with community-based organizations and other agencies

## Program integrity & efficiency

- Provided staff with additional information and controls to prevent fraud and ensure benefit payments are accurate and timely
- Improved the process for benefit customers to provide required documentation at time of application to reduce fact-finding and thus time to determination
- Transitioned the power of attorney (POA) process from paper forms to a self-serve electronic system for employers and their agents

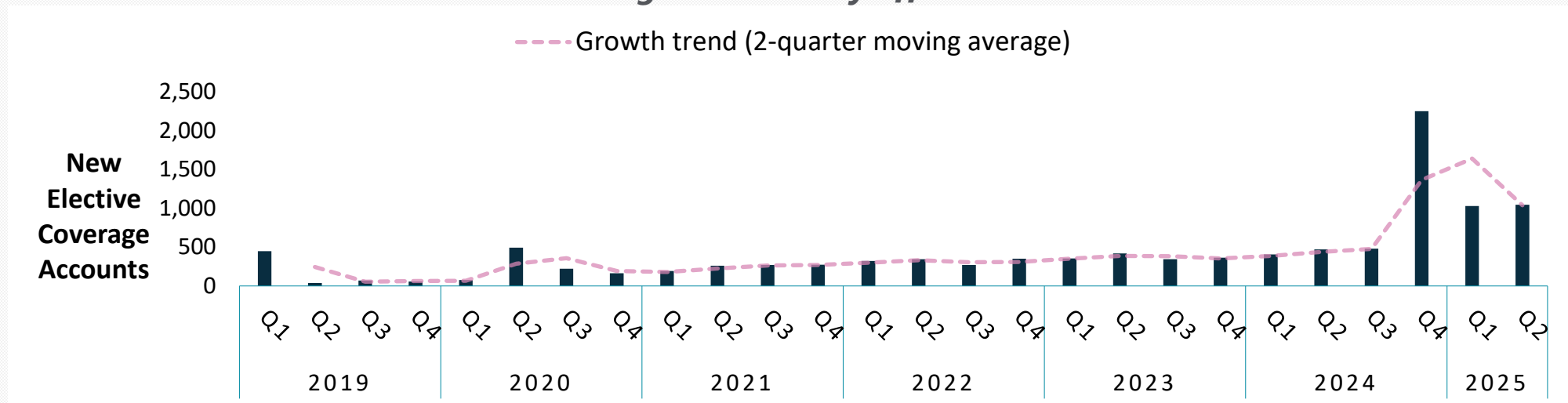
## Progress toward legislative mandates

- Enhanced the benefit system to remove manual work when redetermining claims due to employment changes, backdating, appeals, and other circumstances that impact the claim year or qualifying period
- Built the underlying functionality to withhold child support from benefit payments, which went live in September 2025
- Fully implemented the Transportation Network Company (TNC) Pilot under SHB 1570 (2023), in which drivers can opt in/out of the pilot and their third-party administrator can report earnings and pay premiums quarterly on their behalf

# Elective Coverage participation grew, driven by the launch of the Transportation Network Company (TNC) Pilot for rideshare drivers

- As of the end of June 2025, 10,830 accounts associated with approximately 10,300 individuals had elected coverage for Paid Leave.
- New elective coverage accounts increased substantially in FY25, with **2,953** rideshare drivers who opted-in to the TNC Pilot.
- About 1,900 (18%) elective coverage customers submitted benefit applications in FY25, of which 81% were approved.

***New elective coverage accounts by effective start date***





Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

# Program priorities

Alison Eldridge, Deputy Director

# Portfolio status overview

Leave and Care   Portfolio Dashboard Status Report						As of December 5, 2025			
									
Lvl	Project Description	Theme	Sch	Res	Risk	Q2 - 2025	Q3 - 2025	Q4 - 2025	Q1 - 2026
1	<a href="#">Unclaimed properties 2025</a>	Annual project						11/30/2025 ★	
0	<a href="#">2025 Annual Program Report</a>	Legislation						12/01/2025 ★	
4	<a href="#">WA Cares Contribution Determination</a>	WA Cares						12/31/2025	
2	<a href="#">WA Cares Exemptions 2026 (SSB 5291)</a>	Legislation						12/31/2025	
2	<a href="#">Equitable hiring: Implementation of EO 24-04 and 24-05</a>	Legislation						01/16/2026	
2	<a href="#">Receiving benefit overpayments</a>	Balance of Work						01/31/2026	
4	<a href="#">Assess and waive benefit overpayments</a>	Balance of Work						01/31/2026	
2	<a href="#">Employer account notifications and actions</a>	Balance of Work						01/31/2026	
1	<a href="#">2026 Annual changes (premium rate, WBA, SS cap)</a>	Annual project						1/31/2026	
3	<a href="#">Job protection and Small business grants (ESSHB 1213)</a>	Legislation						01/31/2026	
2	<a href="#">4-consecutive hours (ESSHB 1213)</a>	Legislation						01/31/2026	
1	<a href="#">2025 1099Gs</a>	Annual project						02/28/2026	
3	<a href="#">Cloud Migration Portal</a>	Enhancement						Q1 - 2026	
2	<a href="#">Elective coverage for Tribes</a>	Balance of Work						04/15/2026	
2	<a href="#">Quality Assurance Revamp</a>	Enhancement						04/24/2026	
2	<a href="#">WA Cares Annual Statements 2026</a>	WA Cares						04/30/2026	
4	<a href="#">One Washington</a>	Enhancements						03/01/2027	

<b>Reporting Date:</b>	11/01/2025 – 11/30/2025	<b>Project Summary:</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Program Health</b>	
<b>Sponsors:</b>	JR Richards; Matt Buelow	Employment Security administers the Paid Leave program (established in 2017 under RCW 50A). During the launch of Paid Leave, Employment Security prioritized creating the technology and operational processes required to pay benefits. Employer wage reporting and premium collection started in 2019. Benefit payments began in 2020. ESD implemented the Paid Leave program focused on delivering benefit payments on schedule. The agency could not fully implement every component of the complex law in its initial design work and meet an aggressive timeline to reach benefit payment. As a result, the program presently operates with several manual procedures that require further design work, and key components of the law remain incomplete.				<b>Prior</b>	<b>Current</b>
<b>Project Manager:</b>	Chi Underwood						



### Key Accomplishments

- Active deliverables:**
- Kick-off Elective coverage for Tribes
- Sub-project deliverables approved by the steering (March and June)**
- Benefit overpayments
  - Employer responsibilities
  - Cross-program benefits
- Solution Design sessions: Gate 1 (Requirements and solution direction)**
- Reviewed the feature sets for sub-projects to deliver the project vision.
  - Worked with leadership to validate the deliverables that are included in the MVP scope and considered for the future phases.
  - The architects provided a high-level overview of their technical plan.

### Activities for Upcoming Month

- **Onboarding QA vendor:** Finalize QA contract.
- **Funding gate submission:** Complete the technology budget and the project management plan based on the delivery plan provided by each sub-project team.
- **Active projects:** Continue to manage active projects.
- **Architect & solutioning session:** Schedule and complete architectural / solutioning the prioritized deliverable for March 2026.
- **Delivery plan:** Prioritize and continue finalizing a delivery plan for each sub-project for 12/2025 – 06/2026; 07/2026 – 06/2027.

### Scheduled Events and Quality Milestones

Scheduled Events and Quality Milestones	Status
<b>Paid Leave Balance of Work (BoW) Sub-Project Charter Approval</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit Overpayments charter</li> <li>• Employer responsibilities charter</li> <li>• Cross-program charter</li> <li>• Other program requirements charter</li> </ul>	★
<b>Paid Leave Balance of Work (BoW) Program Charter Approval</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overarching program charter – 10%</li> </ul>	●
<b>Paid Leave BoW Sub-project Product Solution Design – Gate 1 (requirements &amp; solution direction)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traceability matrix</li> <li>• High-level solution direction</li> <li>• Sponsor sign-off on requirements and agreement on solution direction</li> </ul>	★
<b>Paid Leave BoW Sub-project Product Solution Design – Gate 2 (features, backlog, and delivery plan)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Features mapped to approved requirements</li> <li>• Backlog architecture (epics, MVP features)</li> <li>• Delivery plan by development team</li> <li>• Sponsor sign-off on feature alignment and delivery plan</li> </ul>	●
<b>Onboard QA Vendor</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview QA vendors – 100%</li> <li>• Contract signed – 75%</li> </ul>	●
<b>Funding Gate Approval Submission</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete project kickoff: WaTech Oversight – 100%</li> <li>• Complete Project Management Plan (PMP) – 10%</li> <li>• WaTech and OFM technology budget approval – 0%</li> <li>• WaTech gated certification received – 0%</li> </ul>	●

# Implementation update: December release

## 52 features and 10 bug fixes, including:

- Implementation of HB1213
- Assessing, waiving, and accepting repayment of benefit overpayments
- Employer homepage and quarterly reporting improvements
- Cross-program benefit detection and prevention integrations
- Required annual work (1099s, rate changes)
- WA Cares benefit determinations and exemptions changes

## Non-technical work included:

- Development of seven new business processes and updates to 42 existing ones.
- Over 25 hours of staff training with more coming in January.
- Significant updates to external communication materials for benefit customers and employers, including web content, guides, toolkits, posters, notifications, emails, and letters.
- Three employer-focused webinars with over 1,000 registered attendees combined.

# Employer accounts

Updates to employer account homepage, including:

- Displaying current employer contact information with easy access to update.
- An account alerts banner.
- New sections for Quick Actions, Access, More Services, and Resources.

Implementation of grants for HB1213:

- Ability to see and apply for small business assistance grants.
- Ability for TPAs to apply for grants on behalf of employer customers.
- Streamlined processes for staff to amend and approve applications.

The screenshot displays the employer account homepage with a dark teal navigation bar at the top containing links for Home, Payments, Manage Account, Wage Reporting, Benefit Claims, More, and Add/Switch Account. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Contact Information:** A table with five columns: Employer Legal Entity Name (Nimbus Integration Test Services L LC), Customer ID (C222214794), Primary Address (320 Test Dr, Bellingham, WA 98225), Primary Email Contact (x@esd.wa.gov), and Primary Phone (333-333-3333). An Edit button is located at the bottom right.
- Account Alerts:** A yellow banner with two alerts: "You have 5 reports that are past due." and "Your next report is due in 53 day(s) by 02/02/2026." A Take Action button is on the right.
- Quick Actions:** A grid of four teal buttons: Submit Quarterly Wage Report, Make Payments, View Quarterly Report Status, and View Benefit Claims.
- Access:** A table with two columns: SAW Username (kevin.mcgowan@esd.wa.gov) and Access Type (Full Access). Below are links for User Maintenance and Manage Linked Agents.
- More Services:** A list of links: Small Business Assistance Grant, Conditional Premium Waivers, Voluntary Plans, Paid Leave Payment Coupon, and WA Cares Payment Coupon.
- Resources:** A row of four icons and links: Paid Leave for Employers, WA Cares for Employers, Unemployment Reporting, and Employer Newsletter Signup.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Customer ID</b>
Jane Jones	F613VD5MY5

**Account Alerts**

You have an overpayment balance due on your account of \$3763.00

More information about your overpayment is in your assessment letter, which is in the correspondence table for the claim.

[Make a Payment](#)

# Benefit overpayments

- Customers with an overpayment receive notifications, can see their balance, request a waiver (when appropriate), make payments and see their payment history.
- Customer Care can manage, assess, waive, or cancel overpayments, and Finance can properly account for overpayments, waivers, and repayments.

# Future work

## Next

- Changes to employer sizing (ESSHB 1213)
- WA Cares omnibus (SSB 5291)

## Later

- Stable data infrastructure
- Pre-application for benefits
- One application for birth and bonding
- Comprehensive authorized representative process

# Next meeting

1:30 to 2:30 p.m. on Friday, January 23 (virtual)

## Proposed topics

- Legislative updates

# Open comment

---

Reminders Use the Zoom “raise hand” feature to make a comment.

---

Please frame your questions as a comment.

---

The meeting host will unmute participants to allow for the open comment.

---

# Continue the conversation

**JR Richards**, Director

Insurance Services Division

Employment Security Department

[jennifer.richards@esd.wa.gov](mailto:jennifer.richards@esd.wa.gov)



Visit us online at  
[www.paidleave.wa.gov](http://www.paidleave.wa.gov)



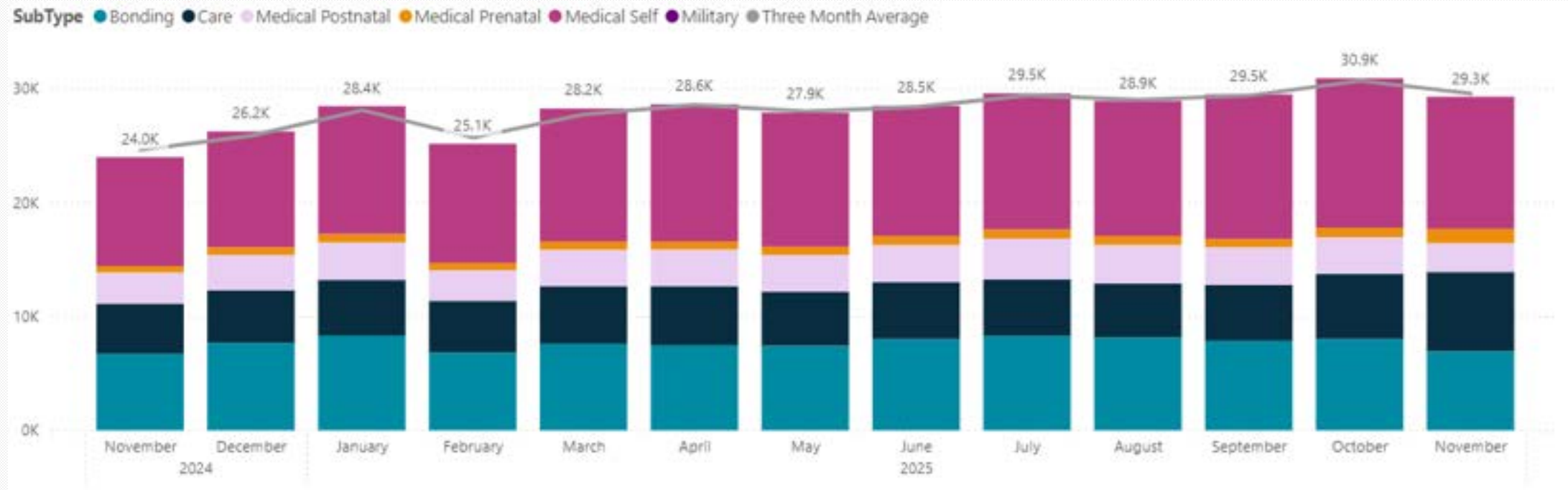
Join our listserv at  
[bit.ly/PaidLeaveList](http://bit.ly/PaidLeaveList)

# Appendix

**Program experience additional details**

# Claim applications by type

- **November 2025, we received 29.3 thousand applications**
  - 5% less than the previous month
  - 22% more than November 2024
- **48% family, 52% medical**
- **Three-month rolling average: 29.9 thousand**



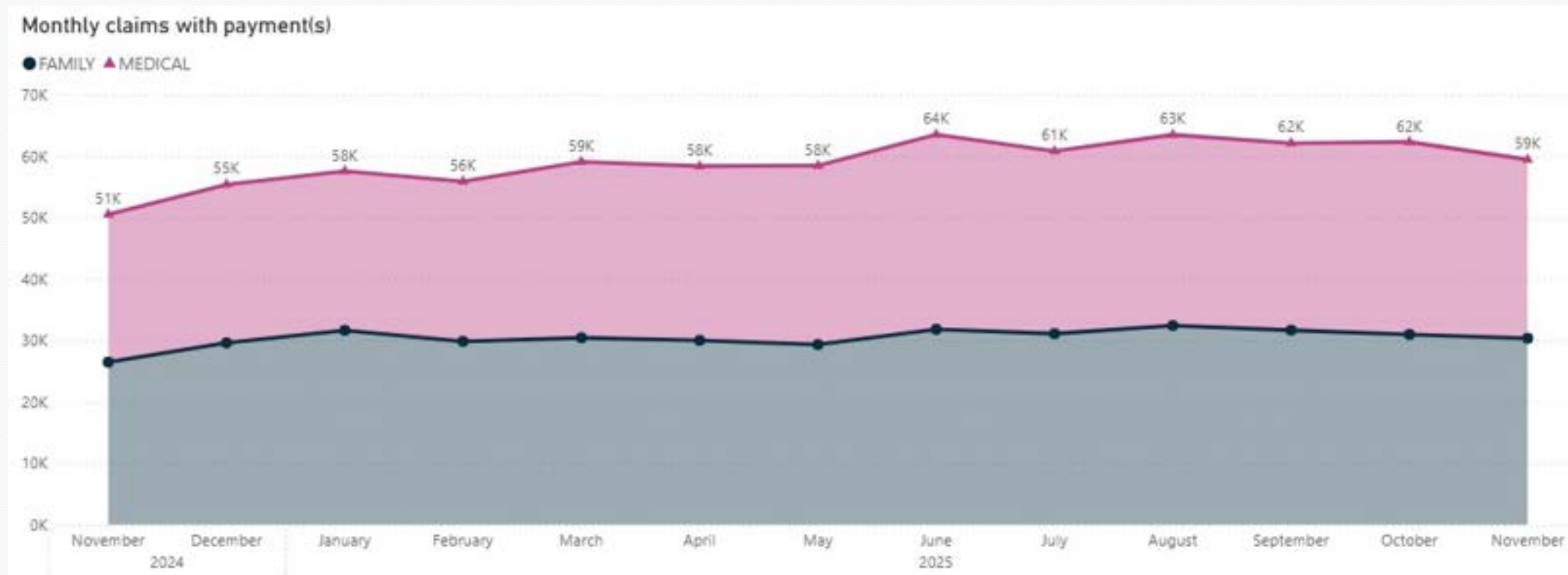
# Claims with payments and approval rates

## November 2025, 81% of claims were approved

- 84% were approved in the prior month
- Current month typically lower than prior month (data maturity)

## November 2025, total unique paid claims was 59,458

- 18% more than November 2024



# **Paid Leave annual report additional details**

# Paid leave claims by type – age & average hourly wage

*Paid Leave claims by leave type and age*

	New Child Leave		Family Care	Family Military	Serious Medical Condition
	Family Bonding	Medical Pregnancy			
Ages 18–29	44%	25%	8%	0.06%	23%
Ages 30–39	46%	22%	10%	0.04%	23%
Ages 40–49	19%	5%	23%	0.05%	53%
Ages 50–59	2%	-	29%	0.03%	69%
Ages 60+	-	-	23%	-	76%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>39%</b>

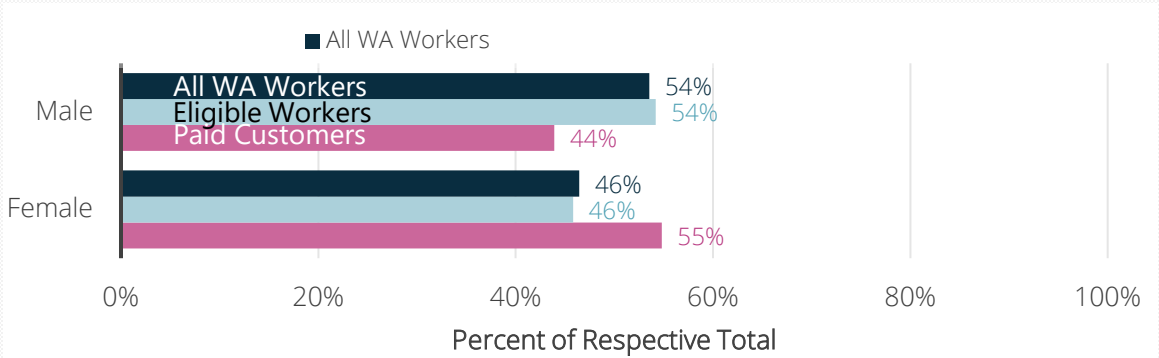
*Paid Leave claims by leave type and average hourly wage*

	New Child Leave		Family Care	Family Military	Serious Medical Condition
	Family Bonding	Medical Pregnancy			
Under \$19	27%	21%	16%	0.03%	36%
\$19 to \$24	25%	16%	18%	0.04%	40%
\$25 to \$35	27%	13%	18%	0.04%	42%
\$36 to \$61	34%	14%	14%	0.06%	38%
More than \$61	41%	16%	10%	0.03%	33%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>39%</b>

# Female customers have the highest participation

- Those who identify as female have the highest Paid Leave participation
- Female workers tend to have more Medical Pregnancy claims, whereas male workers tend to have more Family Bonding claims
- Nonbinary workers and those who prefer not to say have the most serious medical condition claims.

*Paid Leave customer comparison to eligible and all workers by gender*



We cannot compare nonbinary workers to the WA workforce because these data are not yet collected by the U.S. Census.

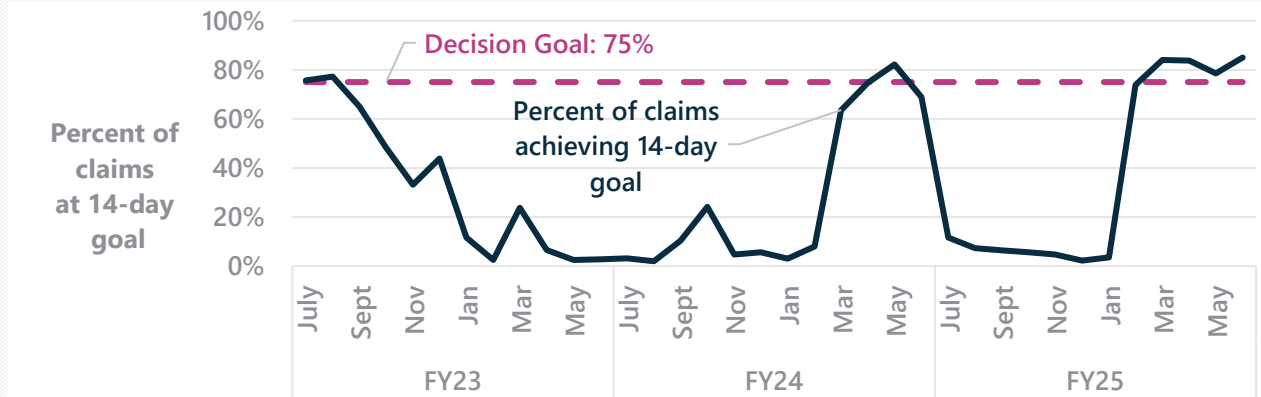
*Paid Leave claims by leave type and gender*

	New Child Leave		Family Care	Family Military	Serious Medical Condition
	Family Bonding	Medical Pregnancy			
Female	23%	25%	14%	0.06%	38%
Male	44%	-	17%	0.01%	39%
Nonbinary	8%	3%	9%	-	79%
Prefer not to say	23%	5%	15%	0.06%	58%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Sources: American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

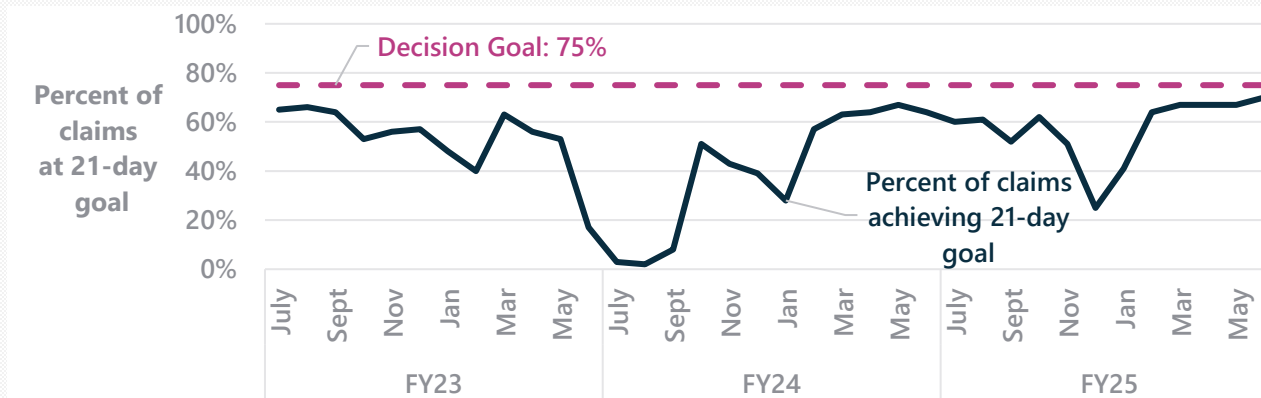
# Performance metrics: FY25 in review – benefits processing times

## Claims reaching goal of 14 days from application submission date to decision



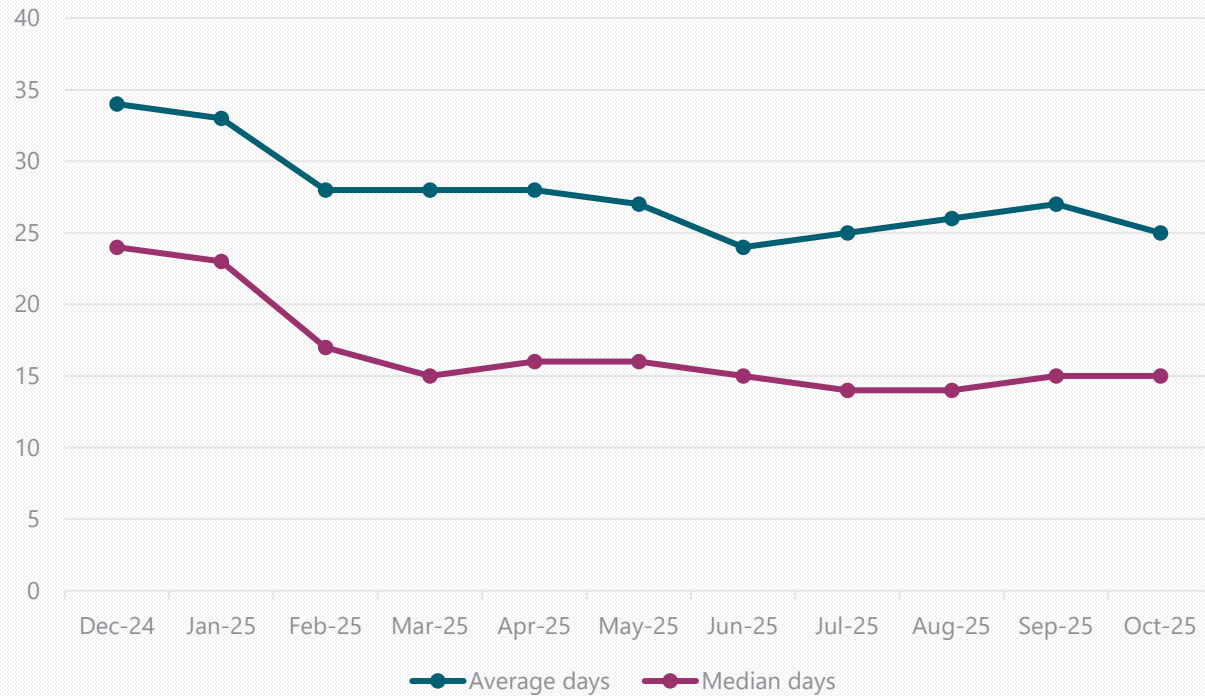
- Achieved goal 14-day decision goal for time from application submission in 4 of the last 6 months of FY25
  - Substantial progress compared to the first 6 months
- Median processing time of **11** days
  - Median processing time for the past fiscal year was around 14 days
- The program fell short of its 21-day goal for time from submission to first weekly claim processed in all months of FY25
- However, time from application submission to first weekly claim processed dropped steadily through FY25, despite an increase in applications
  - Sustained improvement is needed

## Claims reaching goal of 21 days from application submission date to first processed weekly claim



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

# Time from application submission to first weekly claim processed

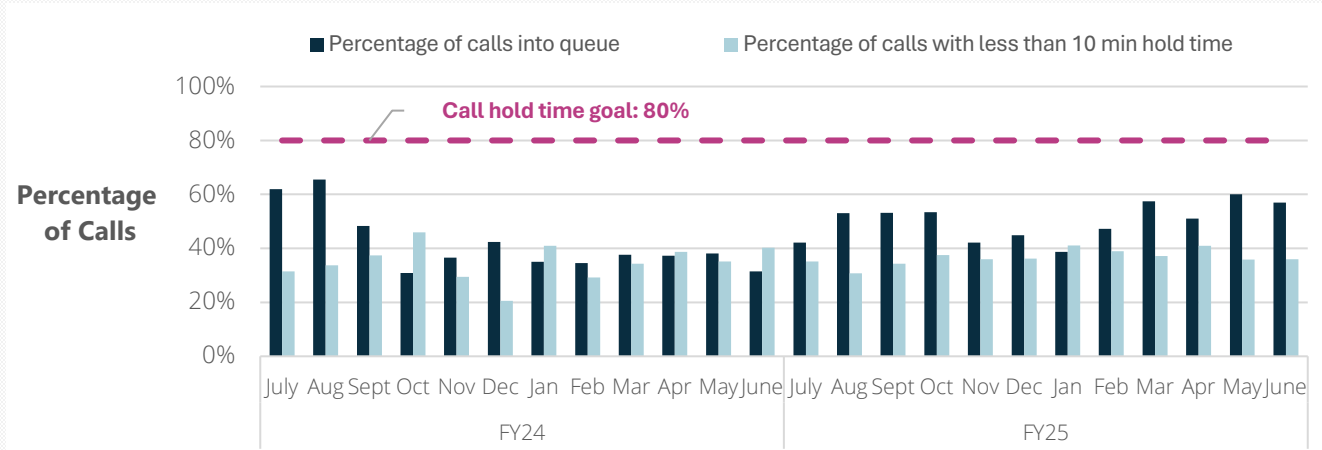


Month	Average days	Median days
November 2024	32	21
November 2025	28	18

Month	Average days	Median days
December 2024	34	24
January 2025	33	23
February 2025	28	17
March 2025	28	15
April 2025	28	16
May 2025	27	16
June 2025	24	15
July 2025	25	14
August 2025	26	14
September 2025	27	15
October 2025	25	15

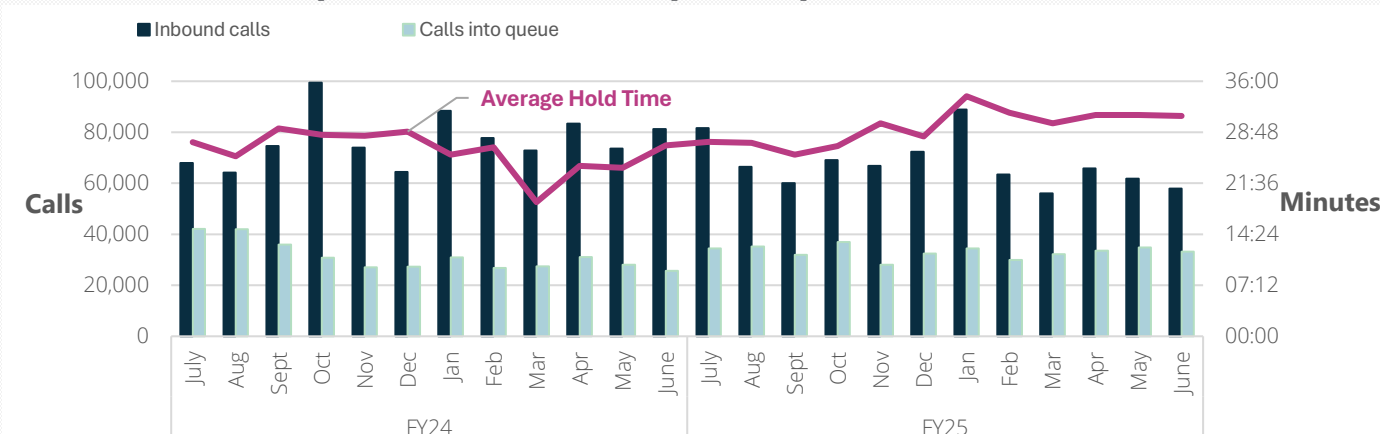
# Performance metrics: FY25 in review – phones and hold times

## Calls entering the queues with less than a 10-minute hold time



- Did not achieve goal that 80% of incoming calls in Paid Leave queue was answered in under 10 minutes
  - Only about 36% of calls in a queue had hold times under 10 minutes
  - On average, 50% of calls went into a queue
- However, the program is meeting the goal for some customer queues:
  - Employer customer calls have a much lower volume and have not been receiving the 'high call volume' message

## Relationship between calls, telephone queues, and hold times



- Late FY25, calls into Leave and Care began to decline
  - Coincided with claim processing prioritization and product improvements to support customers acting without calling in
- However, average call hold times remained over 30 minutes, so improvement was limited
  - Call volumes remained high with a small fraction of calls answered

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

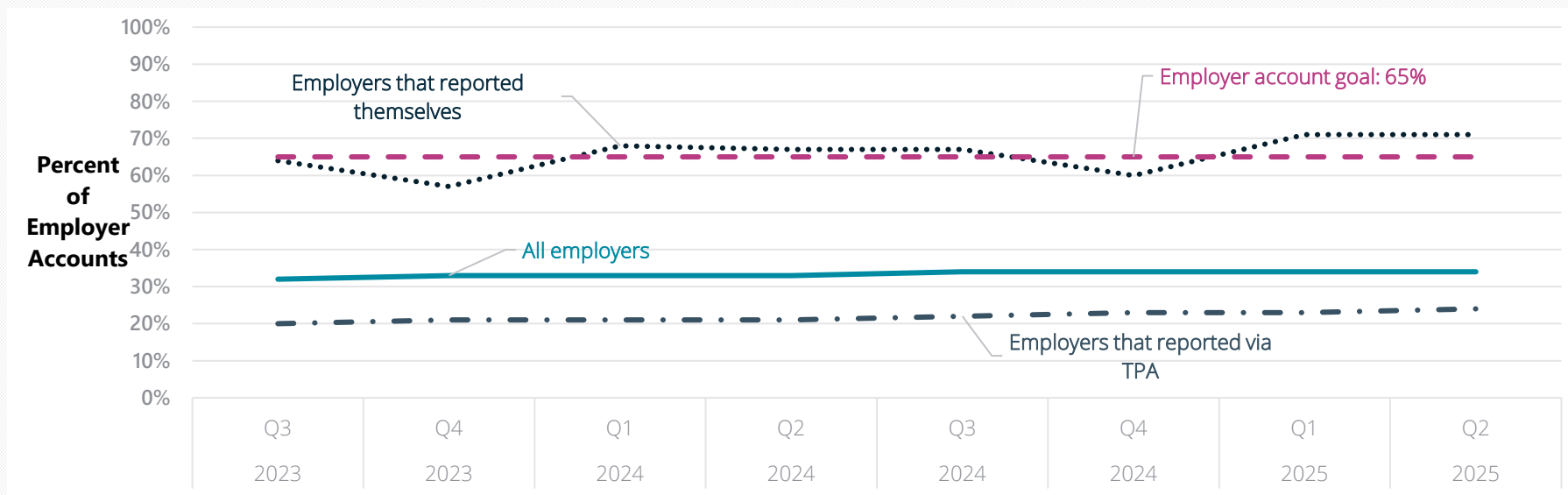
# Phones

Month	Number of calls received for Paid Leave	Percentage of calls into queue*	Percentage of calls answered from Paid Leave queue	Queue time for Paid Leave
November 2024	28,084	42%	58%	30:05
December 2024	32,485	45%	60%	28:13
January 2025	34,408	39%	57%	31:35
February 2025	29,925	47%	60%	28:47
March 2025	32,189	57%	59%	26:50
April 2025	33,624	51%	57%	28:13
May 2025	34,886	56%	50%	23:54
June 2025	33,238	57%	51%	23:37
July 2025	37,587	57%	51%	25:21
August 2025	31,535	53%	59%	27:54
September 2025	33,300	54%	60%	27:37
October 2025	36,925	60%	58%	26:01
November 2025	26,825	45%	54%	31:56

# Performance metrics: FY25 in review – full employer access to portal accounts

- Remained short of goal that 65% of all employers with quarterly reporting for a given quarter will have full account access by the end of that quarter
  - Overall percentage grew from 33.5% to 34.4% during fiscal year.
- Notably, we saw a much higher percentage of self-reporting employers with full access
  - This group exceeded the goal throughout much of FY25, while most employers using TPA-reporting lacked full access

**Percent of employer accounts with full Portal account access**

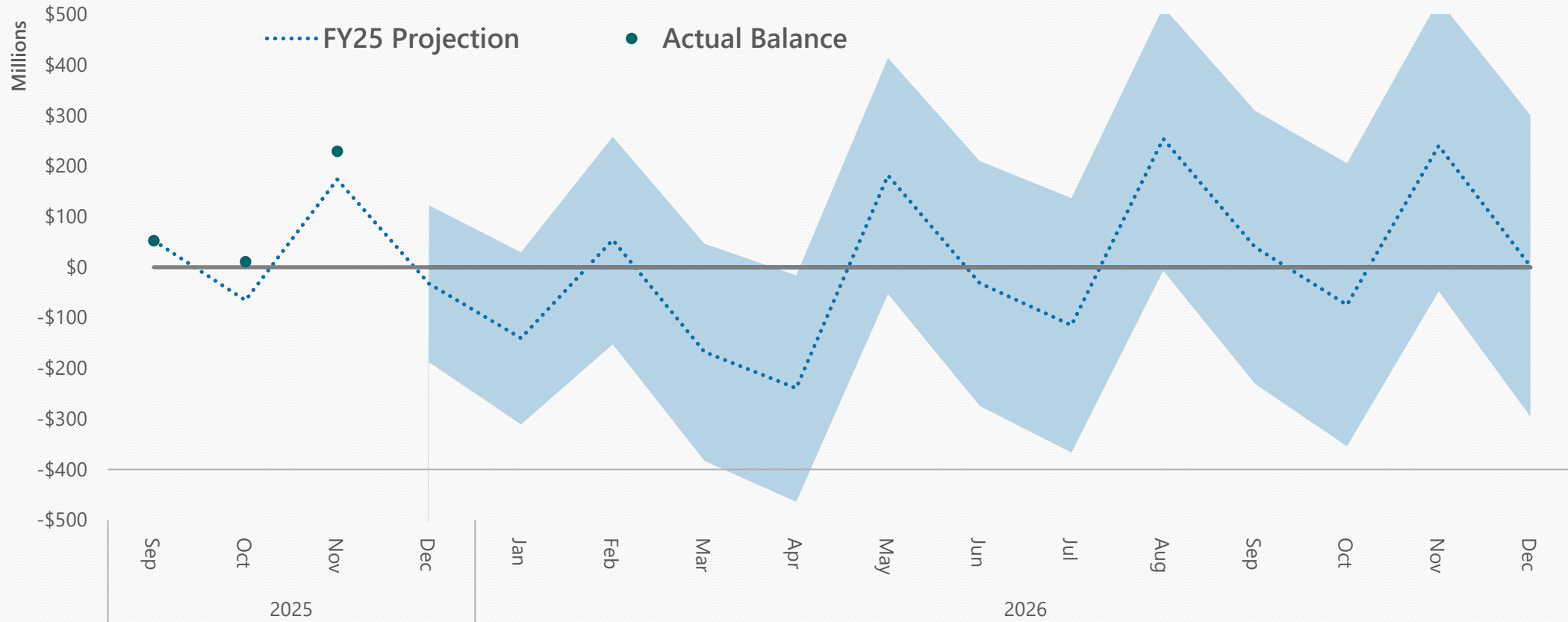


Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

# Account balance projections

# Account balance 2025+

*Intermittent deficits are expected to continue, becoming less deep after premiums at higher 2026 rate are received.*



FY25 Projection is based on 2025 Paid Leave Annual Actuarial Report, including the final 2026 premium rate, the final 2026 Social Security wage cap, and account balance through Sep 30.

The FY25 projection already considers the account balance through Sep 30, and the 2025Q3 data was reasonably close to projected so the projection was not updated for 2025Q3 but will be updated as more data is received through 2025Q4.

High and low ranges may be adjusted as more data is received.