

A photograph showing the silhouettes of several people standing in a meeting room, illuminated by a bright light source from the left, creating a strong backlight effect. The room has large windows and a reflective floor.

Unemployment Insurance ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

December 16, 2021

Agenda



- UI Backlog Update
- ESSB 5193 Implementation
- State Quality Service Plan Briefing
- UI Policy Update
- ESSB 5478 Implementation
- Future Meetings Discussion

UI Backlog Update and ESSB 5193 Implementation



**Employment
Security
Department**
WASHINGTON STATE

Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee Presentation

December 16, 2021

Julie Lord, UI Customer Support Director

Jill Will, UI Policy and Legislative Implementation Manager

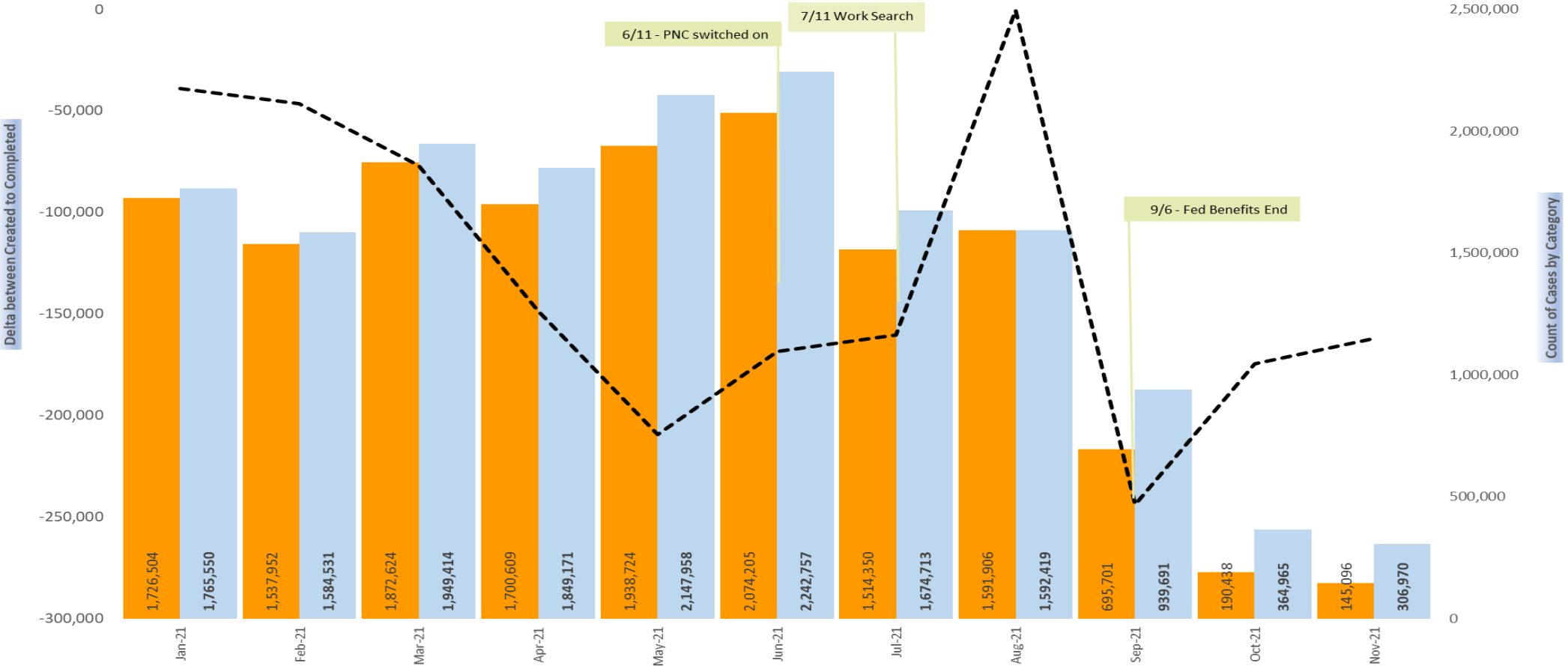
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Overall Issues Volume

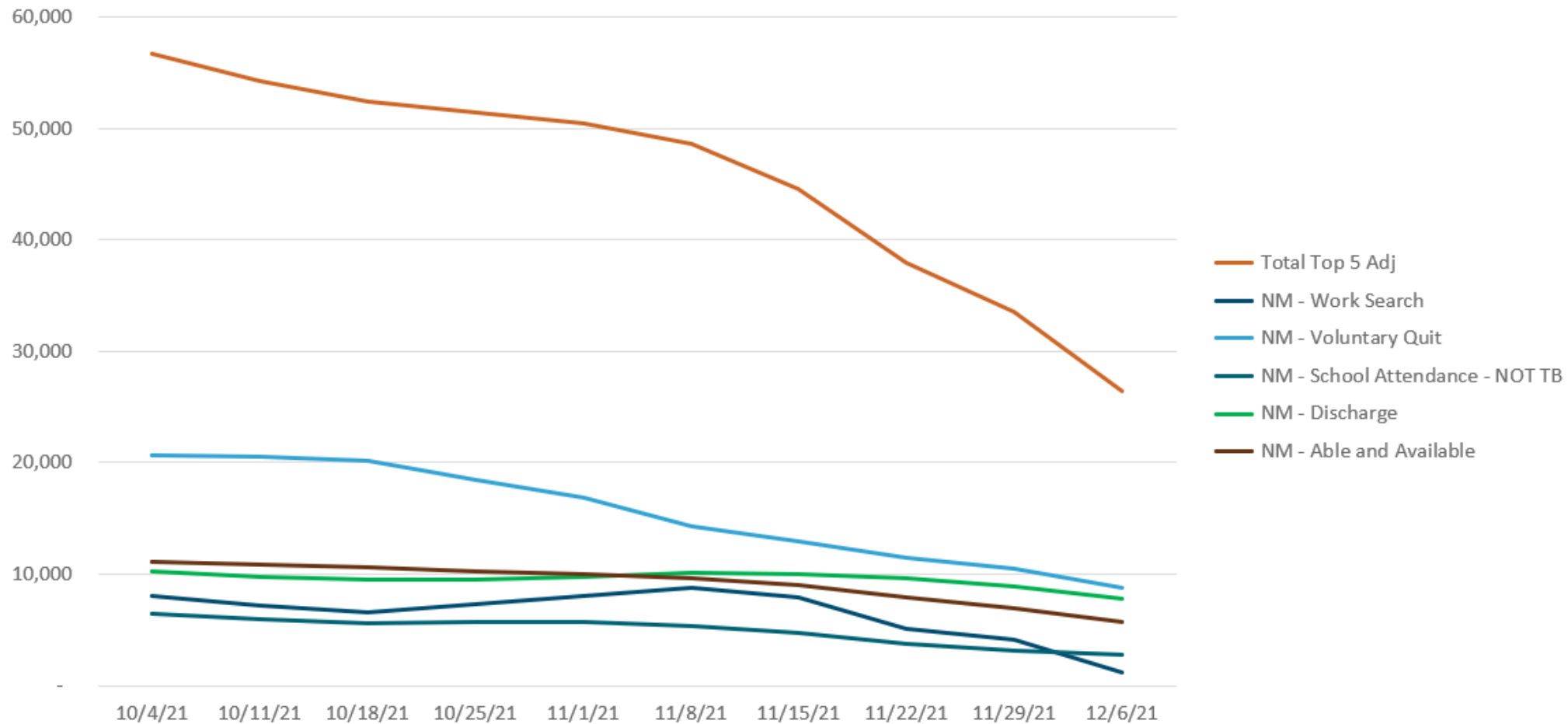


Workload Volumes: Created Issues vs Completed with Net Variance

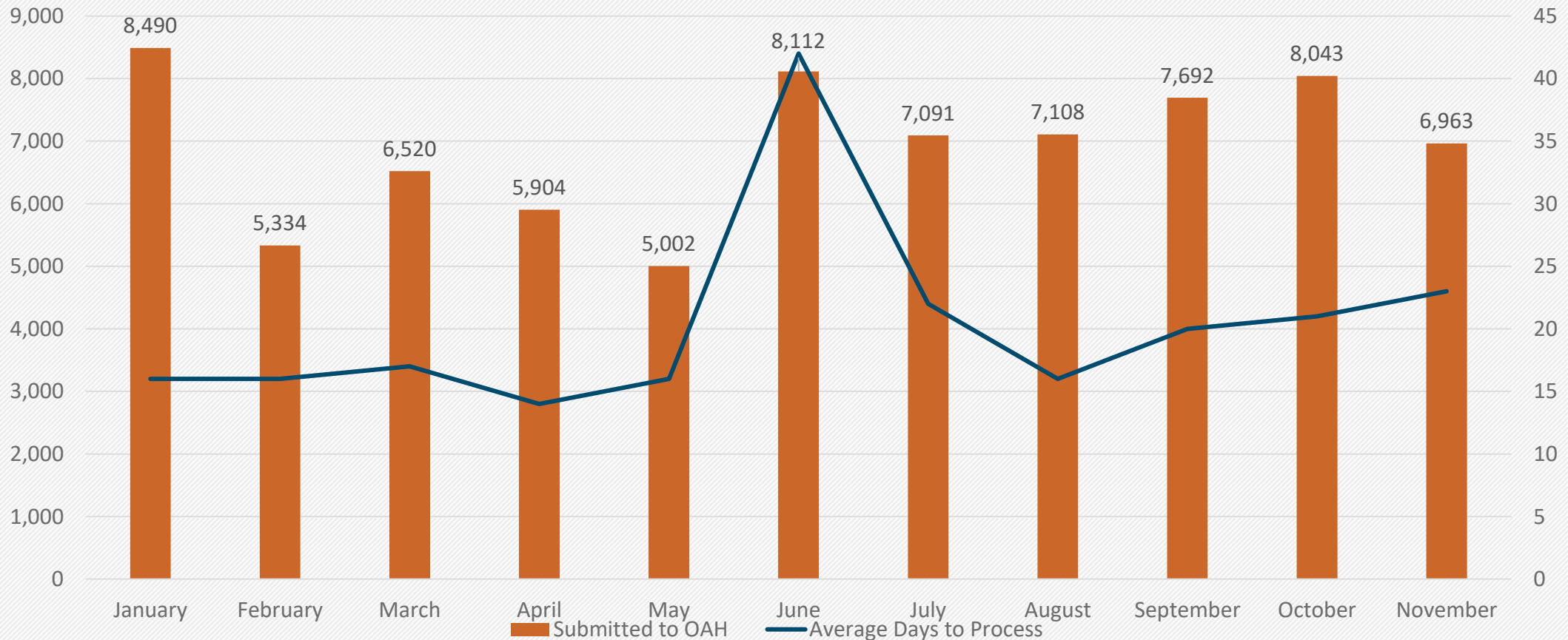
Created Closed Net Variance



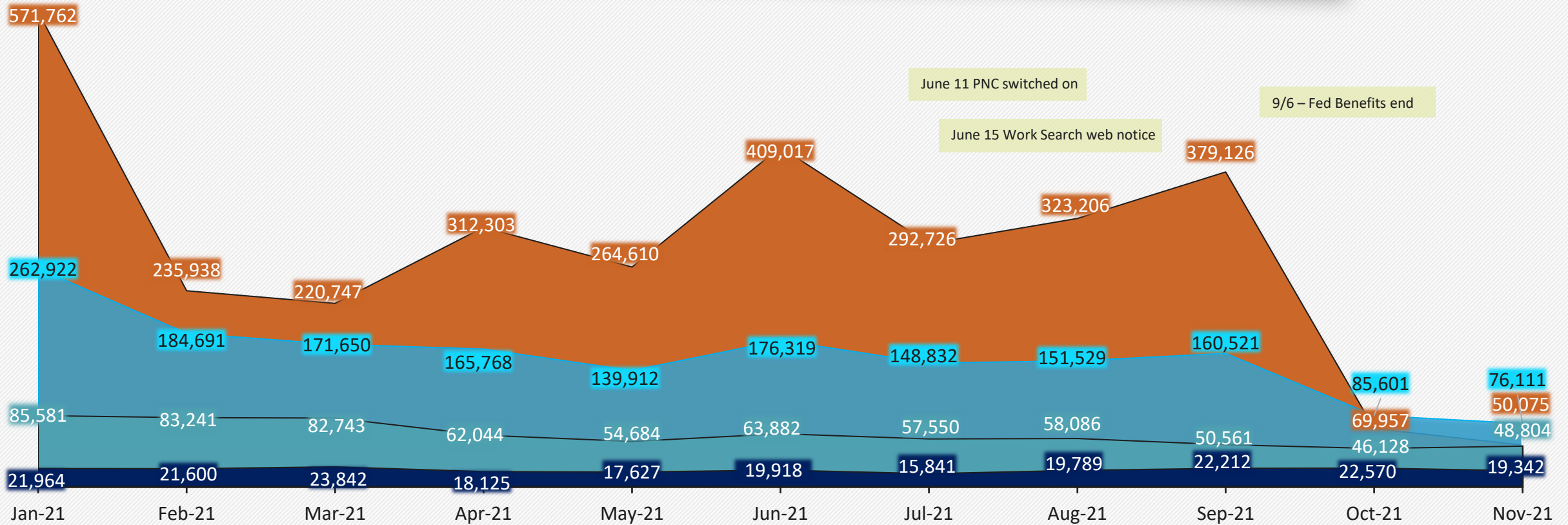
Top Adjudication Issues



Appeals Sent to OAH

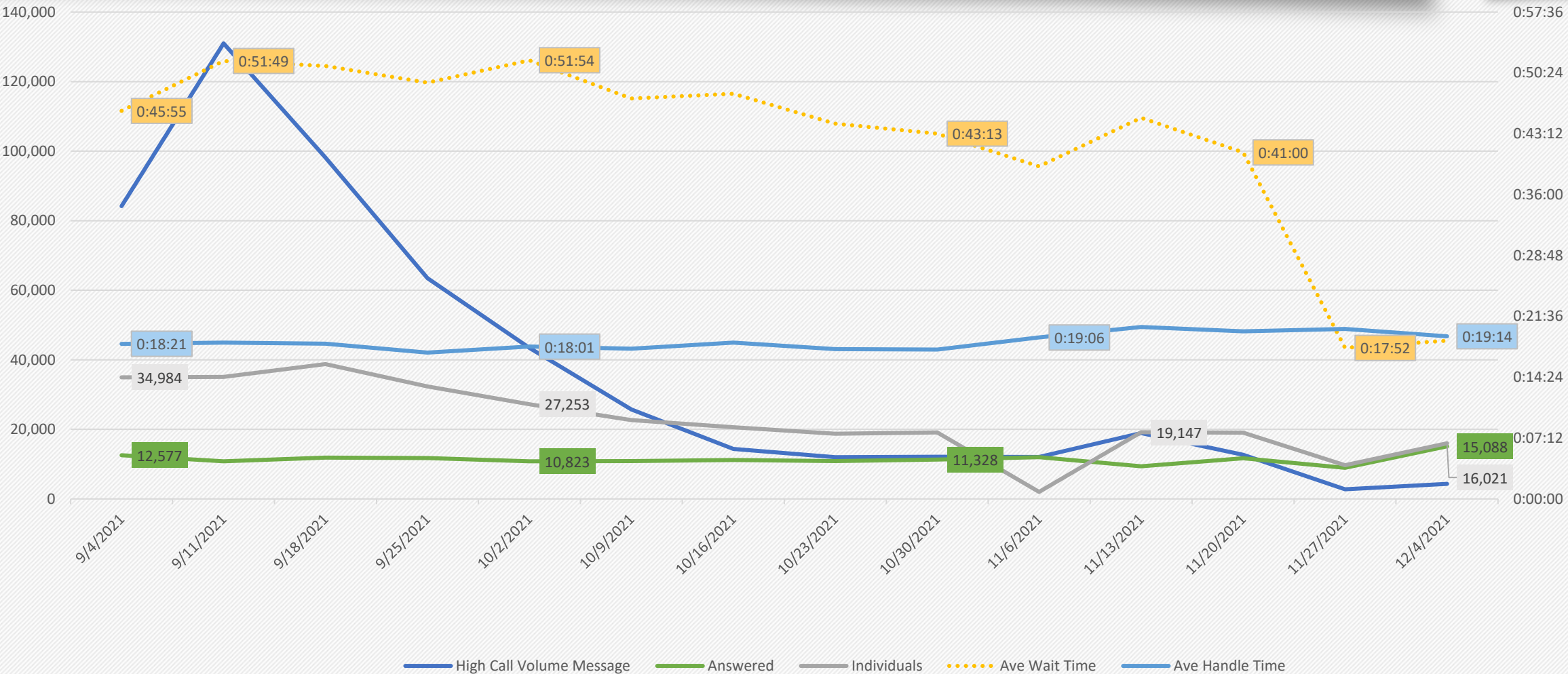


Call Volume



■ High Call Volume Messages
 ■ Individuals
 ■ Answered
 ■ Abandoned

Call Volume Detail



UI Virtual Assistant Project



Provide UI customers with access to a virtual agent, via chat and voice, using Google Contact Center Artificial Intelligence (CCAI) services, to provide answers for commonly-asked questions.

- **Phase 1:** *Went live October 4, 2021:* Question and Answer Pairs for Chat Virtual Assistant in English.
- **Phase 2:** *Went Live October 25, 2021:* Answer specific questions about your claim in English, example weekly claim status, by the Chat Virtual Assistant.
- **Phase 3:** *Go-Live January 3, 2022:* Launch Voice Virtual Assistant in English and Spanish. Spanish is also added to the Chat Virtual Assistant.
- **Phase 4:** *Go-Live January 31, 2022:* Scheduled Callbacks by Chat and Voice Virtual Assistant.
- **Phase 5:** *Go-Live February 24, 2022:* Improvement of intelligence behind the Question-and-Answer Pairs. (The Virtual Assistant will become smarter.)

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ESSB 5193 Implementation



The [ESSB 5193 Sec 3\(3\)](#):

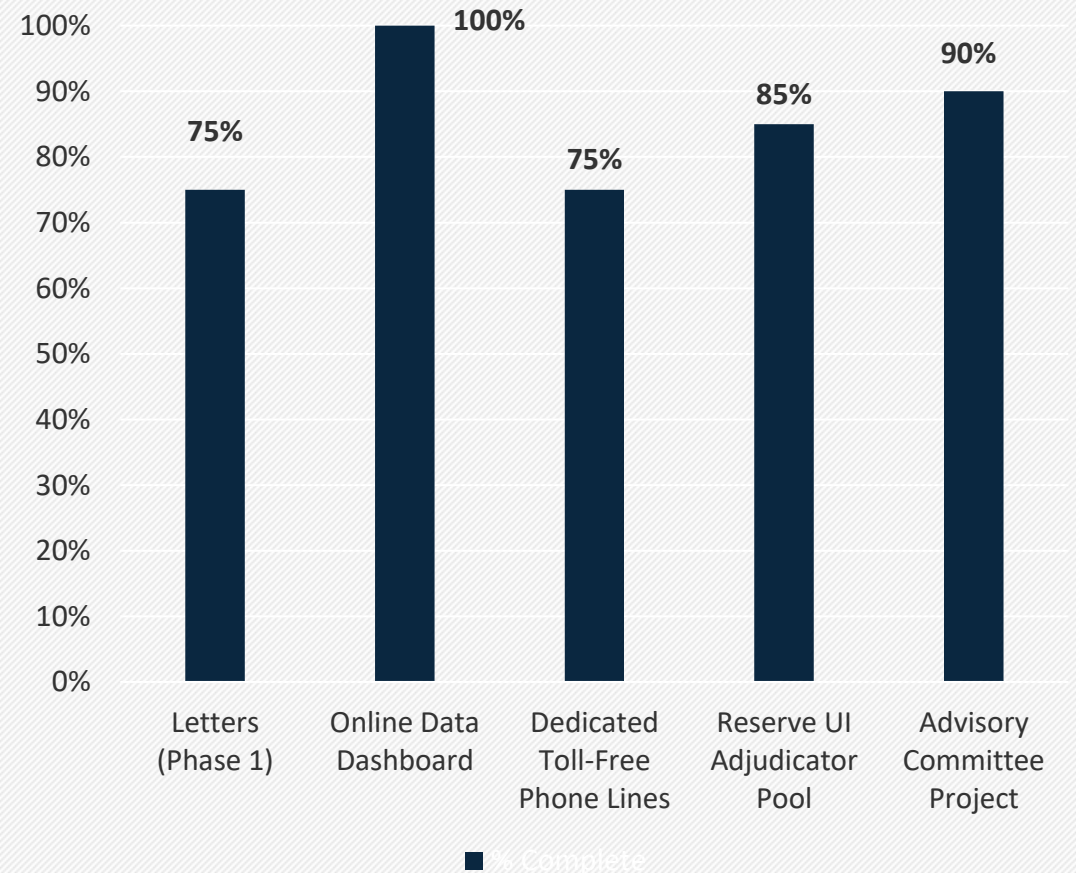
The department will work with an unemployment insurance advisory committee comprised of business and worker advocates to explore:

- (a) Establishing thresholds that will trigger automatic adjustments in department staffing assignments and phone agent staffing levels;
- (b) Establishing a pilot to provide a caseworker approach to the claims of a group of claimants with that casework carrying over to reemployment services;
- (c) Increasing language access, including by providing translation of notices sent to claimants as part of their unemployment insurance claims; and
- (d) (d) Frequency of the initial and continuing training to meet the needs of section 2 [reserve adjudicators] of this act.

ESSB 5193 - Implementation Project Status



- **Letter Project:** Three of four letters and drop-ins will be completed by 12/31/2021. Received feedback on monetary determination template required by legal settlement.
- **Online Data Dashboard Project:** Create online dashboard and provide quarterly reports. [Link here.](#)
- **Dedicated Toll-Free Phone Lines:** Two of three lines established. A pilot project underway to identify more equitable service model for digital non-native.
- **Reserve UI Adjudicator Pool Project:** Establish a training program for pool of trained adjudicators.
 - Annual status report complete, training plan complete
 - SPSCC to assist with e-learning content 50hr/week starting 9/16 -12/31
 - ESD meeting with OFM to resolve HR issues and establish State agency recruiting plan.
- **Advisory Committee Project:**
 - Completed LEP presentation to EDI sub-committee.
 - On track to present Staffing Model and Case Worker Pilot to UIAC this month, December 2021.



ESSB 5193 – Phone Staffing Trigger



Modeled 2022 staffing needs for Intake Phone and Non-Phone Work

- Model basis – 2019 actual workload, 2022 projected UI rate within 1/10 percent point of 2019

Used UI Staffing Model and Erlang C Staffing Model – industry standard

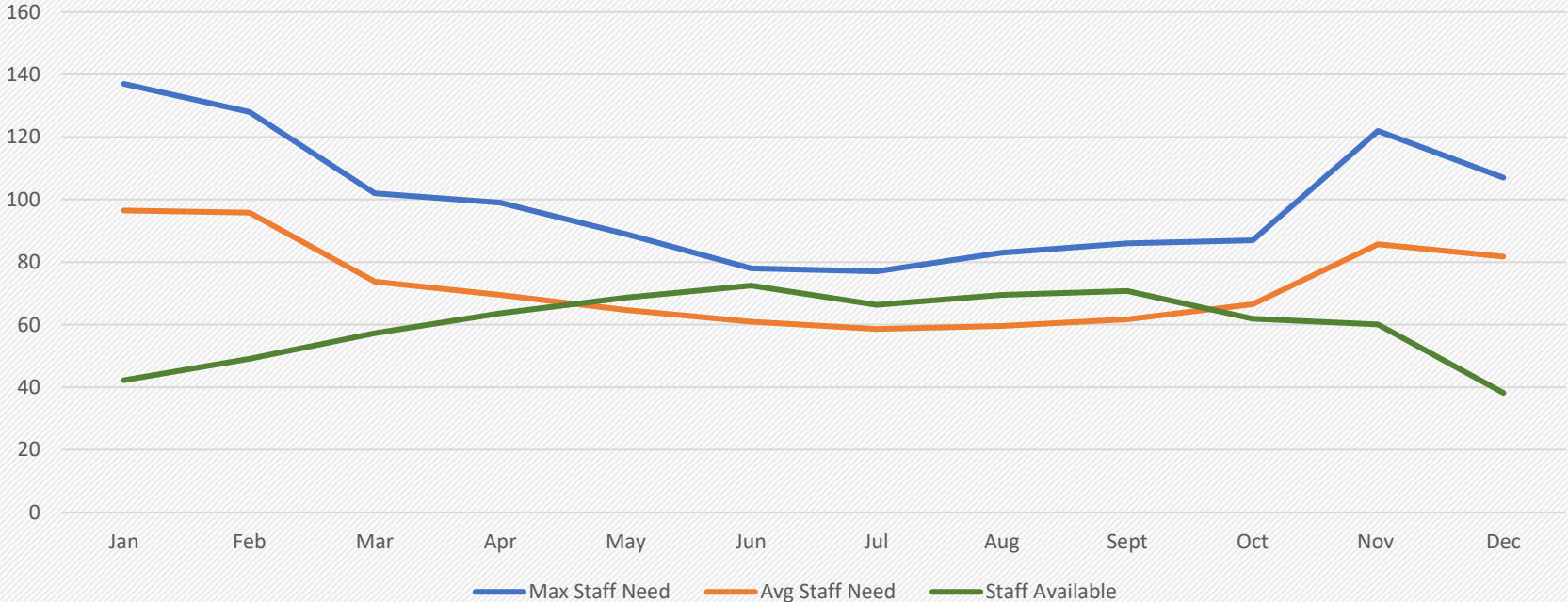
Staffing Assumptions

- 146 permanent UIS1,2, and 3 FTE
- 71.5% utilization rate, 104 effective staff available
- Allocated staff to keep non-phone work current in the month created
- No backlog as of 2022
- Does not include additional PUA work required by USDOL in 2022

ESSB 5193 – Explore Phone Staffing Trigger



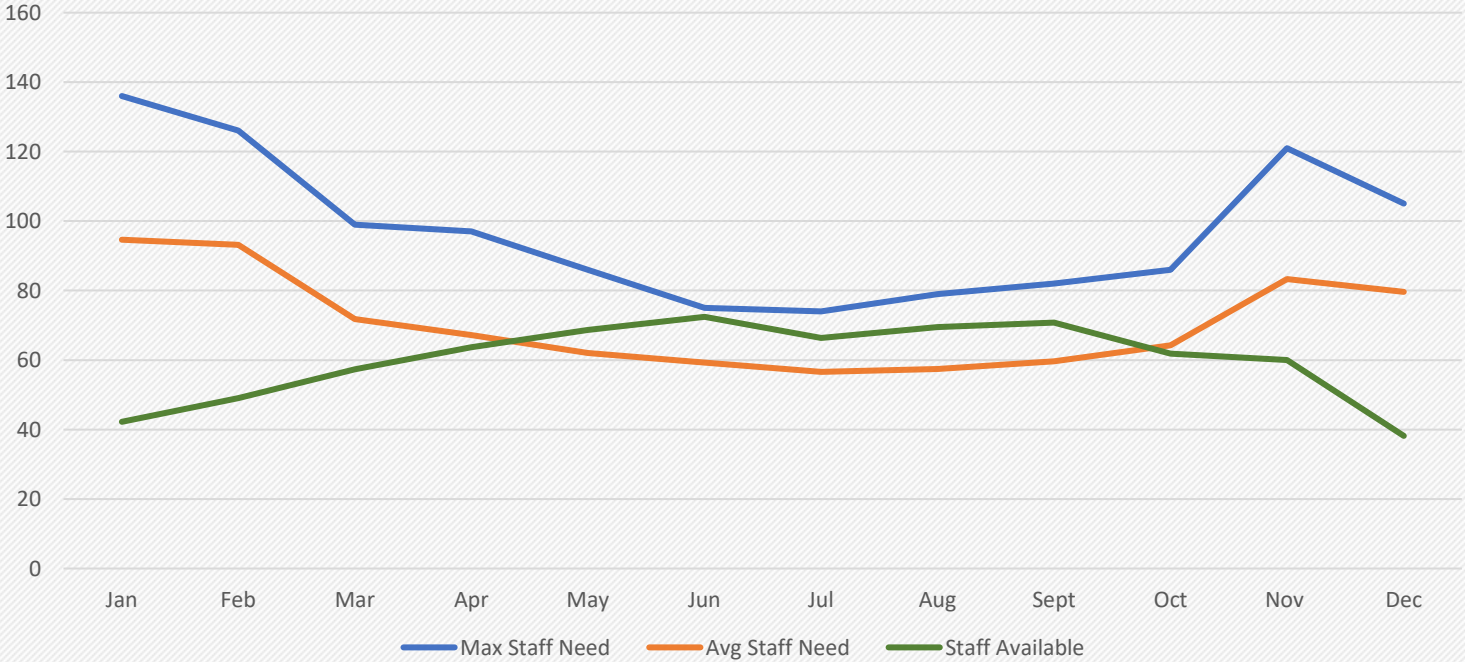
2022 Projected Phone Staff Required
85% of calls answered within 20 minutes



ESSB 5193 – Phone Staffing Trigger



2022 Projected Phone Staff Required
85% of calls answered within 30 minutes



ESSB 5193 – Explore Pilot Project



UICS - Case Management Pilot Project

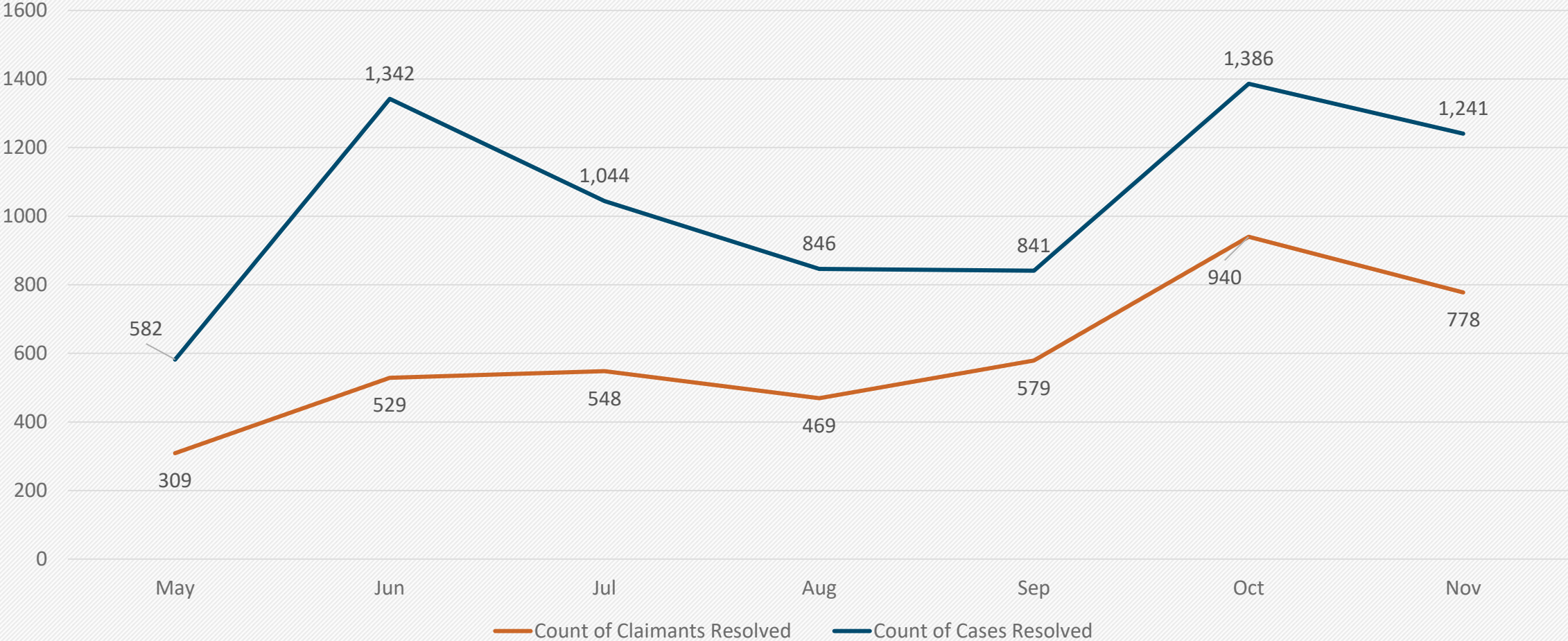
Can we be more efficient and effective in helping claimants with complex problems?

The test – Can all the issues and tasks associated with a claim be resolved within 48 hours of when an adjudicator is assigned a case?

Cross Functional Team – Intake, Adjudication, Office of Special Investigations

- Team has all skills required to resolve issues and work tasks
- Claim moves among different team member if multiple issues require different skill sets
- Microsoft Teams channel to facilitate hand-offs and communication
- Included LEP claimants in the pilot sample

ESSB 5193 – Explore Pilot Project



State Quality Service Plan Briefing



**Employment
Security
Department**
WASHINGTON STATE

Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee Presentation

December 16, 2021

Joy Adams, UI Quality Assurance Manager

Nicole Sherman, UI Process Review Supervisor

Employment Security Department

State Quality Service Plan



- The SQSP is the state's UI performance management and service plan.
- Collaborative approach between USDOL and ESD to track UI performance management and planning.
- Allows for an exchange of information between Federal and state partners to enhance the UI program's ability to reflect their joint commitment to performance excellence and client-centered services.
- Focus on continuous improvement using a "Plan-Do-Check-Act" approach.
- The SQSP is part of the process by which states receive Federal UI administrative grants.

2022 State Quality Service Plan



- Due to the extraordinary circumstances, [UIPL 24-21](#) adjusted this year's expectations: no *new* corrective action plans were required for measures that newly fell below standards.
- *Existing* corrective action plans were to be refreshed and reported.
- Washington has existing Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) for the following measures:
 - Nonmonetary determination timeliness
 - Lower authority appeals
 - Tax quality
 - Overpayment recovery and detection
 - Data validation
 - Benefit Accuracy Measurement

2022 SQSP – Where we stand



- Based on period ending 3/31/2021, the majority of UI program measures did not meet acceptable levels of performance.
- With the impacts of COVID-19 and guidance from UIPL 24-21, ESD will not develop CAPs for all newly failed measures, but will continue reporting on existing CAPs.
- For calendar year 2020, top three root causes for estimated overpayments included Benefit Year Earnings, Separation Issues and Employment Services (ES) Registration.

SQSP 2022 – Select Measures



Measure	Acceptable Level of Performance	Performance in March 2020	Performance in March 2021
First Payment Promptness	≥ 87%	87.59%	66.44%
Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness	≥ 80%	65.23%	66.03%
Nonmonetary Determination Quality – Separations	≥ 75%	83.13%	72.34%
Nonmonetary Determination Quality – Nonseparations	≥ 75%	87.60%	44.68%
Improper Payments	< 10%	12.79%	9.78%
Lower Authority Appeals (30 days)	≥ 60%	33.83%	4.89%

SQSP 2022 – Other Measures



- Areas we have done well
 - Higher Authority Appeals (Commissioner's Review Office)
 - Lower Authority Appeals Quality
 - New Employer Status Determinations Time-lapse

- Areas of concern
 - Tax Quality
 - Quality Assurance (Tax Performance System, Benefit Accuracy Measurement)
 - Data Validation

Looking Forward



- Continuing to work with UI Operations to monitor, measure, and improve performance as we recover from the pandemic's impacts
- Working with USDOL National and Regional offices, [Tiger Teams](#) (multi-disciplinary team of outside experts), National Association of State Workforce Agencies ([NASWA](#)), and others to innovate, prioritize, and re-set our work in future months and years

UI Policy Update



**Employment
Security
Department**
WASHINGTON STATE

Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee Presentation

December 16, 2021

Joy Adams, UI Quality Assurance Manager

Scott Michael, Legal Services Manager

Employment Security Department

UI Policy Update



Continued Work for Pandemic Programs

- Since March 2020, ESD has developed technology and guidance to operate new benefits programs at a break-neck pace – often ahead of the pace of detailed guidance from USDOL
- We continue to have clean-up work in regard to all pandemic programs, including PUA and PEUC, as well as developing a retroactive implementation of Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC).
- We are developing detailed expectations for timelines, but we expect work on PUA ([UIPL 16-20](#) changes [3](#), [5](#) and [6](#)) and MEUC in the first half of 2022.

Vaccine-Related UI Claims

- As of December 10th, UI adjudicators have identified 52 new claims as separations related to the vaccine mandates.

UI Rulemaking Update



Benefit Certification

- Corrects a cross reference.
 - Expedited rule filed: November 17, 2021
 - Planned permanent rule adoption: January 18, 2022

Lump Sum Retirement Deduction

- SB 5061 (2021) removed the deduction of lump sum pension or retirement benefit payments from UI benefits. The rule repeals the associated WAC.
 - Expedited rule filed: December 13, 2021
 - Planned permanent rule adoption: February 23, 2022

ESSB 5478 Implementation



**Employment
Security
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WASHINGTON STATE

Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee Presentation

December 16, 2021

Joy Adams, UI Quality Assurance Manager

Denice Craig, Employer Services Manager

Employment Security Department

ESSB 5478 Implementation



- Provided \$500 million to offset benefit charges from COVID-19 related claims.
- Offsets are split into four categories based on industry, employer size, and a minimum increase in tax-rate class.
- Preliminary numbers shared at November meeting indicate the money will be fully utilized, with Category 1 and 2 employers receiving a high rate of benefit charge offset.
- Category 3 and 4 employers will receive meaningful charge relief as well.
- **The forgiven benefits will not be officially calculated until the tax run the weekend of December 17-19. We will be able to provide the final numbers around December 21st.**

ESSB 5478 Implementation



Tax rate notices will be mailed to employers between December 20-29 with a mailing date of December 29th.

Example of tier 1

Your tax rate for 2022 is based on the following benefit charges and taxable wages.

Experience Year	Benefit Charges*	Taxable Wages**
2021 (07/01/20 - 06/30/21)	\$0.00	\$18,970.00
2020 (07/01/19 - 06/30/20)	\$280.31	\$22,855.18
2019 (07/01/18 - 06/30/19)	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
2018 (07/01/17 - 06/30/18)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Experience Transferred IN	\$1,010.47	\$15,863.00
Total	\$1,290.78	\$60,188.18

= 0.021445

Benefit Charges divided by Taxable Wages equals Benefit Ratio

The forgiveness ratio for the benefit charge offset program is 100.00%. We reduced your total benefit charges by \$1011.41.

*Benefit charges are your share of unemployment benefits that we paid to your former employees.

**Taxable wages are the total amount of your employees' wages on which you paid taxes.

Example of tier 2

Your tax rate for 2022 is based on the following benefit charges and taxable wages.

Experience Year	Benefit Charges*	Taxable Wages**
2021 (07/01/20 - 06/30/21)	\$8,308.36	\$426,336.05
2020 (07/01/19 - 06/30/20)	\$190.67	\$473,651.59
2019 (07/01/18 - 06/30/19)	\$0.00	\$556,376.02
2018 (07/01/17 - 06/30/18)	\$0.00	\$526,899.22
Total	\$8,499.03	\$1,983,262.88

= 0.004285

Benefit Charges divided by Taxable Wages equals Benefit Ratio

The forgiveness ratio for the benefit charge offset program is 87.42%. We reduced your total benefit charges by \$7385.50.

*Benefit charges are your share of unemployment benefits that we paid to your former employees.

**Taxable wages are the total amount of your employees' wages on which you paid taxes.

Closing



Future Meetings Discussion