

Washington
Paid Family & Medical Leave



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026

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.

Attendance

Advisory committee members will confirm attendance when name is called



Agenda Approval of December minutes

Governor's budget

Legislative update

Open comment

Approve December minutes



2026 Governor's budget

Martin McMurry, Chief Operating Officer

Governor Ferguson's 2026 Supplemental Budget

Paid Leave Contribution Modification

- ESD's agency request legislation to modify the Paid Leave premium contribution requirements to alleviate the federal tax burden on employers.
 - The proposal moves the employer contribution to family leave, easing implementation requirements and on-going costs and preventing customer confusion while not changing the total amount paid in premiums.
- The associated resource request is primarily for IT contractor work to be completed in fiscal year 2027.
- Governor's budget fully funds this request.

Paid Leave Decision Package

Decision Package	ESD Request	Governor's Budget
Paid Leave Contribution Modification	\$1,160 FTE: 0.1	\$1,160 FTE: 0.1

Dollars in thousands

2026 Legislative update

Josh Dye, Government Relations Director

Paid Leave bills ESD's tracking

HB 2345/SB 6199: ARL regarding Paid Leave contributions

- Adjusting the contributions of employers and employees for the family medical rates

HB 2485: Supplemental benefits + program evaluation

- Limits concurrent use of PTO or payments when taking Paid Leave
- ESD evaluates processes and policy around qualifying events

SB 5889 : Supplemental benefits for gov. employees

- Limiting supplemental benefits for public employee while on Paid Leave

Paid Leave bills ESD's tracking

SSB 5292: Paid Leave premium rate setting

- Premium rate to be set based on actuarial report
- Lowest rate necessary to maintain solvency and close with a 4-month reserve
- 1.2% maximum rate

SB 6127: State audit of program integrity

- Requires the state auditors to conduct audit and report findings around fraud protections, program misuse, and employer access to data.

SB 6140: Reduce the max weeks of leave

- Initiates benefit reductions to maintain a 1.2% premium rate in the event insolvency is projected.

Paid Leave bills ESD's tracking

SB 6141: Pause on weekly growth of weekly benefit amount

- Temporary pause on annual max weekly benefit amount increase for 2027.

SB 6142: Reduce the max weeks of leave

- Reduce the maximum weeks available for leave by 4 weeks.

SB 6143: Increases claim period duration

- Increases the claim year period from 1 year to 1.5 years.

Next meeting

1:00 to 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 25 (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

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Employment Security Department

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Visit us online at
www.paidleave.wa.gov



Join our listserv at
bit.ly/PaidLeaveList

Appendix





Program priorities




Portfolio status overview

Leave and Care Portfolio Dashboard Status Report							Overall Health				Report Date	
As of January 5, 2026							Close Out	On Target	At Risk	High Risk	N/A (planning)	Complete
Lvl	Project Description	Theme	Sch	Res	Risk	Q4 - 2025	Q1 - 2026	Q2 - 2026	Q3 - 2026			
4	WA Cares Contribution Determination	WA Cares	●	●	●	12/31/2025	★					
2	WA Cares Exemptions 2026 (SSB 5291)	Legislation	●	●	●	12/31/2025	★					
1	2026 Annual changes (premium rate, WBA, SS cap)	Annual project	●	●	●	1/3/2026	★					
2	4-consecutive hours (ESSHB 1213)	Legislation	●	●	●	01/3/2026	★					
3	Job protection and Small business grants (ESSHB 1213)	Legislation	●	●	●	01/3/2026						
1	2025 1099Gs	Annual project	●	●	●		02/28/2026					
3	Cloud Migration Portal	Enhancement	●	●	●		Q1 - 2026					
2	Elective coverage for Tribes	Balance of Work	●	●	●			04/15/2026				
2	Quality Assurance Revamp	Enhancement	●	●	●			04/30/2026				
2	WA Cares Annual Statements 2026	WA Cares	●	●	●			04/30/2026				
2	Equitable hiring: Implementation of EO 24-04 and 24-05	Legislation	●	●	●				07/01/2026			
0	WA Cares: Pilot and Production	WA Cares	●	●	●					07/01/2026		
5	Paid Leave Benefit Overpayments	Balance of Work	●	●	●						08/30/2026	
5	Paid Employer Responsibilities	Balance of Work	●	●	●						08/30/2026	
4	One Washington	Enhancements	●	●	●						03/01/2027	

Paid Leave Balance of Work Project Summary

Status at 1/15

Program	
Schedule	
Scope	
Budget	

	In Progress, on-schedule
	In Progress, behind
	Risk to go live



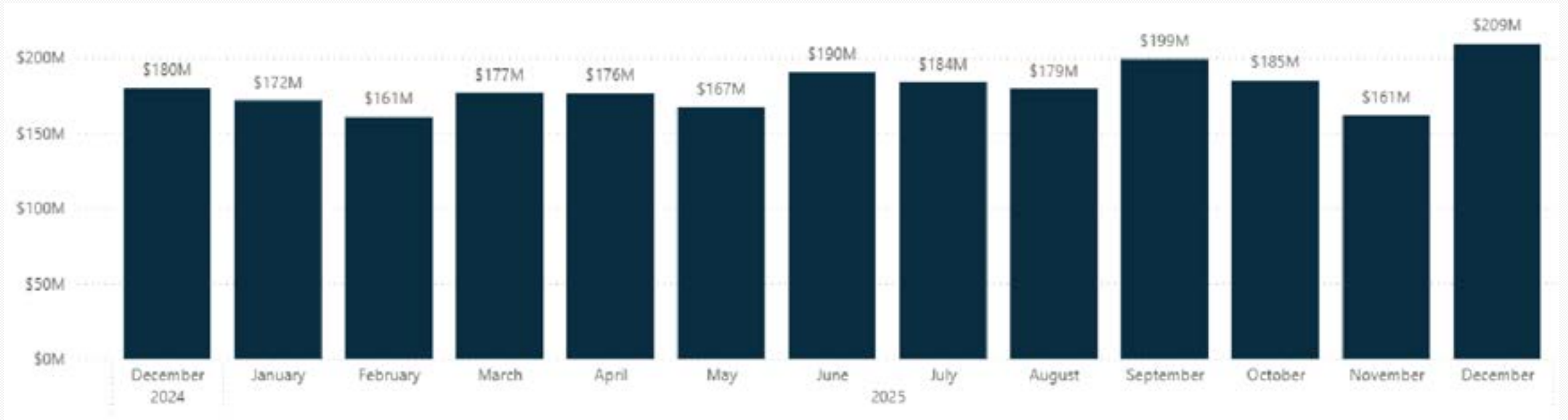
Progress to date:

- **QA Vendor for Paid Leave BOW:**
 - QA vendor ISG started readiness assessment January 1, 2026
- **Active BoW deliverables - January:**
 - Assess overpayments (case management)
 - Assess overpayments (CRM)
 - Conference & Conciliation case management
 - Apply Employer Interest (basic functionality) – Interest & Billing Statements and Documents
 - Identify Missing wage reports
 - Event hub data service
- **Deliverable plans, alignment and status:**
 - Delivery plans for all sub-projects have been completed
 - Leadership have reviewed and in the process of validating the MVP scope for June 2026
 - Teams identified major risks with deliverable timeline
 - Teams will present what can be delivered based on confidence levels for June 2026
- **Budget completion delay:**
 - Technical budget (overarching plan) planning are being finalized
 - Budget analysis shows tight funding through June 2026, and a mitigation plan is needed

Program experience and performance measures

Monthly Benefit Payments

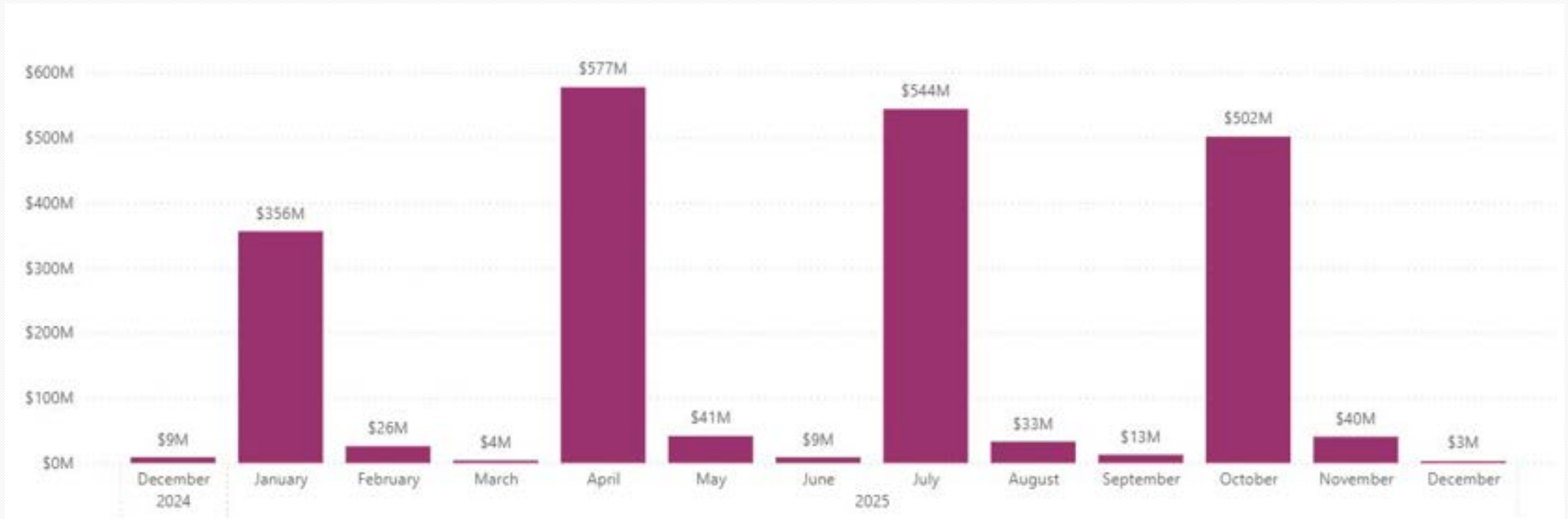
- **December 2025, \$209 million benefits paid**
 - 30% more than the prior month
 - 16% more than December 2024
- **\$178 million avg. monthly payments for previous 12 months**
- **December 2025, avg. weekly benefit for new claim years was \$1,125**



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

- December 2025, \$3 million in premiums remitted
- \$2.15 billion premiums remitted in the previous 12 months



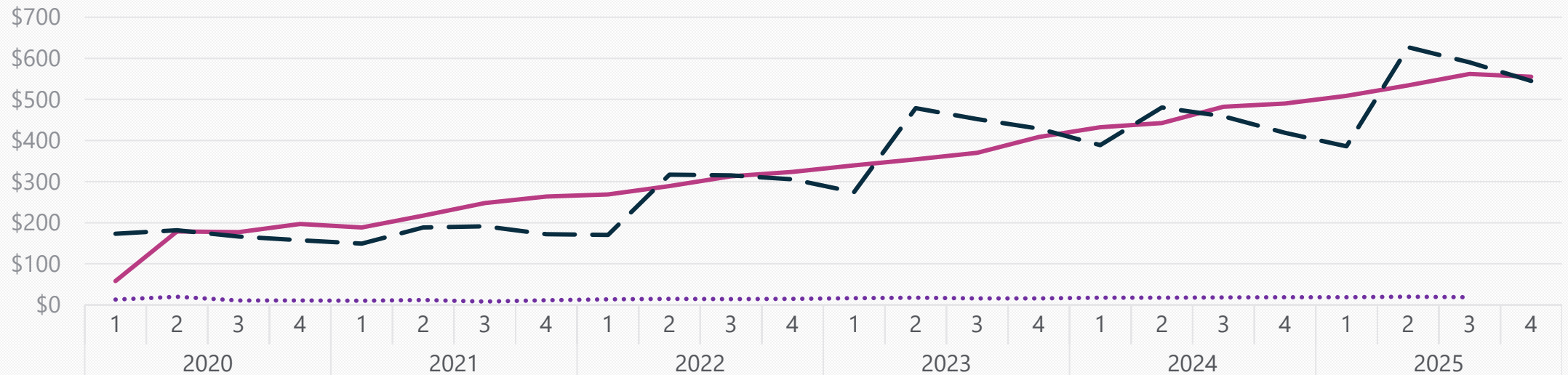
Technical note: Data grouped by date financial transaction occurred in accounting database. If comparing to monthly invoiced premiums or account balance data published elsewhere there may be slight variations.

Monthly Account Balance

- Ending account balance for December 2025 was \$16.6 million
- \$213 million less than the prior month
- \$99 million less than December 2024



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



— Benefits	\$58	\$179	\$177	\$197	\$189	\$217	\$248	\$264	\$269	\$289	\$313	\$324	\$339	\$355	\$370	\$409	\$432	\$443	\$482	\$490	\$509	\$534	\$562	\$555
— Premiums	\$173	\$181	\$166	\$157	\$149	\$188	\$191	\$172	\$170	\$317	\$315	\$306	\$275	\$479	\$452	\$429	\$389	\$480	\$459	\$419	\$386	\$627	\$590	\$545
..... 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	\$17

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

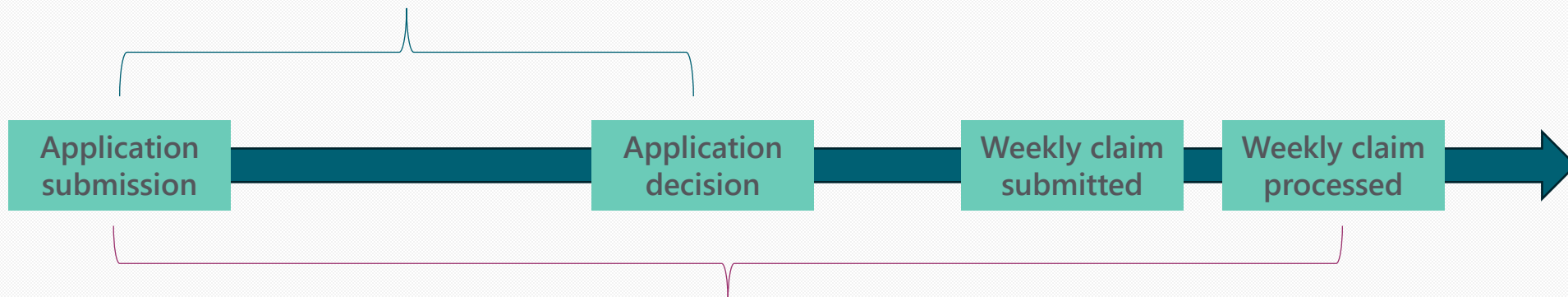
- Phone hold time
- Secure message & email response time

Employer accounts

- Full account access

Benefit wait time

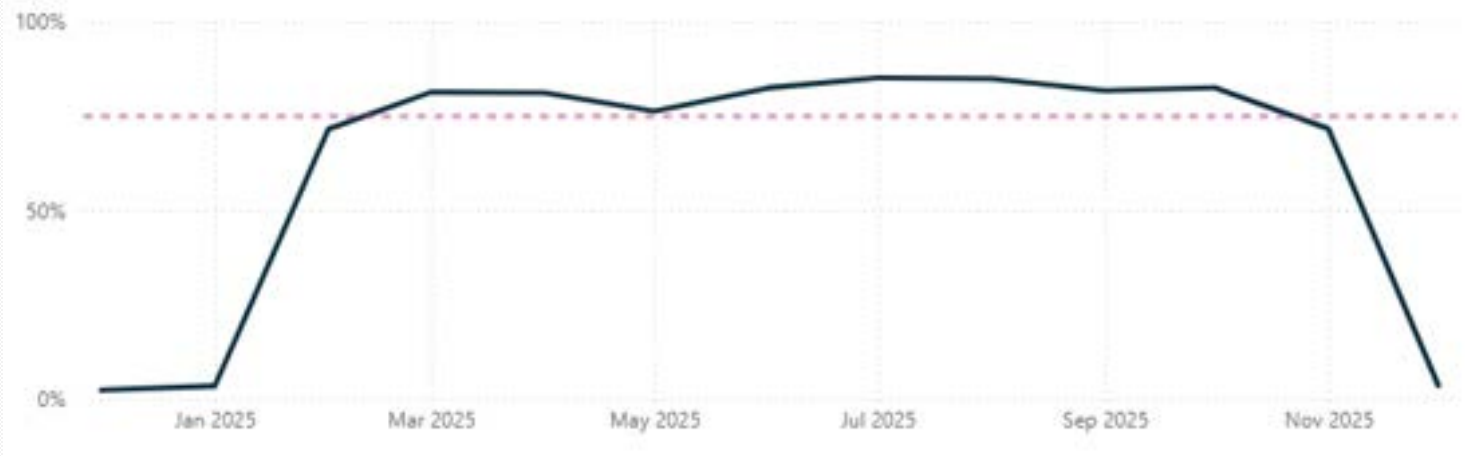
Time to application decision
Goal: 75% within 14 days
(historical "target two weeks")



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

Leave processing times

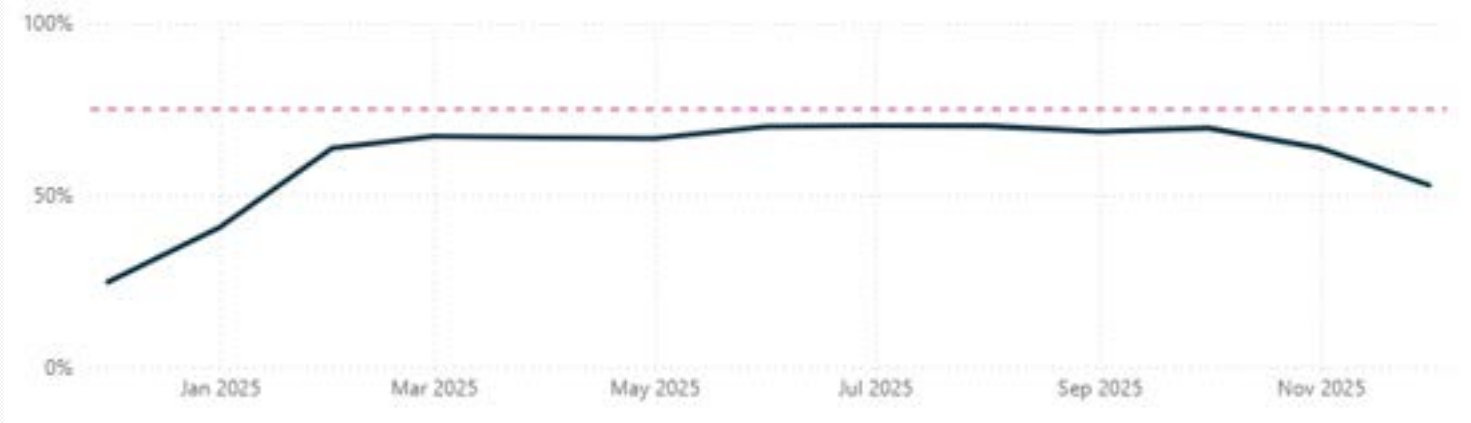
Applications with initial decision within 14 days (Goal: 75%)



December 2025, short of goal with 3% of leave applications initially adjudicated within 14 days

- 68 percentage points less than the previous month
- 1 percentage point more than December 2024
- December 2025, median processing time was 18 days

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



December 2025, under goal with 53% of applications having first weekly claim processed within 21 days

- 11 percentage points less than the previous month
- 28 percentage points higher than December 2024
- December 2025, median time from application submission to first weekly claim processed was 21 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

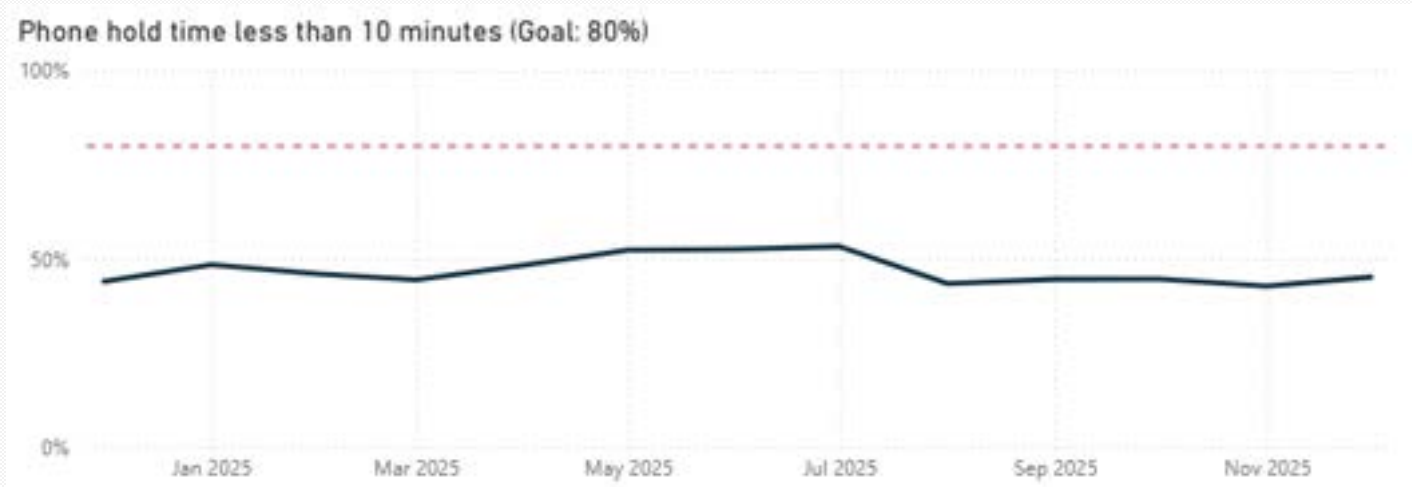


Overall responsiveness goal

80% of contacts meeting response time goals

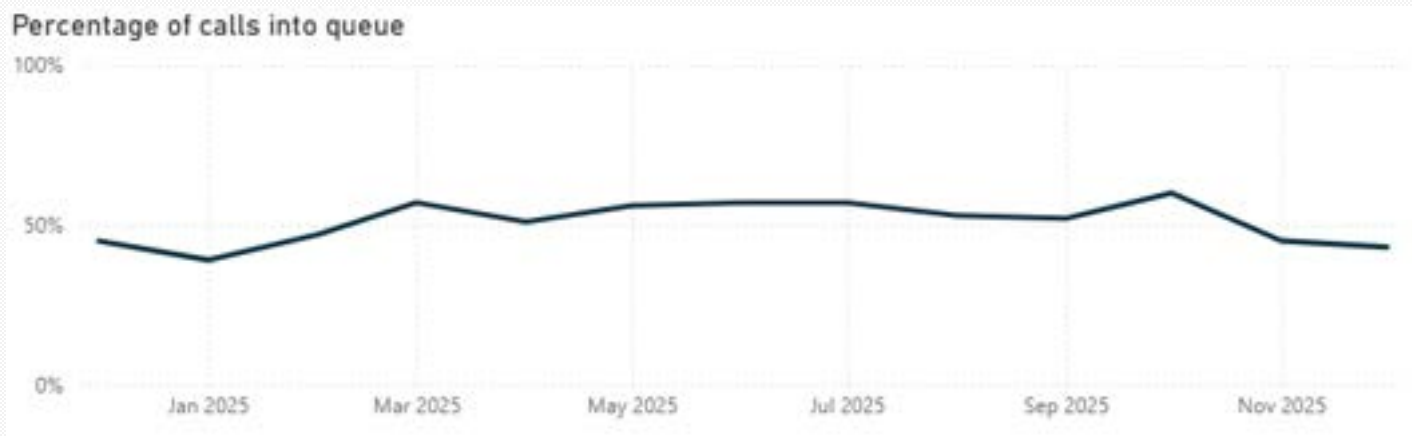
Split out tracking by contact type and customer

Phone responsiveness



December 2025, 45% of Paid Leave phone calls were answered within 10 minutes.

- 2 percentage points more than the prior month
- 1 percentage point more than December 2024
- December 2025, avg. phone queue time was 29 minutes



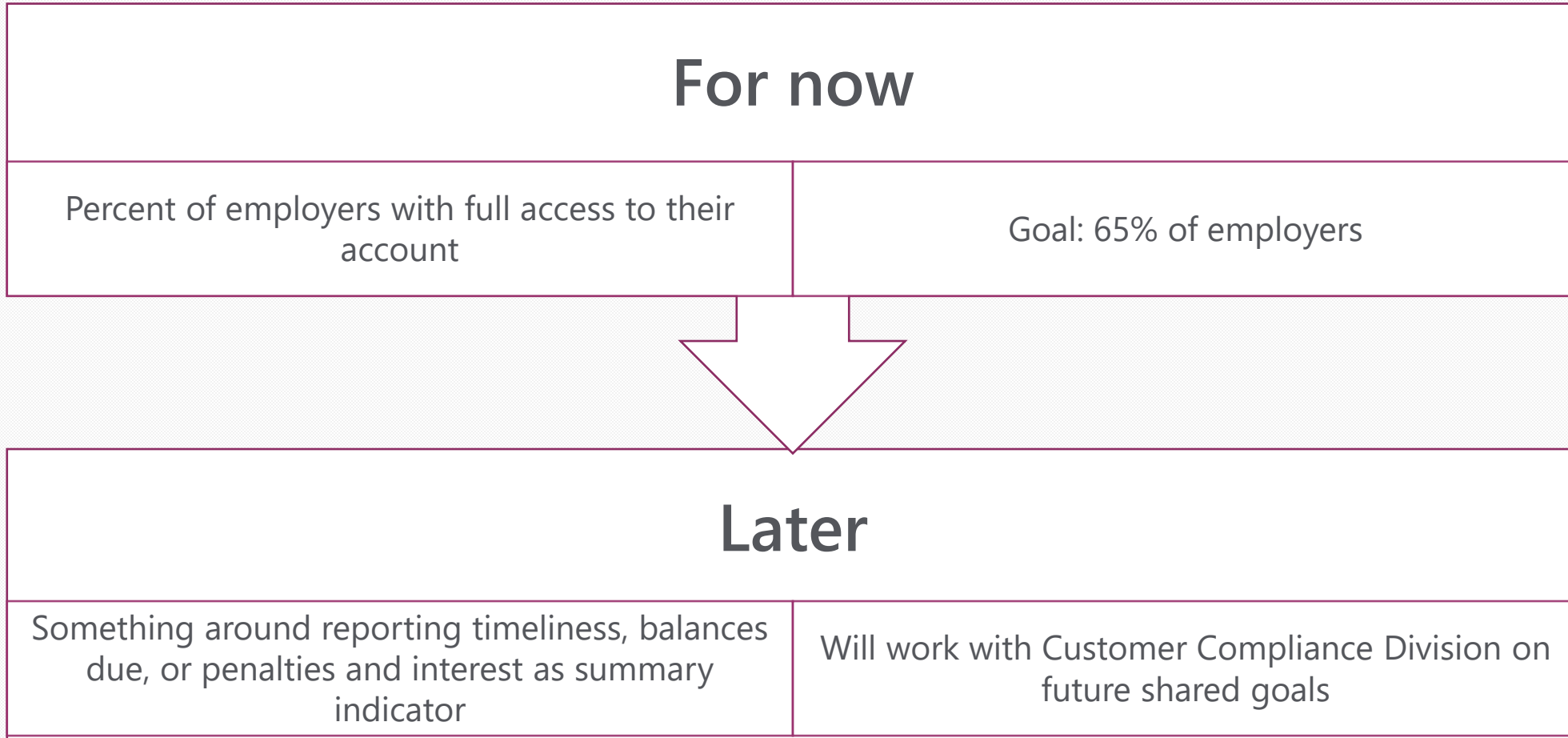
December 2025, 43% of calls to Leave and Care went into a queue

- 2 percentage points less than the previous month
- 2 percentage points less than December 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

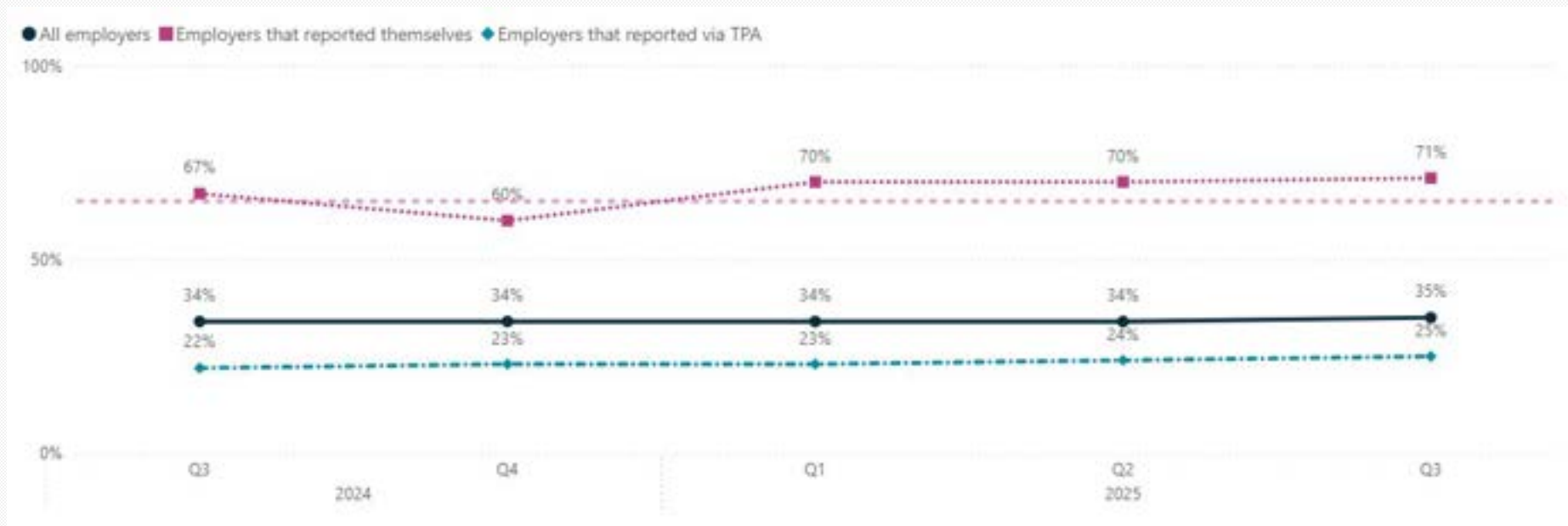
Employer accounts



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
- Q4 2025 percentages will be shared in the next Advisory Committee meeting when this data is mature.



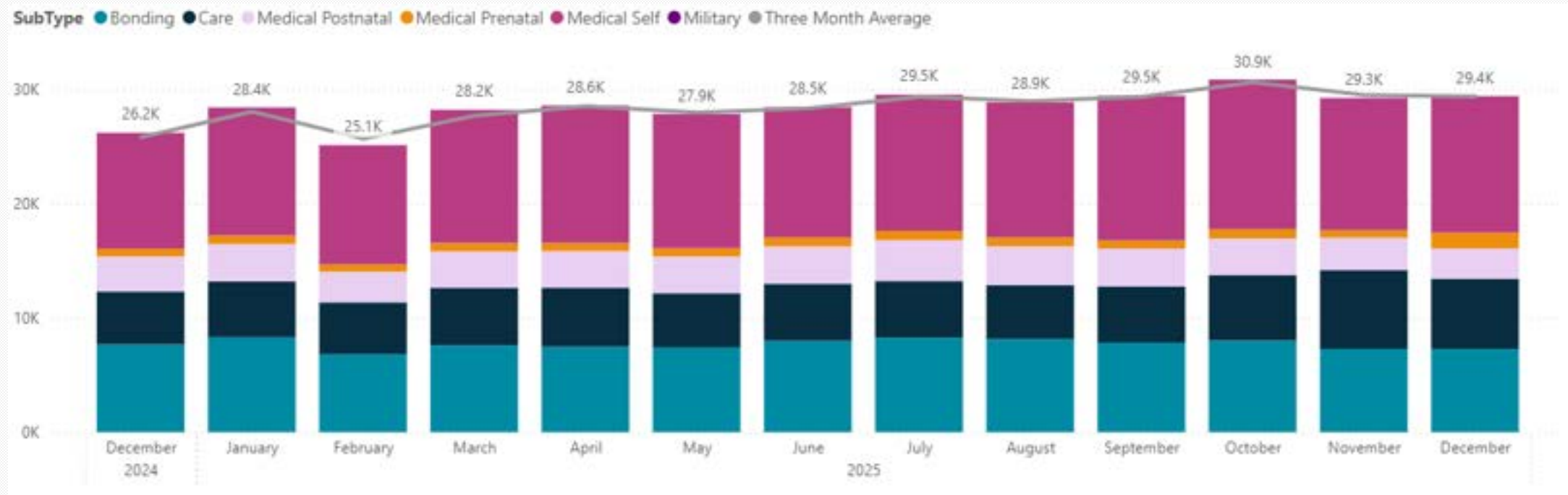
Summary of program performance goals

Performance Metric	Performance Goal	Current Status
Time to application decision	75% of applications with initial decision within 14 days	3%
Time to first weekly claim processed	75% of applications with first weekly claim processed within 21 days	53%
Phone hold time	80% of customers with less than 10-minute hold time	45% met hold time goal, 43% went into phone queue
Secure message & email response time	80% customers receiving a response in 1 business day	TBD
Full account access	65% of employer accounts with full access	35%

Program experience additional details

Claim applications by type

- **December 2025, we received 29.4 thousand applications**
 - About the same as previous month
 - 12% more than December 2024
- **46% family, 54% medical**
- **Three-month rolling average: 29.9 thousand**



Claims with payments and approval rates

December 2025, 83% of claims were approved

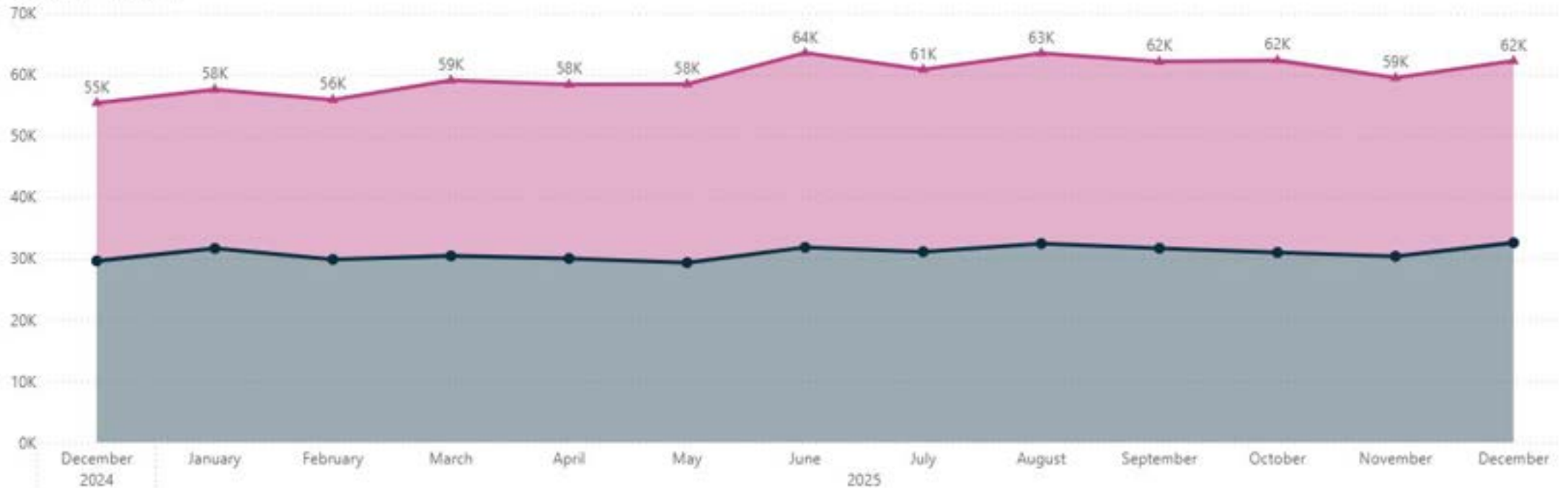
- 84% were approved in the prior month
- Current month typically lower than prior month (data maturity)

December 2025, total unique paid claims was 62,233

- 18% more than November 2024

Monthly claims with payment(s)

● FAMILY ▲ MEDICAL



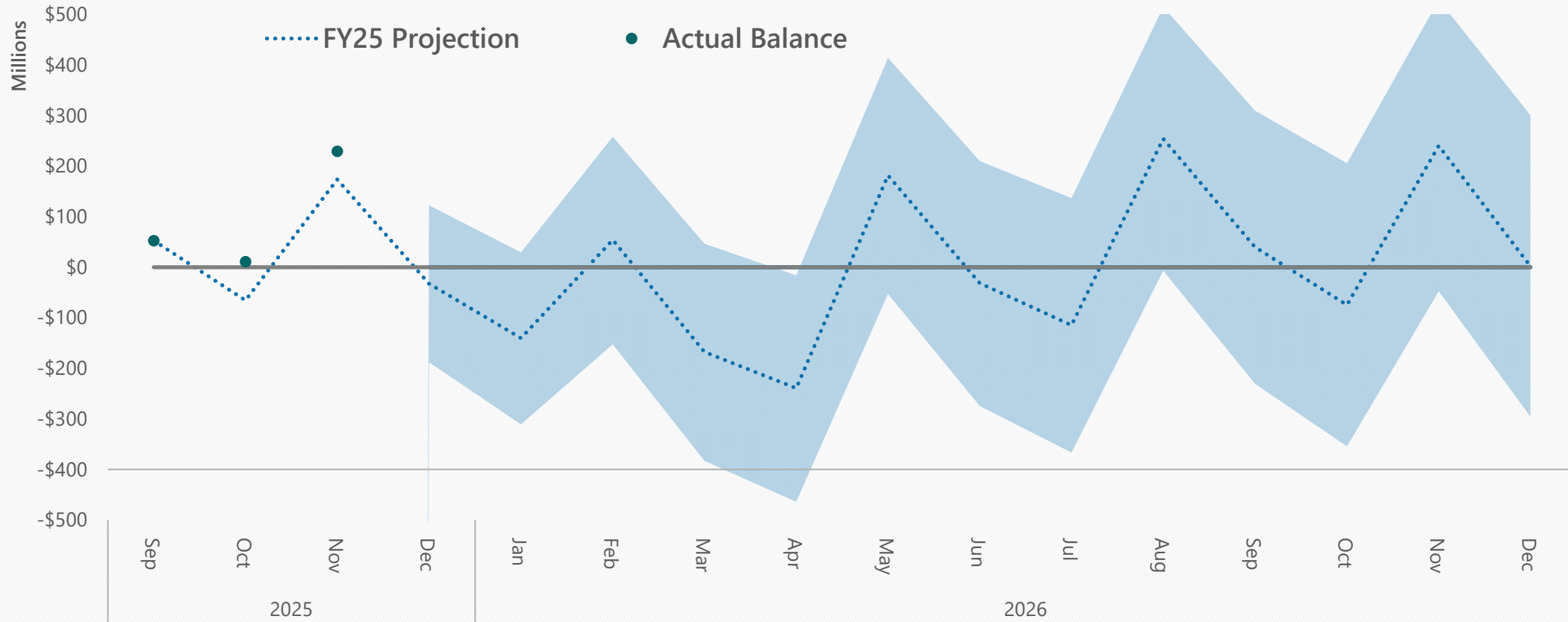
Phones

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
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
December 2025	34,973	43%	54%	29:20

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.