

# Meeting Minutes

## Paid Family & Medical Leave Advisory Committee

February 25, 2026 | 1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. | [Zoom](#) | 212 Maple Park Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501

Attendees	
Committee members	<p><u>Committee Members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jennifer Richards, Insurance Services Director</li> <li>Edsonya Charles, PFML Ombuds</li> </ul> <p><u>Employee Representatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Samantha Grad, Teamsters 117</li> <li>Maggie Humphries, Moms Rising</li> </ul> <p><u>Employer Representatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>James Crandall, Association of Washington Business</li> <li>Rose Gundersen- Washington Retail Association</li> </ul>
ESD staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Mattes- Deputy Director</li> <li>Josh Dye- Government Relations Director</li> <li>Brian Kennedy- Leave and Care Legislative Manager</li> <li>Tony Hanson- Chief Financial Officer</li> <li>Dan Zeitlin- Chief of Staff</li> <li>Rob Wells- Leave and Care Communications Manager</li> <li>Rebecca Grady, Leave and Care Research&amp; Data Manager</li> <li>April Amundson- Leave and Care Policy Manager</li> <li>Karissa Burgess- Actuary 2</li> <li>Todd Dixon- Strategic Operations Manager</li> <li>Kennidi Hunsicker, Administrative Assistant 4- Host</li> <li>Colin Helsley- Co-Host</li> <li>Erika Ayala, Administrative Assistant 4- Taking notes</li> </ul>
Committee members absent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joe Kendo, Washington State Labor Counsel</li> <li>Sam Hatzenbeler, Economic Opportunity Institute</li> <li>Jan Himebaugh- Building Industry Association of Washington</li> <li>Tammie Hetrick- Washington Food Industry Association</li> </ul>
<p>For more information, please visit the Paid Family Medical Leave website at <a href="https://paidleave.wa.gov/advisory-committee/">https://paidleave.wa.gov/advisory-committee/</a></p>	

## Welcome and Agenda review

1:00 p.m. Approve January minutes

1:05 p.m. Introducing ESD's new CFO

1:10 p.m. Budget Update

1:15 p.m. Legislative update

1:20 p.m. Program priorities

1:25 p.m. Open comment

1:30 p.m. Adjourn

### Approve January minutes

- Meeting started at 1:02 pm
- Motion to approve January 21<sup>st</sup> 2026 PFML AC meeting minutes
  - Samantha Grad motions to approve
  - James Crandall seconds
  - All members attending are in favor
  - January 21<sup>st</sup> 2026 PFML AC meeting minutes are approved

### Introducing ESD's new CFO

- Tony Hanson- New Chief Financial Officer, ESD
- On day 7 of working with ESD
- Transferred from the Department of Commerce

### Budget Update- Tony Hanson, Chief Financial Officer

#### **2026 Supplemental Budget**

- PFML Contribution Modification
  - ESD's agency request legislation to modify the PFML premium contribution requirements to alleviate the federal tax burden on employers. The proposal would move the employer contribution to family leave, easing implementation requirements, not change the total amount paid in premiums, reduce implementation and ongoing costs, and preventing confusion to the claimant experience.
  - The request is primarily for contractor work to be completed in fiscal year 2027.
  - Governor and House budgets fully fund this request. The Senate budget bypassed Senate Ways & Means.
  - Although it did not go through Senate, we are feeling pretty confident
- New PFML Report
  - Within existing resources, ESD is to provide a report on the current state of the PFML program by November 1, 2026.
  - Report must include an evaluation of the solvency and integrity of the program as well as any recommendations from ESD.

#### **PFML Decision Packages**

- PFML Contribution Modification
  - ESD Request- \$1,160, FTE:0.1
  - Governor's Budget- \$1,160, FTE:0.1
  - Senate's Budget- Currently in process
  - House's Budget- \$1,160, FTE:0.1

## Legislative Update- Josh Dye, Government Relations Director

### **2SSB 5292 – Paid Leave premium rate setting**

- Premium rate to be set based on actuarial report
- This would move to a forward-looking actuarial model
- This was voted out of laws this morning (2.25.26) and on to rules
- Lowest rate necessary to maintain solvency and close with a 4-month reserve
- 1.2% maximum rate
- Sponsored by Senator Conway

### **2SHB 2345 – ARL regarding Paid Leave contributions**

- Adjusting the contributions of employers and employees for the family/medical rates
- This is around the IRS guidance and was voted out of Labor and Commerce and sent directly to rules

### **Questions & Answers**

- Rose Gundersen- Did you say house or senate?
- Josh Dye-Both senate and house include proviso language to require a report due November 1<sup>st</sup> 2026 to assist looking into 2027 solvency.

## Program Priorities-John Mattes, Deputy Director Employment Services

### Portfolio status overview

- Job protection and Small business grants (ESSHB 1213)- Legislation- Close out
  - Most parts of 1213 have closes out(Job protection and Small business grants)
  - Employer Sizing is set to kick off this week as a part of 1213
- Cloud Migration Portal- Enhancements- Close Out
- 2025 1099Gs- Annual Project- Near Close Out
  - Mailed to benefits customers who received family leave in 2025
- Elective coverage for tribes- Balance of Work- On target
- WA Cares Annual Statements 2026- Annual Project- On target
- Equitable Hiring: Implementation of EO 24-04 and 24-05- Legislation- On target
- WA Cares: Pilot and Production- WA Cares- On target
- Quality Assurance Revamp- Enhancements- On target
- Paid Leave Benefit Overpayments- Balance of Work- At Risk
- Paid Employer Responsibilities- Balance of Work- At Risk
- WA Cares Out-of-State Coverage- WA Cares- On target
- One Washington- Enhancements- At Risk
- Rose Gundersen- The three columns with bubbles, can you explain what SCH, RES, Risk mean?
- JR Richards & John Mattes
- *Schedule*
- *Resourcing* to support the work
- *Risks* identified and can we mitigate. This may have a high likely hood of impact on the work

### Paid Leave Balance of Work project summary

- Program remain on track for our March milestones, with a few areas requiring close monitoring due to cross-team dependencies.
- June milestones/deliverables will require timely decisions and continued alignment across Product, Ops, and Technology. (e.g., Payment v Interest, Collections)
- On target for Active March BOW deliverables:
  - Assess overpayments (case management)
  - Fraud, fault and overpayment reason data
  - Conference & Conciliation case management
  - Identify Missing wage reports
  - Missing report penalty
  - Billing statements
  - Interest
- Deliverable plans, alignment and status
  - All major deliverables for the period are progressing as planned, with no scope changes requiring escalation.
  - Teams continue to validate that scope remains achievable within the current timeline and resource plan.
  - Product feature level roadmap has been completed; Dev team resources assigned.

- Budget:
  - Technology budget submitted and being reviewed by OFM.
  - Current expenditures are within the approved budget, with variances driven primarily by Professional Service Contract activity.

**Highlights**

- We have hosted several webinars with tribes on PFML
- Employer responsibilities is making good progress (penalties and interest, overpayments)
- Balance of work - Good sponsorship engagement. Large feature release scheduled for June.
- Auto UI Cross match is live and in productions
- JR Richards- Additional context on the status of this work. When we restructured the BOW, we recognized we were in red (risk to go live) and there was some risk to delivery. We are now in yellow (In progress, behind) and getting back on track.

## Public Comments

No public comment

## Adjourned

JR Richards thanked everyone for their continued active participation and for their commitment to this work. Meeting adjourned: 1:22 p.m.

## 2026 Meetings

The next Paid Family & Medical Leave Advisory Committee meeting is on:

- Wednesday March 25th, 2026 – 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. – Zoom Meeting

**Proposed Topics**

- Legislative Updates
- Budget update
- Update on BOW(Balance of Work) items

### Contact information

JR Richards, Director of Insurance Service Division

Employment Security Department

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