

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

# Paid Family & Medical Leave Report

DECEMBER 2025

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# Contents

Contents .....	2
Executive summary .....	4
Key insights .....	4
Legislative changes .....	6
Program participation .....	8
Projected and actual Paid Family & Medical Leave benefits .....	8
Benefit application approvals and denials .....	12
Elective coverage participation .....	14
Transportation Network Company (TNC) Pilot Participation.....	16
Voluntary plan participation .....	16
Premium rate.....	18
Premium rate calculation .....	18
Premium rate for 2026 .....	19
Family-medical split.....	20
Benefit payments.....	21
Small business assistance .....	22
Operating and implementation costs.....	23
Customer-focused program performance goals.....	24
Benefits processing times .....	24
Customer contacts responsiveness.....	26
Full employer access to Portal accounts .....	28
Family & medical leave insurance account balance .....	30
Outreach & community engagement.....	32
Establishing a Community Engagement team.....	32
Community education, outreach, and engagement .....	33
Engagement with worker communities .....	36
Engagement with community-based organizations.....	36

WorkSource centers .....	38
Engagement with employers .....	39
Engagement with health care .....	40
Challenges .....	40
Program participant claims and leave-taking behaviors .....	42
Multiple claims within a claim year .....	43
Lengths of leave .....	44
Program participant demographics .....	47
Age .....	48
Gender .....	50
Racial-ethnic identity .....	52
Age, racial-ethnic identity, and gender .....	55
Language preference .....	56
Geography .....	59
Program participant employment characteristics .....	62
Average hourly wage .....	63
Employer size .....	65
Average hourly wage and employer size .....	67
Employer industry .....	68

# Executive summary

The Washington state Legislature enacted the Paid Family and Medical Leave (Paid Leave) insurance program in 2017. Premium assessments began in 2019, and benefits became available in 2020. Both employees and employers contribute premiums to pay for Paid Leave. The program is administered by the Employment Security Department (Employment Security) and generally allows for up to 12 weeks of paid family leave or paid medical leave for eligible Washington workers. Under certain circumstances, individuals may qualify for up to 16 or 18 weeks of combined family and medical leave. The law requires employment protection and continuation of employer-provided health care benefits for many employees. Benefits are progressive, providing up to 90% of recipients' weekly pay for each week of leave.

This report is a product of RCW 50A.05.050<sup>1</sup> and includes:

- Program participation.
- Premium rates.
- The Family and Medical Leave Insurance Account (Paid Leave account) balance.
- Benefits paid.
- Program costs.
- Demographic information on program participants.
- Outreach efforts.
- Assistance available for small businesses.

## Key insights

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During fiscal year 2025<sup>2</sup> (FY25), the Paid Leave program:

- Covered about 71 million hours of leave.
- Paid approximately \$2 billion in benefits.
- Provided benefits to more than 240,000 employees.

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<sup>1</sup> See [RCW 50A.05.050](#)

<sup>2</sup> July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

- Enrolled 3,518 Transportation Network Company (TNC, also known as “rideshare”) drivers into the TNC Pilot and paid out close to \$1.9 million in benefits to enrolled drivers during FY25.
- Continued to grow its Community Engagement team with the hiring of a dual-language Community Engagement Specialist. Staff members have also collectively engaged in over 100 presentations and events.

**Among benefit recipients:**

- Age and gender continue to be the most significant drivers behind program participation. Customers who are between the ages of 30–39 and who identify as female have higher participation.
- Workers making less than \$19 per hour appear to have lower work history-eligibility relative to all Washington workers, as well as lower participation in the program relative to eligible Washington workers.
- Those who work for small employers (49 or fewer employees) appear to have lower work history-eligibility relative to all Washington workers, as well as lower participation in the program relative to eligible Washington workers.
- Those who work in Accommodation and Food Services, Retail Trade, and Administrative and Waste Services appear to have lower work history-eligibility relative to all Washington workers, as well as lower participation in the program relative to eligible Washington workers.

**On program funding:**

- The premium rate taking effect Jan. 1, 2026, will be 1.13%, up from 0.92% in 2025.
- The Paid Leave account is projected to experience ongoing, periodic deficits through 2028 with sustained deficits beginning in 2029 due to rates lower than required to be solvent, and a continued increase in program benefit costs. See the [2025 Actuarial Report for Paid Family & Medical Leave](#) for more details and recommendations.

# Legislative changes

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During the 2025 legislative session, two bills pertaining to Paid Leave passed:

1. Engrossed Second Substitute Senate House Bill 1213 (E2SHB 1213)<sup>3</sup> made several changes to the Paid Leave program impacting both employees and employers.
  - Beginning Jan. 1, 2026, employee job protections will be expanded beyond those employed by employers with 50 or more employees in three phases:
    1. Protections expanded to employees of employers with 25 or more employees in 2026.
    2. Protections expanded to employees of employers with 15 or more employees in 2027.
    3. Protections expanded to employees of employers with 8 or more employees in 2028.

Employees approved for Paid Leave benefits will only be eligible for job protection if they have worked for their employer at least 180 days before taking family or medical leave. For employees who take non-concurrent leave under the Family and Medical Leave act of 1993 (FMLA), the maximum length of job protection for WA Paid Leave may be shortened by the length of FMLA taken in the same year.

- Effective Jan. 1, 2026, there are several changes regarding how employers may access small business assistance grants. The intent behind the small business assistance grants is to partially offset the disproportionate costs of employee leave for small employers. E2SHB 1213 mandates increased awareness and communication about grant availability, caps the number of grants an employer can receive at 10 as opposed to 10 applications, and allows third-party administrators to submit a grant application on an employer's behalf. For employers with fewer than 50 employees, E2SHB 1213 changes the application process and documentation requirements and increases the value of grants to a flat \$3,000.
- Beginning in the fall of 2026, and impacting employers in 2027, employer size determination will now be based on employer reporting of employee counts on the last day of each quarter and averaged across the prior year. Previously, employee counts were averaged from total headcount in employers' quarterly wage reports. This change has the potential to more accurately reflect an

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<sup>3</sup> See [Engrossed Second Substitute Senate House Bill 1213](#)

employer's true size in terms of number of positions, because employees who leave an employer before the end of a quarter will no longer be counted in that quarter. This could result in a small increase in employers qualifying for small business assistance grants and exempt from the employer portion of the premium, but it is unlikely to impact most employers beyond a small change to quarterly reporting.

- Beginning Jan. 1, 2026, the minimum claim duration payment will reduce from eight to four consecutive hours of leave. This has the potential to shift patterns of intermittent leave use by customers and better support workers experiencing their own or a family member's chronic or long-term health condition.
2. Effective July 27, 2025, Substitute Senate Bill 5191 (SSB 5191)<sup>4</sup> updated the definition of employer to include representatives for employers of dockworkers engaged in a collective bargaining agreement.

The program also implemented changes because of legislation passed in prior legislative sessions with the potential to impact certain findings in this report:

1. Substitute House Bill 1570 (SHB 1570)<sup>5</sup> created a pilot program focusing on Transportation Network Companies (TNCs). The pilot began July 1, 2024, and runs through 2028. It requires TNCs to pay drivers the premiums assessed for any drivers who elect Paid Leave coverage.
2. Second Substitute Senate Bill 5649<sup>6</sup> (2SSB 5649) included a provision to sunset the collective bargaining agreement exemption to WA Paid Leave as of Dec. 31, 2023.<sup>7</sup> As such, FY25 was the first full fiscal year in which the employees and employers who had been affected by this exemption appear in data presented in this report.

Additional information on past legislative changes is available in previous Paid Family & Medical Leave annual reports.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See [Substitute Senate Bill 5191 \(SSB 5191\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> See [Substitute House Bill 1570 \(SHB 1570\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> See [Second Substitute Senate Bill 5649 \(2SSB 5649\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> For more information on the expired collective bargaining agreement provision, see [RCW 50A.05.090](#).

<sup>8</sup> For all previous Paid Family & Medical annual reports, see [the legislative resources on the ESD website](#).

# Program participation

## Projected and actual Paid Family & Medical Leave benefits

Most employees in Washington state are eligible for benefits if they have experienced a qualifying event for family or medical leave and worked at least 820 hours during a qualifying year period.<sup>9</sup>

In FY25, customers submitted 321,426 Paid Leave benefit claim applications, hereafter “claims,” indicating strong continued growth in program usage. The beginning-of-year projections of paid claims were close to actuals (**Figure 1**), coming in slightly under projections. Eighty-four percent of submitted claims received payment in FY25. Here, actual claims are those that were approved and associated with at least one payment during the fiscal year. This would not include those who applied and were denied or were approved but did not take leave.

**Figure 1. Projected and actual paid WA Paid Leave benefit claims by fiscal year (FY20–FY25)**

Year	Projected paid claims	Actual paid claims
FY2020 <sup>10</sup>	36,033	47,960
FY2021	131,150	133,014
FY2022	157,146	169,606
FY2023	196,522	195,517
FY2024	228,993	232,192
FY2025	279,571	269,508

Source: Projected paid benefit claims from WA Paid Leave actuaries; actuals from WA Paid Leave administrative data, 01/01/2020–06/30/2025

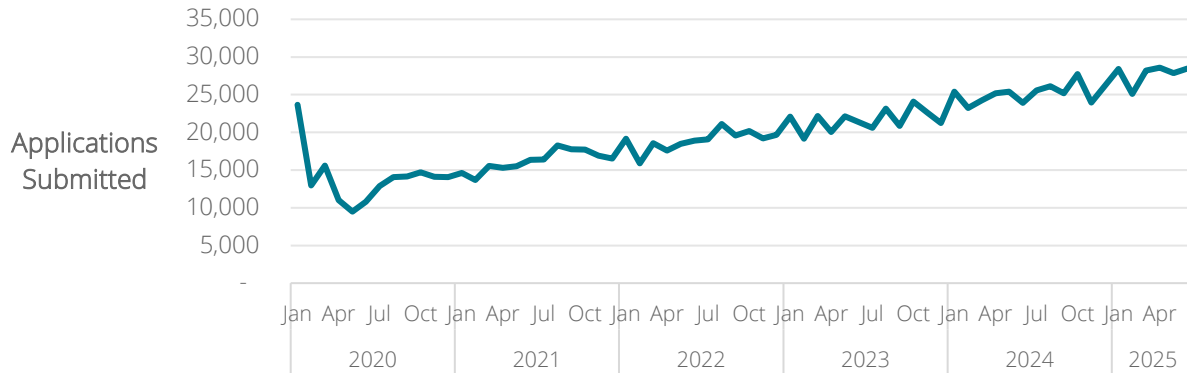
Examining claims month-over-month, the number of claims *submitted* to Employment Security illustrates additional information about program participation and customer need for leave. From Jan. 2020–June 2025 submitted claim applications have continued the steady upwards trend of program growth to date (**Figure 2**). Submitted claims hit a monthly high in April 2025, with more than 28,500 claims submitted that month. **Figure 3** compares the growth as percent change year-over-year since FY21. Paid Leave received about 15% more claim applications in FY25 than the previous fiscal year, suggesting that although year-over-year growth is starting to slow from the program’s first couple years, program usage continues to

<sup>9</sup> Exemptions include federal employees and Tribal employees. Tribal employers may opt in to program participation.

<sup>10</sup> FY20 only includes six months, Jan. 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020, due to the timing of when benefits launched.

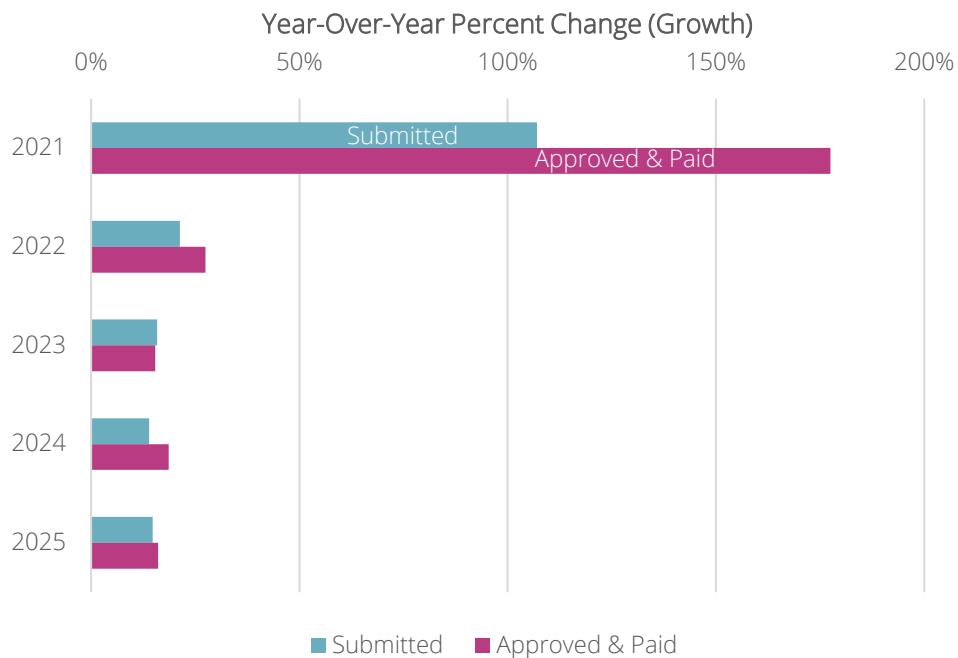
grow substantially (Figure 3). Paid claims have similarly increased at 16% (Figure 3). For comparison, between FY23 and FY24, applications increased by 14% and paid claims by 19%.

Figure 2. Benefit claim applications submitted by month, Jan. 2020–June 2025



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 01/01/2020–06/30/2025

Figure 3. Year-over-year percent change (growth) for claim applications submitted versus paid, Jan. 2020<sup>11</sup>–June 2025



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 01/01/2020–06/30/2025

<sup>11</sup> FY2020 not shown because year-over-year change cannot be calculated for the first year of the Paid Leave program.

Of the over 320,000 leave claims submitted in FY25, 45% were for family leave and 55% for medical leave (Figure 5). Figure 4 provides definitions of the kinds of family and medical leave currently available to customers.

#### Figure 4. Definitions of family and medical leave subtypes available to customers

**Family leave** includes leave to bond with a new child, leave to care for a family member with a serious medical condition, and military leave.

- **Bonding** leave is to care for a new child (adoption, birth or foster placement).
- **Care** leave is to care for a family member<sup>12</sup> with a serious health condition.
- **Military** leave is for military exigencies, such as short-notice deployment.

**Medical leave** includes non-pregnancy medical leave and both pre- and post-natal pregnancy-related medical leaves.<sup>13</sup>

- **Serious Medical Condition** leave is for workers to take for their own non-pregnancy serious health condition. Sometimes referred to as ‘medical’ for shorthand in figures that also include pregnancy leave.
- **Pregnancy** leave is a medical leave taken for pregnancy and/or childbirth recovery.<sup>14</sup> Pregnancy leave is split into two subtypes, depending on when the leave begins.
  - **Prenatal** leave is medical leave that begins while pregnant. It may include leave taken to recover from childbirth.
  - **Postnatal** leave is medical leave taken starting after a child is born to recover from childbirth.

Source: [Washington RCW.50A.10.030](#)

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<sup>12</sup> Qualifying family members include child, spouse of child, or other parent-child relationships (legal guardian, de facto, in loco parentis), parent or parent of a spouse, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, spouse, or registered domestic partner. In 2021, with the passage of [ESSB 5097](#), the definition of a qualifying family member expanded to include chosen family or “any individual where the relationship creates an expectation for care.”

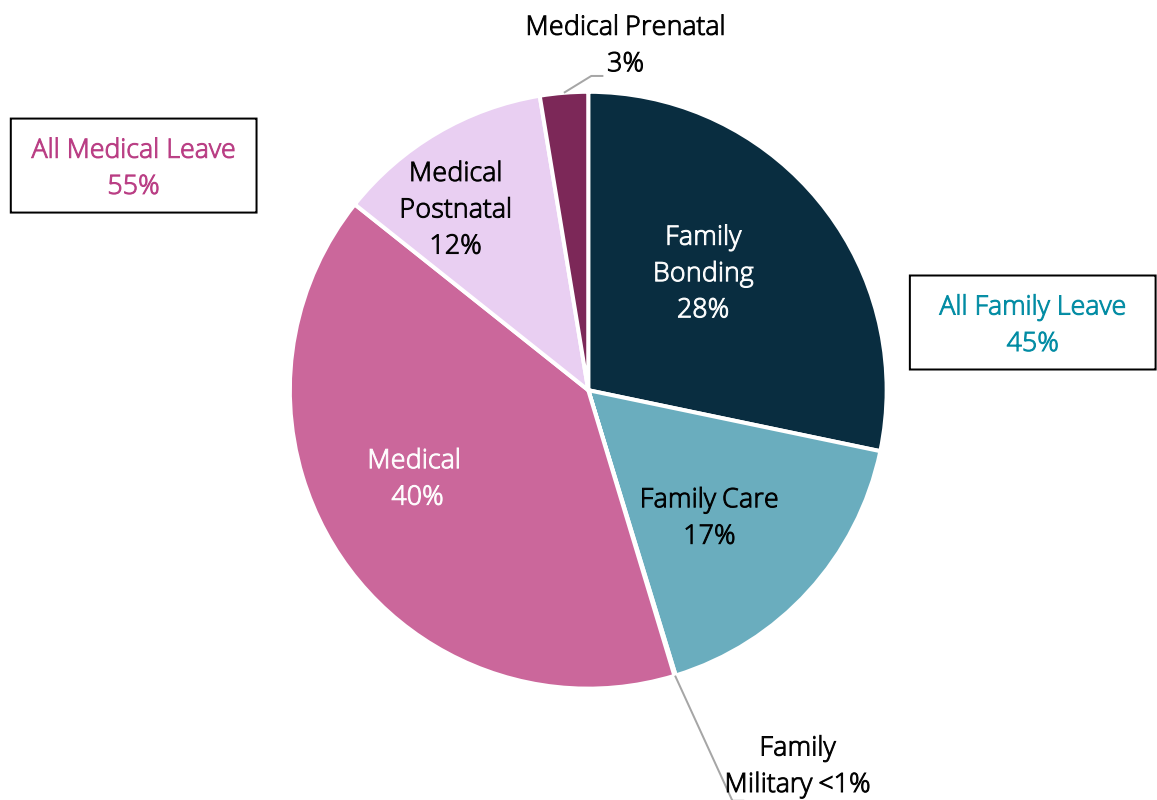
<sup>13</sup> With both prenatal and postnatal medical leave, an individual that experiences a condition in pregnancy or childbirth that results in incapacity, like a C-section, can take an additional 2 weeks of medical leave for pregnancy-related complications. This means they could be eligible to take up to 18 weeks of combined medical and family leave around the birth of a child.

<sup>14</sup> In June 2022, system changes allowed the program to distinguish between medical leaves for one’s own serious health condition and for pregnancy and childbirth recovery. Note here that we distinguish between pre- and postnatal medical leave for the purposes of reporting out on the number of applications submitted. In later sections, we refer to these claims as one group – “medical pregnancy” or “pregnancy” – which includes all medical leaves taken for pregnancy or childbirth recovery.

The most common application subtype is for a worker’s own serious medical condition, at 40% of all submitted claims (Figure 5). This is followed by family bonding at 28%. The most infrequently submitted types in FY25 were for medical prenatal leave (3%) followed by family military (<1%).

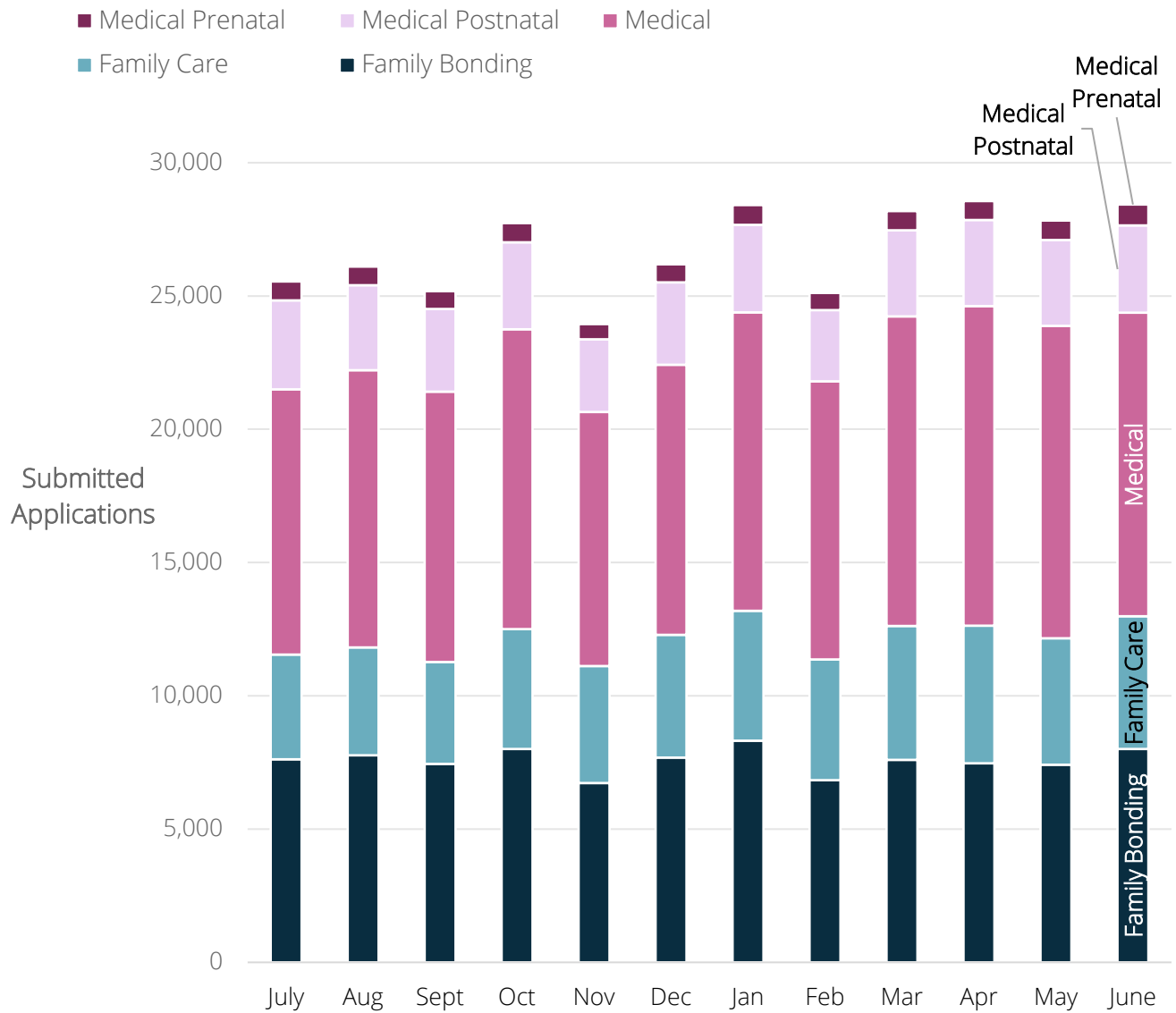
Month-over-month in FY25, the relative numbers of each claim type submitted is largely consistent (Figure 6). Even in months with fewer claims submitted, such as November and February, a breakdown of claims by type showed relative frequencies of each type are largely constant month-over-month.

Figure 5. FY25 Claim applications submitted by leave type



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

Figure 6. Submitted claim applications by month and leave type



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

## Benefit application approvals and denials

Overall, 89% of benefit applications were ultimately approved and 84% paid to customers. However, approval percentages across benefit applications differ by type of leave (Figure 7).

Applications for bonding leave had the highest approvals, while applications for military<sup>15</sup> and medical prenatal<sup>16</sup> leaves had the lowest in FY25.

**Figure 7. FY25 Claim applications by subtype, submitted versus approved**

	Benefit applications/claims submitted	Claims approved	Claims paid
Family Bonding	90,886	95%	92%
Family Care	54,609	85%	76%
Family Military	226	61%	50%
Medical	129,732	85%	80%
Medical Prenatal	8,366	72%	69%
Medical Postnatal	37,607	93%	92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>321,426</b>	<b>89%<sup>17</sup></b>	<b>84%<sup>20</sup></b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

There are also differences across claim types in the percentage of benefit applications paid, which is largely comparable to approval alone (**Figure 7**). Larger differences between percentages approved versus paid can show shifts in need. For example, family military leave shows a larger difference, which likely reflects the nature of military exigency (that deployment plans can change) and consequent change in customer need to use leave.

When benefit applications are denied, up to five possible reasons for the denial are recorded. For some denial reasons, such as insufficient documentation of identity or hours worked, the application will only list the single denial reason. Thus, most (97%) claims in FY25 were denied for a single reason (**Figure 8**).<sup>18</sup> **Figure 8** lists the reasons that benefit applications were denied as a percent of all denied applications. Of the approximately 34,000 benefit applications that were denied in FY25, over one-third were denied because the customer did not meet the eligibility requirement of having worked 820 hours in the qualifying period, including situations in which insufficient documentation was provided to substantiate work hours (**Figure 8**). Over one-fourth of benefit applications were denied because the customer did not submit sufficient medical documentation, a requirement of both customers who take most types of medical

<sup>15</sup> The most common denial reasons for military claims are the qualifying event does not meet the exigency definition, or the customer does not meet the hours worked requirement. It is common for customers to submit the wrong documentation (i.e., memorandums in lieu of orders, which do not provide authorization of movement and lines of accounting for movement). Moreover, there are a consistent number of applications submitted for military leave that do not qualify under exigency, such as field training or change of duty stations.

<sup>16</sup> The most common denial reasons for medical prenatal claims are the customer does not meet the hours worked requirement, did not provide sufficient medical certification, or applied ahead of the event.

<sup>17</sup> Percentage is based on the total applications and is not an average of the percentages in the column.

<sup>18</sup> Most commonly, benefit applications that are denied for two or more reasons are denied for a combination of applying before the qualifying event has occurred, exhausting leave, and/or not providing sufficient documentation of the qualifying event.

leave<sup>19</sup> and those who take family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

**Figure 8. Benefit application denial reasons in FY25<sup>20</sup>**

Denial Reason	Percent
Hours worked requirement not met	38%
Missing or insufficient qualifying event documentation	24%
Exhausted leave	11%
Applied ahead of the event	11%
Claim year ended	5%
Other	4%
Unable to establish good cause to backdate the claim	3%
Missing or insufficient identity documentation	2%
Non-qualifying event	2%
Hours worked requirement not met – excluded under voluntary plan	1%
Hours worked requirement not met – excluded as a tribal or federal government employee	1%

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

## Elective coverage participation

Those who are self-employed or working as independent contractors may choose to opt in to the Paid Leave program. This includes individuals who work independently and business owners who may have employees already covered by the program and would like to obtain coverage for themselves. Beginning July 1, 2024, this also included rideshare drivers who are allowed to opt in to the Transportation Network Company (TNC) Pilot established by Senate House Bill 1570,<sup>21</sup> passed by the Legislature in 2023.<sup>22</sup> Drivers who opt in to the pilot have their coverage begin the following quarter, like elective coverage customers. Those electing coverage become eligible for leave at the beginning of the quarter after opting in once they have met the eligibility criteria of 820 hours worked in the qualifying period. The initial participation period for non-TNC elective coverage is three years, after which participation changes to an annual basis. TNC Pilot participants may opt in or out at any time, and their coverage starts or ends at the next turn of the quarter.

<sup>19</sup> Medical certification is required for medical leave for a worker’s serious health condition as well as medical prenatal leave and medical postnatal leave with complications. Medical postnatal leave without complications only requires proof of birth.

<sup>20</sup> Denied benefit applications can have multiple denial reasons, but 97% of all denied applications only list a single denial reason. These are not de-duplicated, so percentages will exceed 100%.

<sup>21</sup> See [Senate House Bill 1570](#) Section 4

<sup>22</sup> As of June 30, 2025, a total of 3,518 drivers had opted into coverage. Of those, 2,953 had active coverage.

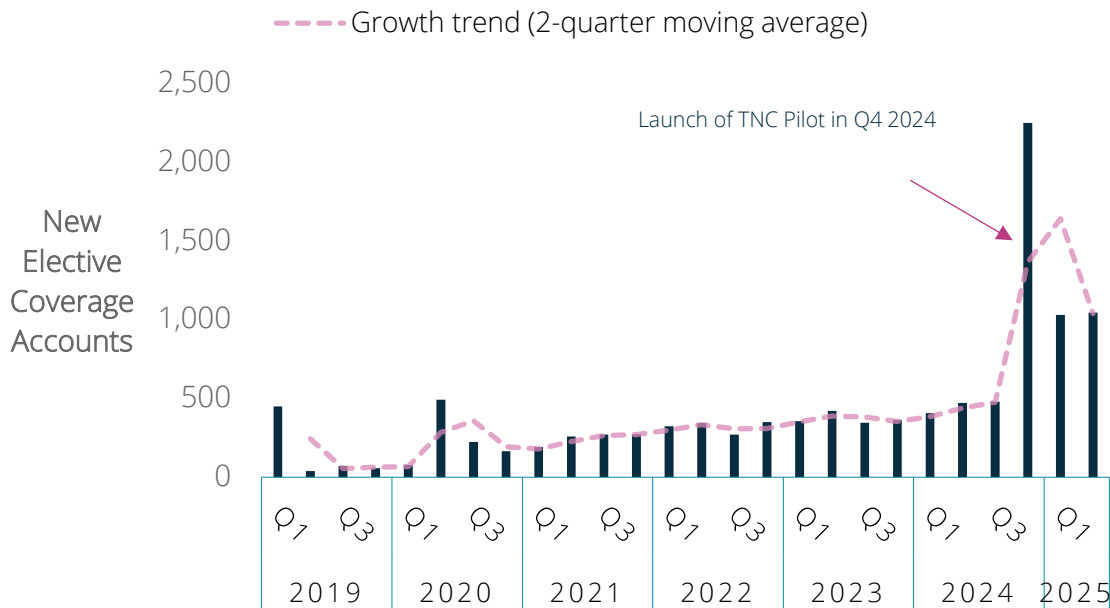
As of the end of June 2025, 10,830 accounts associated with approximately 10,300 individuals had elected coverage.<sup>23</sup> In the last year, 4,800 accounts began coverage and 129 ended coverage. This is higher growth than in the past two fiscal years, mainly due to TNC Pilot rideshare driver opt-in (Figure 9). Figure 10 shows the growth of new elective coverage accounts by effective start date. Growth had been relatively steady from 2021 through late 2024, when new elective coverage accounts rose considerably due to the TNC Pilot launch.

Figure 9. Elective coverage accounts by coverage start date, FY2019–FY2025

	Accounts by coverage start date	Year-over-year percent change
FY2019	488	-
FY2020	698	43%
FY2021	839	20%
FY2022	1,209	44%
FY2023	1,395	15%
FY2024	1,587	13%
FY2025	4,805	204%

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 7/1/2018 - 6/30/2025

Figure 10. New elective coverage accounts by effective start date



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 1/1/2019 - 6/30/2025

<sup>23</sup> This includes individuals with accounts coverage start dates before the end of the fiscal year.

Approximately 1,900 (18%) of active elective coverage customers filed benefit applications in FY25, of which 81% were approved.<sup>24</sup> Collectively, these customers submitted just under 3,000 benefit applications, or about 1% of all submitted applications in FY25.<sup>25</sup>

## Transportation Network Company (TNC) Pilot Participation

As of the end of FY25, 2,953 rideshare drivers had active coverage<sup>26</sup> in the WA Paid Leave TNC Pilot. During FY25, Paid Leave received 484 leave applications from enrolled TNC drivers, of which 63% were approved.<sup>27</sup> Among these submitted benefit applications, 412 (85%) were family leave applications, while only 72 (15%) were medical leave applications. Within the family leave applications, 57% were for family care and 43% were for family bonding. Within the medical leave applications, 72% were for a worker's serious medical condition, 17% for prenatal medical pregnancy, and 11% for postnatal medical pregnancy. The most common reason for denial of a leave application was insufficient hours worked, accounting for 87% of denials.

## Voluntary plan participation

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The Paid Leave program includes a provision for employers to operate a voluntary plan in lieu of participating in the state's plan. These leave programs must meet or exceed the state's Paid Leave benefits while not costing employees more than the state plan would. Interested employers submit a voluntary plan application to Employment Security, along with a nonrefundable application fee.<sup>28</sup> After Employment Security reviews and approves plans, the department provides ongoing general assistance to employers operating voluntary plans. Plans must be fully reviewed on a periodic basis for the first three years to ensure requirements are met. Employers operating voluntary plans are still required to submit quarterly wage reports. Employment Security posts a list of all employers with an approved voluntary plan on its [website](#).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Compared to an overall 89% of applications approved during the same time frame. Elective coverage claims cannot be directly linked. This is an estimate.

<sup>25</sup> Over 320,000 benefit applications were submitted by Washington workers in FY25.

<sup>26</sup> After enrollment, drivers' coverage begins the following quarter, like all elective coverage customers. Not all these drivers are eligible yet to apply for benefits unless they have worked 820 hours in the qualifying period.

<sup>27</sup> This compares to 89% approval overall for submitted benefit applications.

<sup>28</sup> For more information about voluntary plan costs and fee structures see the legislative report published in August, 2022 analyzing the administration of voluntary plans, found [here](#).

<sup>29</sup> See <https://paidleave.wa.gov/voluntary-plans-employer-list/>

As of the end of FY25, 425 employers had approved voluntary plans (**Figure 11**). Approximately 93% of these employers offer a combined family and medical leave plan with a few employers offering either a medical leave only (about 6%) or family leave only (about 1%) voluntary plan.

**Figure 11. Voluntary plan employers by plan type offer and employer size**

	Family & Medical Plan	Medical Only Plan	Family Only Plan	All Plan Types
Small Employers (<50 Employees)	242	12	4	258
Large Employers (50+ Employees)	131	12	0	143
Unknown Employer Size	23	1	0	24
<b>All Voluntary Plan Employers</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>425</b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

Of voluntary plans, 60% are run by small employers (fewer than 50 employees), 34% by large employers, and 6% of employers were not sized because they did not submit quarterly wage records in FY25. This could be for a variety of reasons; for example, the business could have since closed or there is still uncertainty about the need to submit wage records despite administering their own plan. This is about half the percentage missing size for the prior year, indicating increasing success of employer customers meeting their reporting responsibilities.

**Figure 12** shows the average employment and total wages for the 401 voluntary plan employers with submitted wage records during the fiscal year. Voluntary plan employers reported a total of 148,574 employees during the fiscal year, or about 4% of statewide employment, and about \$37 billion in gross wages, or 11% of statewide wages (**Figure 12**). Compared to FY24, the number of voluntary plan employers increased nearly 12%, while employment and wages as a share of statewide totals remained about the same.<sup>30</sup>

**Figure 12. Employment and gross wages of employers with approved voluntary plans by employer size**

	Employment	Share of Statewide Employment	Total Gross Wages	Share of Statewide Gross Wages
Small Employers (<50 Employees)	2,929	0.2%	\$506,666,686	0.7%
Large Employers (50+ Employees)	145,646	5.0%	\$36,704,105,082	13.7%
<b>All Employers</b>	<b>148,574</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>\$37,210,771,768</b>	<b>11%</b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

<sup>30</sup> Wage and employment information regarding last year's voluntary plans can be found in the [2024 Annual Report](#) on pages 11 and 12.

# Premium rate

Premiums are assessed quarterly and remitted to Employment Security in conjunction with employer reporting in the month following the end of each quarter. Reporting months are April, July, October, and January. Premium responsibility is split between employees and employers and only applies to wages up to the social security cap. Employers may withhold from employees up to 100% of the family leave premium and up to 45% of the medical leave premium. Employers with 50 or more employees are responsible for 55% of the medical leave premium. Small businesses (employers with 49 or fewer employees) are exempt from paying the employer portion of the premium, except if the small business receives a small business assistance grant<sup>31</sup> or if they choose to opt in to contributing the employer portion of the premium. Upon receiving a grant, they are required to pay the employer portion of the premium for the next three years. Those who are self-employed and independent contractors electing coverage are responsible only for the employee share of the premium.

## Premium rate calculation

Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 5286, passed in 2023, modified the Paid Leave premium rate calculation beginning in 2024, based on recommendations from the Legislative Task Force on Paid Family and Medical Leave Premiums.<sup>32</sup> The current methodology is as follows:

$$\text{Premium Rate} = \frac{140\% (\text{benefits paid} + \text{admin costs for prior fiscal year}) - \text{Sept 30 account balance}}{\text{taxable wages of the prior fiscal year}}$$

The premium rate is calculated annually by taking 140% of the prior fiscal year's expenses, including benefits paid and Employment Security's administrative costs for the Paid Leave program. This is then reduced by the Paid Leave account balance as of September 30th. The result is then divided by the total taxable wages in the prior fiscal year. This ratio is carried out to the fourth decimal place and then rounded up to the nearest hundredth of a percent. This rounded figure is the next calendar year's premium rate.

While SSB 5286 removed the ability to assess an additional solvency surcharge if the rate results in projected solvency concerns in the following year, it does require the Commissioner to adjust the premium rate lower if the rate calculated results in a projected Paid Leave account balance that would exceed a three-month reserve at the end of the following rate

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<sup>31</sup> See [Small Business Assistance section](#) in this report.

<sup>32</sup> The final report can be found [here](#).

collection year.<sup>33</sup> For the calculation of the 2026 premium rate, the end of the following rate collection year is the end of quarter one of 2027. The three-month reserve is defined in statute<sup>34</sup> as three months' worth of the average monthly expenses (benefits paid and administrative costs) in the prior twelve months at the time of rate setting.

## Premium rate for 2026

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Using the methods outlined above, taking 140% of total benefits paid (\$2,014,431,850) and administrative costs including small business assistance grants (\$77,251,752) then reducing that by the Paid Leave account balance on Sept 30, 2025, (\$52,660,055) resulted in \$2,875,696,988. This was then divided by taxable wages in the prior fiscal year (\$255,122,722,907) which equaled 1.13% after being carried out to the fourth decimal place and then rounded up to the nearest hundredth of a percent.<sup>35</sup>

$$1.13\% = \frac{140\% (\$2,014,431,850 + \$77,251,752) - \$52,660,055}{\$255,122,722,907}$$

Thus, the total premium rate taking effect Jan. 1, 2026, will be 1.13%. This is an increase from 0.92% in 2025.

The estimated three-month reserve at the end of the rate year (2027 Q1) is \$543 million. Upon running this rate through Employment Security's Office of Actuarial Services model, the estimated Paid Leave account balance will likely be in deficit, much lower than a three-month reserve. The current rate structure only grants the Commissioner the ability to decrease the rate if the above calculation results in a premium rate higher than what is needed to maintain a three-month reserve at the end of the rate year. The new methodology reduced but did not eliminate risk of short-term deficits and has now also been outpaced by sustained growth in benefits above what was assumed in prior Legislative Task Force conversations in 2022. Current projections indicate ongoing, periodic deficits through 2028 with the deficit becoming sustained in 2029 due to rates lower than required to be solvent, and a continued increase in program benefit costs.

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<sup>33</sup> Projected Paid Leave account balances are estimated models produced by Employment Security's Office of Actuarial Services, for more information regarding project balances see the [Actuarial Annual Report for Paid Family and Medical Leave](#).

<sup>34</sup> [RCW 50A.10.030\(6\)\(c\)\(ii\)](#)

<sup>35</sup> Small business assistance grants were excluded from total benefits paid and were immaterial to the rate calculation.

## Family-medical split

Premiums are split between family and medical leave, with 100% of the family leave employee-funded. Medical leave is 45% funded by employees and 55% funded by employers (Figure 13).

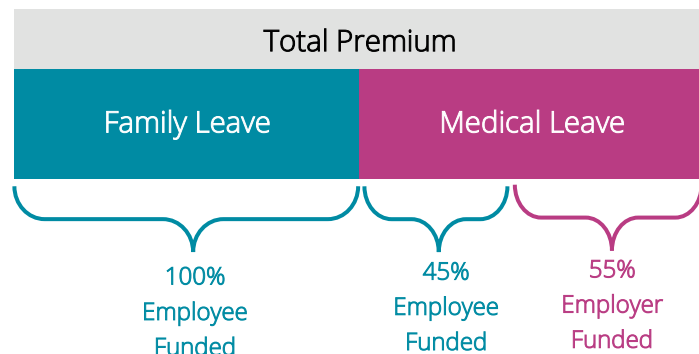
Since Jan. 1, 2022, the family-medical split of total premium has been variable based on the ratio of paid claims in the prior fiscal year.<sup>36</sup> Changes to the ratio of family and medical claims adjusts the contribution rates for employees and employers. A

shift toward more family claims paid relative to medical claims paid increases the employee contribution compared to employers. The inverse of this, higher use of medical leave, increases the employer contribution. Employers may also choose to cover some or all their employees' portion as an additional benefit they provide to their employees.

For 2025, the family premium was set at 48.22% and the medical premium was set at 51.78% of the total premium. This means employees contributed 71.52% and employers contributed 28.48% towards the total premium for 2025.

For 2026, the family premium will be 48.06% and the medical premium will be 51.94% of the total premium. This translates to employees contributing 71.43% and employers contributing 28.57% towards the premium in 2026.

Figure 13. Employee and employer funded portions of the Family and Medical Leave premiums



Source: [Washington RCW.50A.10.030](#)

<sup>36</sup> Claims paid include any leave claim with at least one payment in the prior fiscal year.

# Benefit payments

Applicants approved to take leave submit weekly claims for leave, relaying information about any hours worked that week, whether they used other benefits (e.g., unemployment) and other information necessary to calculate the week's benefit payment. **Figure 14** shows the number of employees and claims with at least one approved weekly payment, approved benefit dollars, and leave hours used by the month and in total for FY25. Month over month in FY25, the number of customers using leave increased. Unsurprisingly, the approved benefits amount and leave hours taken followed the same trend.

Between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, the program covered about 71 million hours of leave and paid approximately \$2 billion in benefits to over 213,000 Washingtonians across over 269,000 benefit claims. On average, each week approved customers used 32 hours of leave and received \$910.<sup>37</sup>

Figure 14. Benefit claims and approved payments by month,<sup>38</sup> July 2024 - June 2025

	Employees with at least one approved weekly claim payment	Claims with at least one approved weekly claim payment	Approved benefits (millions)	Leave hours (millions)
July	20,131	20,602	77.8	2.8
August	33,568	35,153	120.3	4.3
September	41,562	43,458	150.7	5.4
October	46,352	48,479	155.7	5.5
November	44,583	46,132	138.0	4.9
December	49,388	51,349	173.2	6.2
January	52,595	54,501	167.3	6.0
February	52,112	54,047	157.7	5.6
March	55,290	57,738	181.7	6.3
April	55,412	57,598	169.1	5.8
May	56,041	58,185	167.5	5.7
June	60,625	63,491	196.8	6.7
July 2024 to June 2025 <sup>38</sup>	213,718	269,508	\$2,009	71

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

<sup>37</sup> Washington workers taking Paid Leave may do so intermittently and some start or end mid-week, which results in proration of the weekly benefit, or workers may not typically work a 40-hour week resulting in fewer weekly hours.

<sup>38</sup> Figures are deduplicated totals for the year and are not equal to the sum of the columns.

# Small business assistance

The Paid Leave program includes provisions to support smaller businesses, which may be disproportionately affected when employees take leave. Businesses with 150 or fewer employees are eligible to apply for grants that are paid out of the family and medical leave insurance account<sup>39</sup>. Employers with fewer than 50 employees that receive a grant pay the employer portion of premiums for three subsequent years (twelve quarters). For each employee on leave, employers may receive a grant of \$3,000, if they have hired a temporary worker to replace an employee on Paid Leave for at least a week, or a grant of up to \$1,000 for significant wage-related costs associated with an employee’s use of Paid Leave. Employers may apply for up to 10 grants per year and must provide documentation of a replacement worker and/or wage-related costs. As noted above in **Legislative changes**, there will be some modifications to small business assistance coming in 2026.

A total of 138 small business assistance grant applications were submitted during the fiscal year, of which 126 (91%) were approved.<sup>40</sup> **Figure 15** details the types of grants approved in total and by business size. Approximately \$284,000 in grants went to 57 businesses. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees received a median of one grant each, while those with 50–150 employees received a median of two grants each. Associated with these small business assistance grants are 98 employees who used leave.

**Figure 15. Approved small business assistance grants by type and employer size**

	Grant Type	
	<i>Wage-related costs</i>	<i>Temporary employee</i>
<b>49 or fewer employees</b>	10	28
<b>50–150 employees</b>	37	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>79</b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

Smaller businesses with 49 or fewer employees had a total of 38 grants (30%), and applied for over twice as many grants to cover the costs of a temporary employee as for wage-related costs (**Figure 15**). Businesses with 50–150 employees received 88 grants (70%) and applied for more grants for to cover costs of temporary employees than wages. Employers receiving grants were from 16 counties across the state.<sup>41</sup> Counties with the highest percentage of

<sup>39</sup> Grant funding source can be found in [RCW 50A.24.040](#).

<sup>40</sup> For comparison, since December 2020, there have been 1,030 small business assistance grants submitted with 68% approval.

<sup>41</sup> At least one employer received a grant from these counties, in order of most to least grants received: King, Snohomish, Whatcom, Clark, Pierce, Spokane, Yakima, Chelan, Kitsap, Asotin, Grays Harbor, Thurston, Whitman, Benton, Douglas, Kittitas. Seven grant recipients’ counties were not available in the administrative records.

grants were among those with a higher number of businesses: King (34%) and Snohomish counties (16%).

## Operating and implementation costs

The Paid Leave program continues to grow as more customers utilize the benefit every year. As a new program, Paid Leave also continues to respond to customer demand and policy changes by updating and improving processes and technology. Key projects from the past year include:

- Developed and deployed eight major technology releases comprised of 95 features and 73 bug fixes, improving customer experience.
- Improved equitable access to the benefit by adding an option to select a language dialect if applicable, and by adding graphics to the benefit approval letter to better explain next steps.
- Improved operational processes to allow benefit customers with ITINs to apply online.
- Improved the process for benefit customers to provide required documentation at time of application and made improvements to the questions and flow in the application to lay the groundwork for future changes, like simplifying the process for people who take medical leave to recover from birth followed by bonding leave.
- Provided staff with additional information and controls to prevent fraud and ensure benefit payments are accurate and timely.
- 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. This work lays the foundation for identifying benefit overpayments and is part the Paid Leave system completion project.
- Built the underlying functionality to withhold child support from benefit payments. Withholding went live in Sept. 2025.
- Fully implemented the TNC Pilot under SHB 1570 (2023). Drivers can opt in and out of the pilot, and their third-party administrator can report earning and pay premiums quarterly on their behalf.
- Transitioned the power of attorney (POA) process from paper forms to a self-serve electronic system for employers and their agents. This eliminated the need for staff to review electronic requests and reduced manual data entry to only paper submissions. Monthly paper POA forms dropped by over 40%, from an average of 603 to 342 by Nov. 2024.

## Customer-focused program performance goals

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In January 2025, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) published findings in their report on the Paid Family and Medical Leave Program. JLARC recommended the program “adopt quantifiable customer-oriented performance measures for claims processing and call center management.” Prior to this point, the program had informal working goals, but they had not been formalized and published widely. With input and assent from the Paid Family and Medical Leave Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), Employment Security adopted key performance indicators (KPIs) and performance goals. Two measures track benefits processing times. Four categories of responsiveness when a customer (employer, employee, or healthcare provider) contacts Employment Security are tracked: phone hold time, the percent of calls into a queue, secure messaging response time, and email response. The final measure assesses employer account access. The ability to track and monitor some of these is still being developed. However, these seven KPIs are being used to evaluate responsiveness, effectiveness, and resource allocation, and to inform continuous improvement efforts.

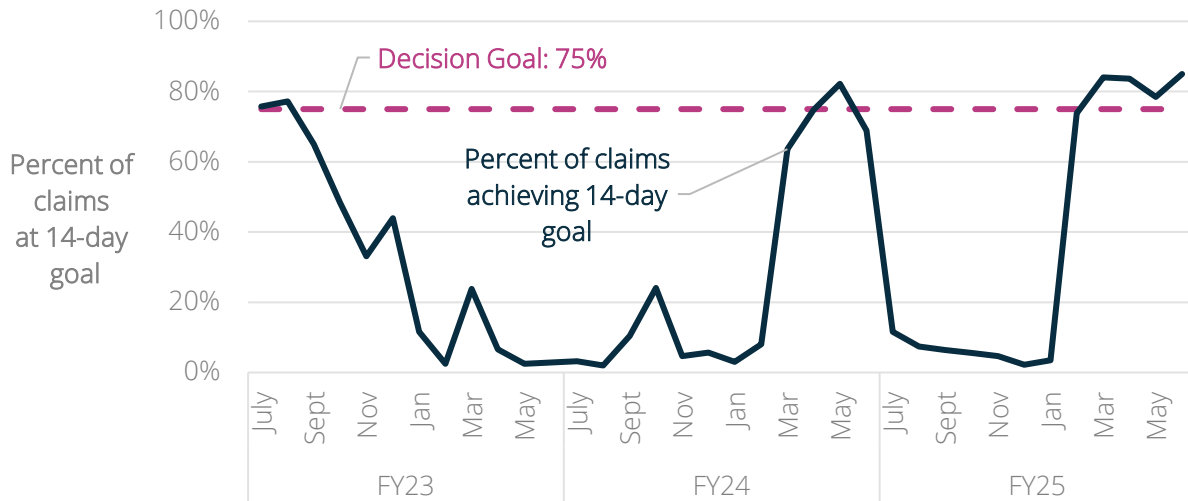
### Benefits processing times

The first benefits processing time KPI the program measures is claim processing time, which is the time from when a customer applies to when Paid Leave approves or denies that application. The program’s goal is to have 75% of all applicants receive a decision within 14 days of their submission date. The program achieved this goal in four of the last six months of FY25, with a median processing time of 11 days (**Figure 16**). This shows significant progress compared to the first six months of FY25, and a majority of FY23 and FY24. The overall median processing time for the past fiscal year was around 14 days,<sup>42</sup> so although fewer than 75% of claims are at goal, at least 50% are. Considerable improvements have been made in the last half of FY25 compared to the rest of the time trend, although there is room to continue improving processing times.

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<sup>42</sup> See [Staffing and Needs Report](#) for more details.

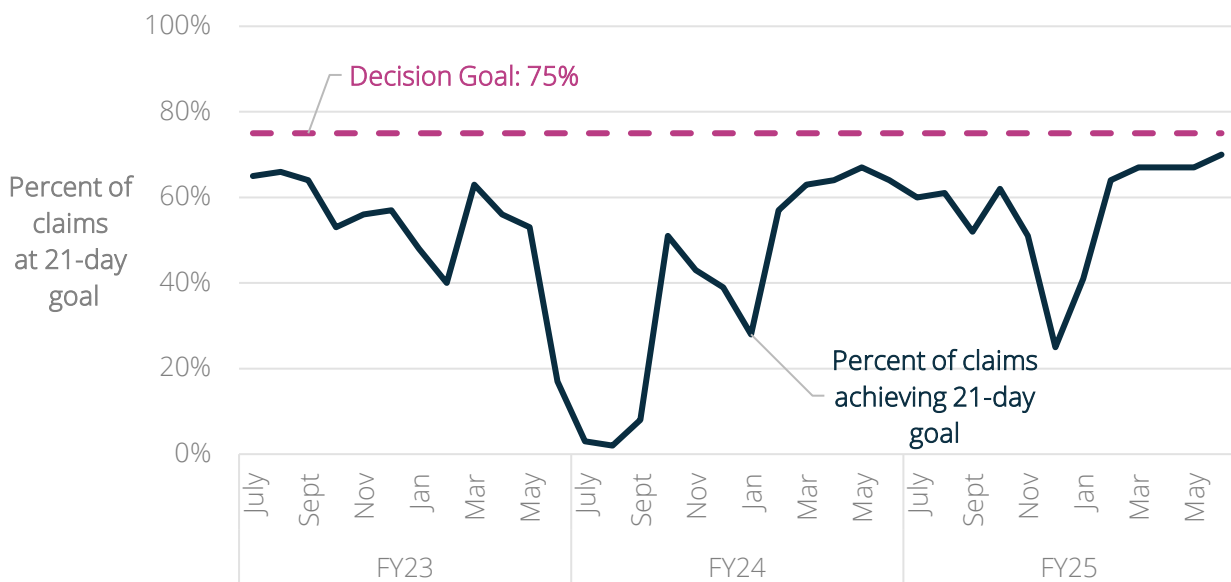
Figure 16. Claims reaching goal of 14 days from application submission date to decision



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2023–06/30/2025

Figure 17 shows the second KPI related to claim processing times, the time from application submission date to first processed weekly claim, whether it is approved, denied, or a non-payment waiting week. This is a proxy for time to first payment because if a payment could have been issued for the first week of leave, this is when it would have happened. The goal is 75% of claims having their first weekly claim processed within 21 days.

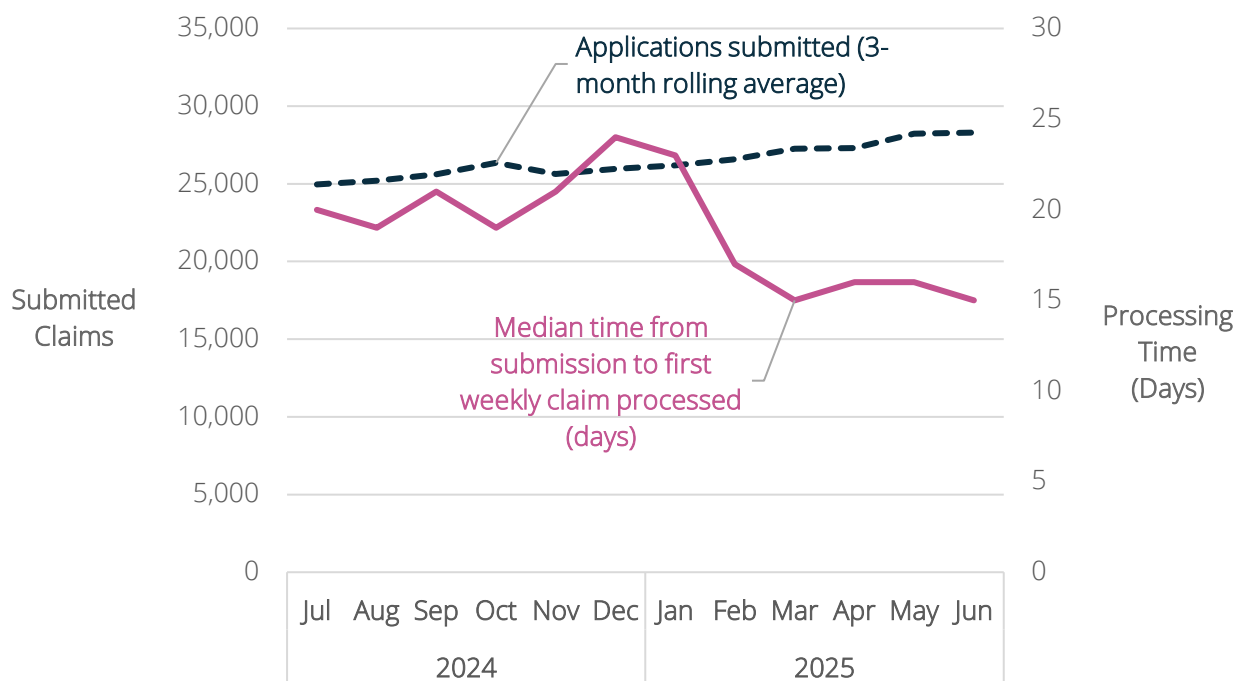
Figure 17. Claims reaching goal of 21 days from application submission date to first processed weekly claim



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2023–06/30/2025

Notably, even as applications have continued to increase, the time from benefit application submission to first processed weekly claim has continued to drop steadily (Figure 18). However, with an overall median of 19 days (down to 15 days in the final months of fiscal year 2025), sustained improvement is needed.

Figure 18. Claims submitted (3-month rolling average) and median time (days) from application submission to first weekly claim processed, July 2024 - June 2025



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024-06/30/2025

## Customer contacts responsiveness

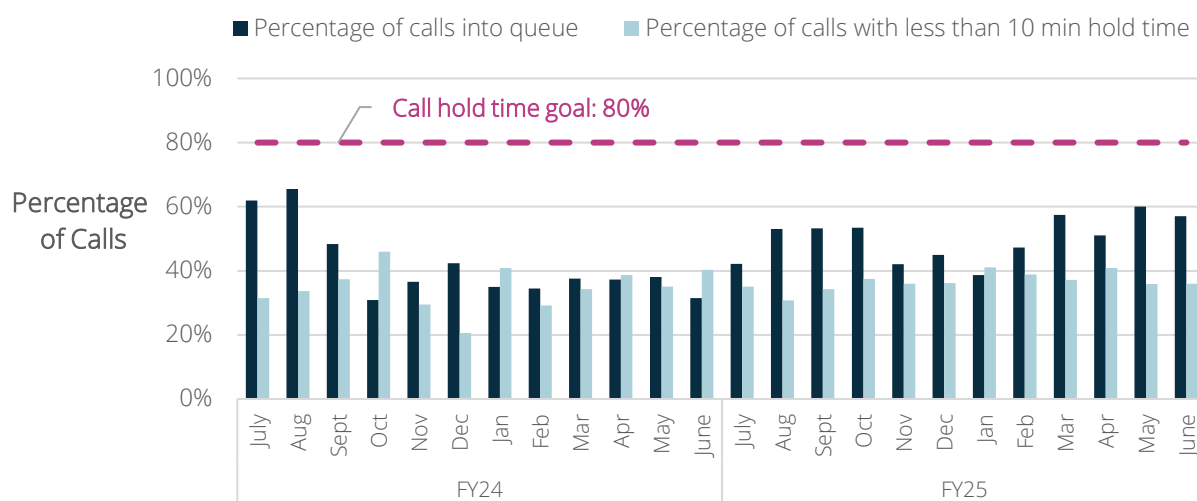
Unfortunately, despite improvements in processing times, there have been costs to other service areas. As claim applications and awareness of the program continue to grow, resourcing of continuous product and process improvement efforts and customer care staffing have not kept up with demand. Paid Leave reprioritized staff who typically answer phones and return calls to focus on processing claim applications. When customers receive claim decisions faster, they are less likely to call to check on their claim, thereby reducing call volume. This enables more customers who need substantive guidance to get through to staff working the phones.

Paid Leave and WA Cares share a phone system, where customers call and select their desired queue for Paid Leave or WA Cares. Paid Leave’s phone contact goal has two parts. First, that all

customers get into a queue with none receiving a 'high call volume' message.<sup>43</sup> Second, that 80% of incoming calls in the Paid Leave queue are answered within ten minutes. In FY25, this goal was not reached (**Figure 19**). On average, 50% of calls made it into a queue in FY25 and only about 36% of calls in a queue had less than a 10-minute hold time. The hold time trend is largely consistent with the previous fiscal year, showing the impact to telephone wait times for reducing application processing times.

While overall the goal has not been met, the program is meeting the goal for some customer queues. For example, employer customer calls have a much lower volume and have not been receiving the 'high call volume' message.

**Figure 19. Calls entering the queues with less than a ten-minute hold time**

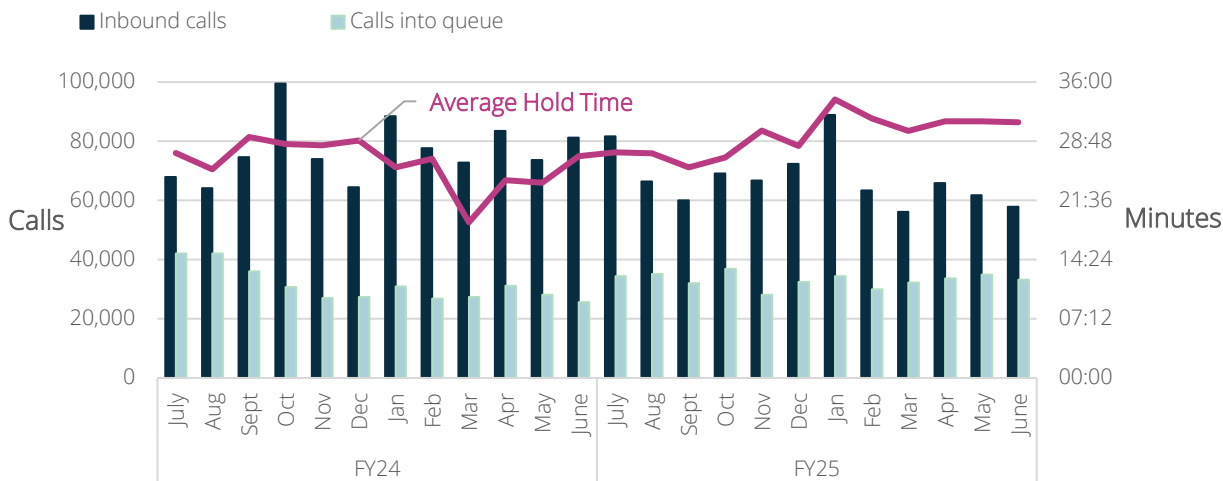


Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

Phone contacts and the related process and product improvement efforts can be further understood by looking at the volume of inbound calls and those making it into a queue (**Figure 20**). In the latter part of FY25, calls into Leave and Care began to decline, which coincides with the program’s reprioritization of claim processing and product improvements to support customers acting without calling in. This suggests that Paid Leave’s strategy to reduce the phone burden has been effective. However, with such a high call volume and small fraction of calls answered, median call hold times remain over 30 minutes. Thus, this improvement is limited.

<sup>43</sup> When the phone system for Paid Leave and WA Cares is experiencing high call volumes and long phone queues, individuals may receive a message indicating the phones are at capacity and they should call back later. When they receive this message, callers are disconnected so that they are not sitting on hold for extended periods. Callers only receive this message when initiating the call. Once the caller enters a queue, they will not receive the high call volume message or be disconnected.

Figure 20. Relationship between calls, telephone queues, and hold times<sup>44</sup>



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

## Full employer access to Portal accounts

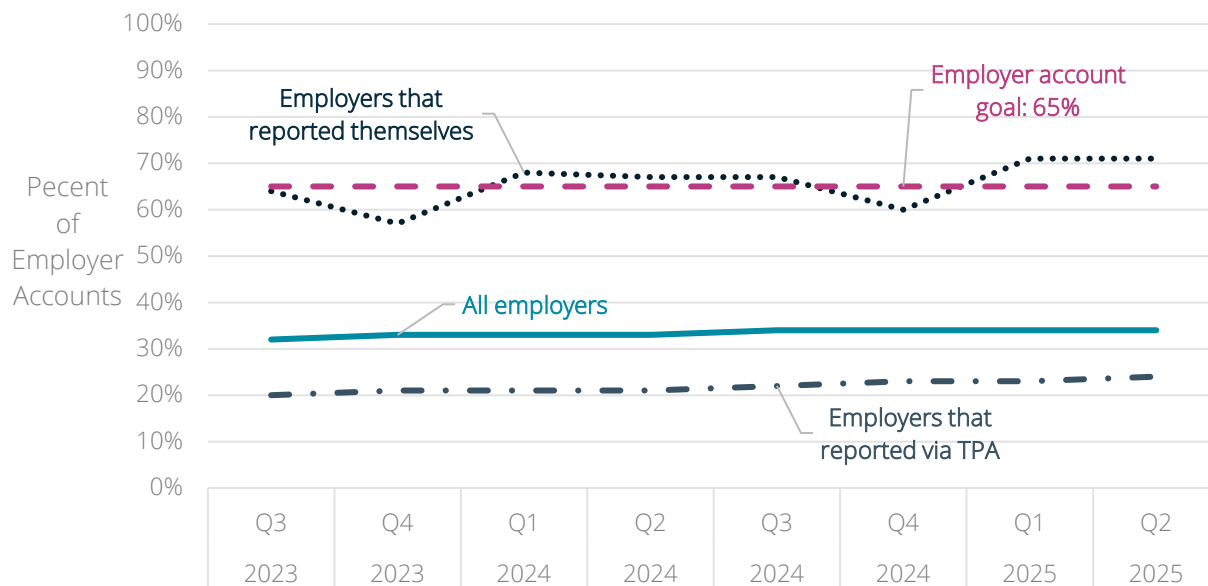
Another KPI, specific to employer customer service, is the percentage of employers with full account access. The current goal is 65% of all employers with quarterly reporting for a given quarter having full account access by the end of that quarter. Employer and third-party administrator (TPA) accounts initially have limited account access by default to appropriately protect employer and employee data. Accounts with limited access allow employers to submit wage reports, but they cannot amend wage reports, submit small business assistance grants, or approve power of attorney documentation, whereas full account access allows employers to access all functionalities. Increasing the percentage of employers who have full access also ensures the program has the best contact information for employers and reduces the need for employers to call for assistance, thereby improving organizational efficiency.

The overall percentage of employers with full account access grew by close to one percentage point during FY25, from 33.5% to 34.4%. Notably, there was a much higher percentage of self-reporting employers having full account access than those that report via TPA, while most TPA-reporting employers continue to lack full account access (Figure 21). When breaking out employers by those who reported by themselves versus via a TPA, self-reporting employers fluctuated above and below the 65% goal in FY25 and completed the fiscal year with 71% of self-reporting employers having full account access. In contrast, the percentage of employers that report via TPA grew from 22% to 24% during the fiscal year (Figure 21). This information is informing future outreach and process improvement design. Fluctuations in these percentages

<sup>44</sup> "Inbound calls" refers to calls to the phone system that is shared by Paid Family and Medical Leave and WA Cares.

are influenced in part by the number of employers that report hours and wages to Paid Leave each quarter.

Figure 21. Percent of employer accounts with full Portal account access



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

Benefits and employer customer needs will continue to increase as the program continues to grow. Additional staff will be needed to support increasing claims and customer contact volumes, along with resources to support product and process evaluation and improvements that will result in longer-term efficiencies and better employer, employee, and healthcare provider customer experience. **Figure 22** details operating and implementation costs for FY19 through FY25, along with expenditure authority for FY26. Resource needs will continue to grow, particularly as the program completes implementation of the law, such as overpayment and compliance features that are currently in development. View the [Paid Family and Medical Leave Program Needs and Resources report](#) for more information about staffing and funding needs.

Figure 22. Operating and implementation costs, fiscal years 2019 through 2026 (millions)

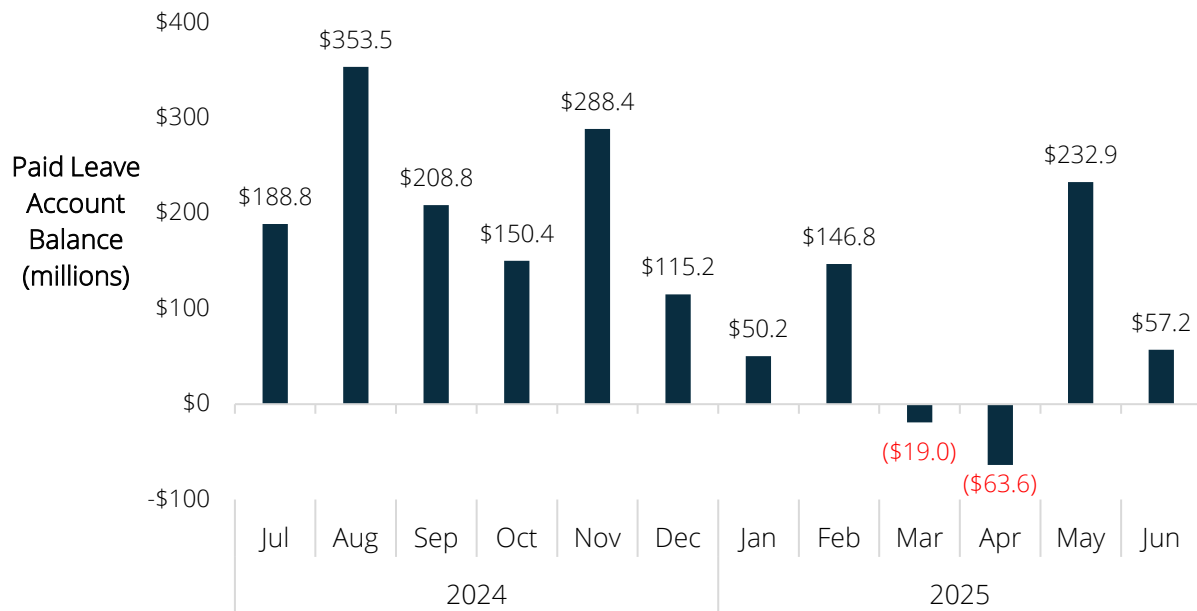
	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Paid Leave implementation & operating costs (out of 22F Fund)	\$40.69	\$50.72	\$43.38	\$48.34	\$63.2	\$69.2	\$77.02	\$99.19

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data. FY19-FY25 are historical amounts, FY26 is expenditure authority for the current year.

# Family & medical leave insurance account balance

Figure 23 shows the Paid Leave account balance at the end of each month in FY25. The account balance has a distinct quarterly seasonality where it is typically highest in the month following the end of the quarter. This is the result of a large influx of premium payments following the reporting period.

Figure 23. Paid Leave account balance by month, FY25 (millions)



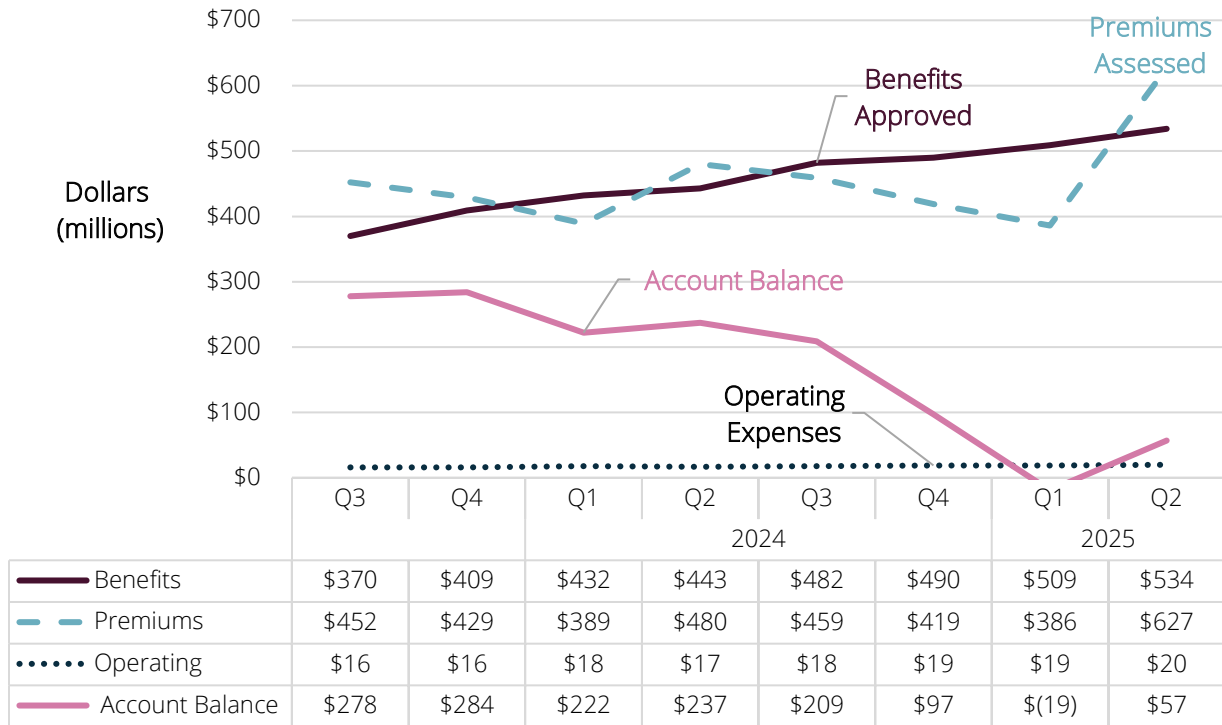
Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

Figure 24 shows quarterly Paid Leave benefits approved, premiums collected, operating expenses, and account balance for FY24 and FY25. Operating expenses average just below 4% of total expenditures in recent quarters. Premiums assessed for each quarter are remitted in the following quarter. The first quarter of premium assessments, reported and collected in Q2, are the largest premiums to be collected each year due to more employees reaching the social security wage cap as the calendar year progresses.

Paid Leave was in a short-term deficit at the close of Q1 of 2025. As discussed in the 2023 session when legislation changed the premium rate calculation, Employment Security anticipated some continuation of short-term deficits. As the program has experienced high growth beyond what was assumed during the 2023 legislative session, those deficits are

becoming larger and longer term. Read the [2025 Actuarial Report for Paid Family and Medical Leave](#) for more detail. (Note: link to report to be added upon publication.)

Figure 24. Insurance account balance by quarter, FY23-25 (millions)



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

# Outreach & community engagement

The Paid Leave program is required by statute<sup>45</sup> to develop and implement an outreach program to ensure employees who may be qualified to receive family and medical leave benefits are made aware of these benefits. Outreach and education have been a focus since the Paid Leave program's inception. Before benefits became available, the program dedicated significant resources to outreach and messaging research and development, media and social media campaigns, in-person events, and outreach and marketing to employers and workers. The program also completed initial research and planning for community partnership and "train-the-trainer" ambassador programs. In 2020, when benefits became available, the program experienced a much higher than anticipated volume of applications. Due to the pandemic and capacity issues, the department put outreach and community partnerships on hold.

These outreach activities were largely resumed in FY23, and since then the program has continued to build the relationships, structures, and capacity needed to expand informational outreach and technical assistance to employers, healthcare providers, and community-based organizations statewide. This past fiscal year, these efforts continued as outlined in more detail below.

## Establishing a Community Engagement team

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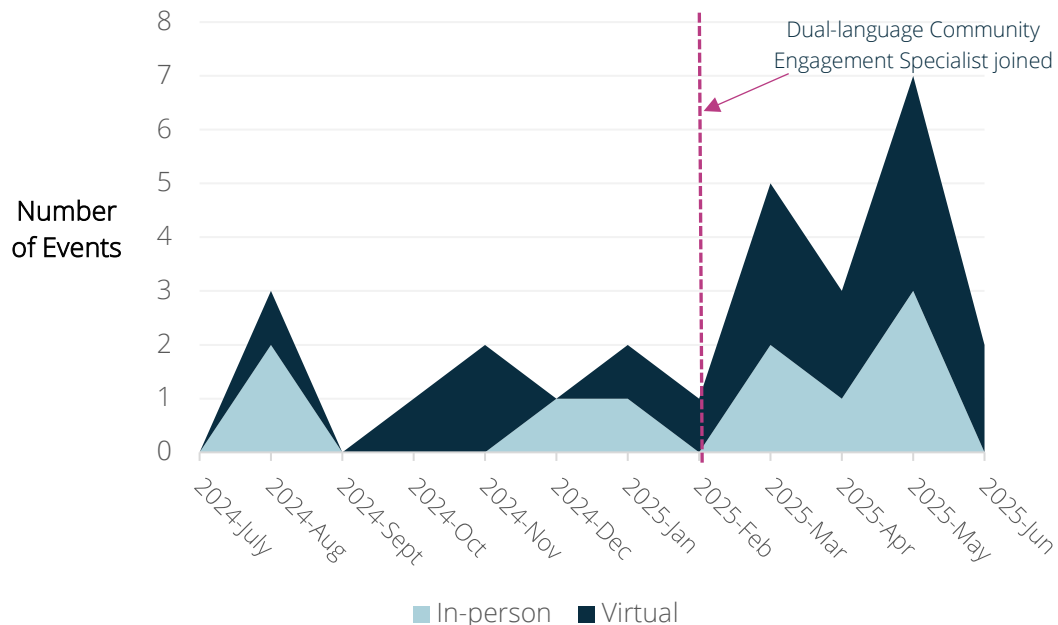
Following the establishment of the Community Engagement team in FY24 with the hiring of a Community Engagement manager, a Dual-language Community Engagement specialist was added in February 2025. This doubled the team's capacity, as seen in **Figure 25** showing the number of events that the Community Engagement team held directly. These include events held in partnership with community-based organizations (CBOs) who provide direct services, educational events and trainings for government and community partners who interact with potential Paid Leave customers, and coordination of or participation in multi-partner networking events to build awareness and answer questions. Importantly, **Figure 25** does not reflect the over 100 presentations and events that other Paid Leave staff have collectively engaged in, usually with the support of the Community Engagement team, including employer webinars, education and technical assistance for healthcare providers, community health workers, and public health entities, as well as partner events with WorkSource, the Shared

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<sup>45</sup> See [RCW 50A.05.020](#)

Work program, the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Office of Equity, and the Washington Health Care Authority.

Figure 25. Direct events held by the Paid Leave community engagement team, FY2025



Source: Insurance Services Department Outreach & Community Engagement Team

## Community education, outreach, and engagement

It is useful to distinguish among community education, outreach and engagement efforts (Figure 26). Community education and outreach are one-way conversations that focus on the Paid Leave program giving customers the ability to make informed decisions through, for example, training key partners or providing tabling or presentation at community events. Community engagement, on the other hand, is a two-way conversation with customers. Engagement focuses on understanding pain points and establishing a feedback loop wherein the program engages with customers to understand barriers, makes improvements based on that feedback, and reports back to customers on progress. Thus, community engagement involves not only those in community engagement specialist roles but also those in customer research and data, product development, content creation, and process development roles for it to successfully benefit all partners and result in better programs and interaction of programs within social, health, and human services systems.

In terms of community and customer education, which is more narrow and detailed knowledge delivery that may directly or indirectly support customers' decision-making, Paid Leave focused on how to provide better technical assistance and increase self-service for customers. The goal is to empower customers to provide correct information when applying, thereby minimizing fact-finding by Paid Leave staff and making the process more efficient for everyone.

Community outreach is more focused on providing broader knowledge that inspires action from community partners and potential customers. To that end, the Community Engagement team has been working to identify and align with existing networks, such as Help Me Grow Washington,<sup>46</sup> CIELO,<sup>47</sup> and UTOPIA Washington,<sup>48</sup> as well as leveraging existing structures by partnering with other state divisions and agencies. The goal is to ease the administrative burden for both community-based organizations and customers. For example, in the last year, Paid Leave concentrated many of the education and outreach efforts to areas of eastern Washington where program awareness and usage remain lower, particularly in rural communities. The program has been building partnerships and establishing rapport among CBOs and especially WorkSource staff, such as migrant seasonal outreach specialists located at WorkSource offices around the state (see WorkSource centers, page 38).

In terms of engaging community partners, a key aim has been to intentionally seek out for partnership-building with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-run organizations or for those with a predominantly BIPOC customer base to increase Paid Leave awareness and

Figure 26. Interplay of community education, outreach, and engagement with potential Paid Leave customers



Source: Insurance Services Division's Outreach & Community Engagement Team

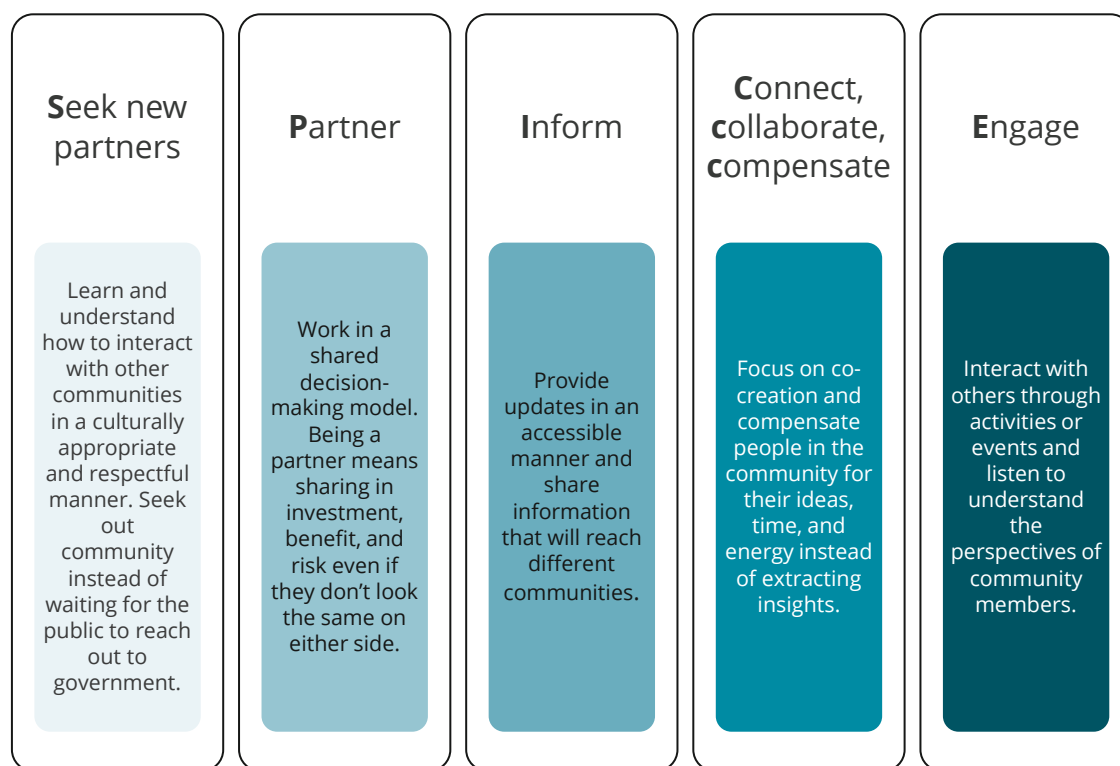
<sup>46</sup> See [Help Me Grow Washington](#), a system that promotes statewide collaboration that builds upon existing early childhood resources and connects families to existing community services.

<sup>47</sup> See [Centro Integral Educativo de Olympia \(CIELO\)](#), resource center and community hub for immigrants and refugees in Thurston, Lewis, and Mason counties.

<sup>48</sup> See [United Territories of Pacific Islanders Alliance \(UTOPIA\) Washington](#), social support and community alliance for members of the Pacific Islander LGBTQIA+.

education, to support equitable program usage. To most effectively accomplish this, the Community Engagement team has centered the SPICE<sup>49</sup> framework (Figure 27) into the design, planning, and implementation of its outreach and community engagement strategy. Unlike the current model of transactional management, in which government dictates how marginalized groups should interact with government, relational partnerships focus on the needs and values of marginalized Washingtonians. The result is a collaborative, engaged partnership that involves impacted communities in every decision and the meaningful engagement of historically or currently marginalized communities interacting with the program.

Figure 27. The SPICE model of community engagement



Source: Washington State Office of Equity, "Community Engagement Toolkit"

Despite being an emerging team within the Paid Leave program, Community Engagement has been busily developing sustainable community partnerships. To meet its goals for this fiscal year, the team deepened connections with community-based organizations such as CIELO and UTOPIA (see **Community-based organizations**), as well as other state agencies, such as Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The team also furthered its connections within Employment Security, for example, with

<sup>49</sup> Washington State Office of Equity, "Community Engagement Toolkit"

the WorkSource and Unemployment Insurance programs. Importantly, as the team has continued its relationship-building with community and statewide partners, it continues to use quarterly feedback solicited from those partners to guide curriculum development, materials, support, and potential partnership pursuits.

In the following sections, more details are provided about the community education, outreach, and engagement efforts conducted over the past year with employees, CBOs, Help Me Grow Washington, WorkSource, employers, and health care providers.

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## Engagement with worker communities

Community Engagement continues to examine eligibility, awareness, and utilization among workers to identify subgroups that experience the biggest barriers in benefit access and use. These results are used to inform outreach and education efforts and drive relationship-building with key community partners. Low-income workers, those who live in rural counties, or those whose preferred language is not English, among others, have lower rates of eligibility, awareness, and utilization. These subgroups are more likely to experience barriers to using the program when they most need it. In FY24, a partnership between Paid Leave, Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), WithinReach, and Catholic Charities identified awareness and access barriers to families expecting or with a new child, and in FY25 the team responded to many of these findings. One key finding was a need for in-person application assistance because customers feel the paperwork is confusing, and many people experience technological barriers. A key initiative to provide this type of support has been a deeper collaboration with WorkSource centers (see **WorkSource centers**). Additionally, Community Engagement placed more focus on creating presentation content and materials for each specific audience to ensure that content is accessible and easy to understand. Reaching Washington's migrant and seasonal farmworker communities and growing relationships with local organizations that serve these communities was also a core focus in FY25. By leveraging research and the knowledge of our community partners, the team can inform customer-facing communications and ongoing outreach activities and planning, as well as technology and process improvements that may help remove barriers and promote equity for customers.

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## Engagement with community-based organizations

Beginning in 2020, the Perigee Fund (Perigee), a private organization focused on partnering to support the infant-caregiver relationship and increase family well-being, awarded outreach and enrollment grants to community organizations in Pierce and Yakima counties to support Paid Leave benefits usage. Early in that work, it became clear that outreach alone is insufficient to

adequately support customers in accessing and successfully using the benefit. Perigee asked Employment Security to partner with them and provide technical assistance trainings in English and Spanish to the grantees. That partnership continued through the end of their outreach and enrollment grants in the summer of 2023.

In parallel, Employment Security and Perigee began discussions about how to scale up the work with select organizations in two counties to communities statewide. In November 2022, the department received a \$200,000 dollar-for-dollar matched grant from Perigee to partner with the Evans Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC) at the University of Washington to design an equitable, scalable community engagement and partnership model. EPIC's work is rooted in human-centered design practices and uses methodologies for convening conversations that center diverse voices and perspectives. This work was completed in late 2024.

Since May 2024, the focus has been on outreach to local CBOs, based initially on a list generated as part of the EPIC project. After an initial touch point, there were several organizations that wanted to discuss what a partnership could look like. A couple noteworthy interactions have been with CIELO<sup>50</sup> and UTOPIA<sup>51</sup> Washington. CIELO is a non-profit that "promotes community, self-sufficiency, and leadership of Latinos in the South Puget Sound." The Community Engagement team met with the CIELO staff and provided a Paid Leave 101 presentation. The team was invited to attend an in-person Diaper Bank event where most of the community members spoke languages other than English, and team members spoke with them about the Paid Leave program. The Community Engagement team continues to stay in touch with CIELO.

The Community Engagement team has also worked with the United Territories of Pacific Islanders Alliance Washington (UTOPIA Washington), a queer and trans people of color-led, grassroots organization born out of the struggles, challenges, strength, and resilience of the Queer and Trans-Pacific Islander (QTPI – "Q-T-pie") communities. Throughout this blossoming partnership, the Community Engagement team has provided Paid Leave 101 presentations and tabled at a community Pride event hosted by UTOPIA Washington.

## Help Me Grow Washington

Help Me Grow Washington<sup>52</sup> is a system model that promotes statewide collaboration to build upon existing early childhood resources to promote protective factors among families and

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<sup>50</sup> See [Centro Integral Educativo de Olympia \(CIELO\)](#), resource center and community hub for immigrants and refugees in Thurston, Lewis, and Mason counties.

<sup>51</sup> See [United Territories of Pacific Islanders Alliance \(UTOPIA\) Washington](#), social support and community alliance for members of the Pacific Islander LGBTQIA+.

<sup>52</sup> See [Help Me Grow Washington](#), a system that promotes statewide collaboration that builds upon existing early childhood resources and connects families to existing community services.

mitigate the impact of adversity. By connecting families to existing community services through a coordinated access point or call center, Help Me Grow Washington provides timely access to resources and care coordination to reduce barriers to services.

Help Me Grow Washington consists of four main components:

1. Creates a coordinated access point and call center for resource connection using family resource navigators.
2. Develops and implements data collection and evaluation to systematically identify service gaps.
3. Conducts family and community outreach.
4. Conducts health care provider outreach.

The Paid Leave program began partnering with Help Me Grow Washington following a proviso in the 2022 operating budget, which directed Employment Security to report to the Governor and Legislature concerning the ability to provide integrated services through connecting the Paid Leave program with a statewide family resource, referral, and linkage system. Key partners included WithinReach, DCYF, Department of Health (DOH), Premera Blue Cross, and King County Best Starts for Kids.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to continuing these partnerships, Community Engagement has begun working more closely with Help Me Grow to develop a toolkit for healthcare providers to improve the guidance available. This will help ensure that healthcare providers have the clarity needed to fill out Paid Leave medical certification forms, supplying the necessary information at the outset and thereby alleviating an administrative burden on both Paid Leave staff and customers, as well as additional work for themselves by reducing follow-up contacts for further information.

## **WorkSource centers**

WorkSource is a statewide partnership of state, local and nonprofit agencies that provides an array of employment and training services to job seekers and employers in Washington, both online and through a network of more than 60 WorkSource centers, affiliate and connection sites. This past year, the Community Engagement team built on prior foundational efforts, partnering to increase support for Paid Leave customers in WorkSource centers and better integrate Paid Leave into the offerings available through the WorkSource system. There were three streams of activities:

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<sup>53</sup> See [Help Me Grow 2023 Impact Report](#)

- Community Engagement delivered Paid Leave training, increasing awareness of Paid Leave among Workforce Services staff to enable them to identify potentially eligible customers and support them in connecting with Paid Leave Customer Care specialists.
- The team also deepened ties with WorkSource seasonal farmworker specialists located across the state who regularly meet with both farmworkers and community members. The aim of this effort is to ensure that correct information about Paid Leave program eligibility and access is shared with this often-vulnerable population of workers. As part of this endeavor, the team is also developing best practices to supply WorkSource outreach specialists with updated advocacy information to ensure all WorkSource sites are giving consistent information not only to this population but to all Washingtonians.
- A collaborative project to expand the pilot launch of Paid Leave services in WorkSource centers, including offering in-person assistance and/or direct phone lines. In FY24, only three pilot sites hosted assistance; in FY25, this grew to 14 centers around the state offering at least one of these services. More than 500 Paid Leave customers were served in person at a WorkSource center in FY25, with the majority requesting help to apply for Paid Leave or general information about the program.

A high majority of these customers (400) submitted new Paid Leave claim applications, indicating these services supported their access to benefits. About 6% of customers receiving in-person assistance used an on-site interpreter and over two-thirds learned about the in-person assistance from WorkSource, although recommendations also came from Paid Leave representatives, employers, family and friends, and others.

Direct phone line usage (120 calls) was lower than in person assistance in FY25, but that is likely due to implementation timing. Before June 2025, this service was only available at two locations, Rainier and Kennewick. At the very end of the fiscal year, direct lines were added to 12 more centers, and in June 2025 all 14 WorkSource centers showed phone bypass usage, suggesting a high potential for this service to assist customers. Evaluation efforts are ongoing to assess the services provided in partnership with WorkSource and identify areas for enhancement.

## Engagement with employers

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The program's outreach to employers largely focuses on education and assistance to ensure they understand and can successfully fulfill their responsibilities under the Paid Leave law. After a hiatus during the pandemic, L&I restarted their Contractor Training Day event series and invited Employment Security to present at in-person events held monthly throughout the

state. These events reach hundreds of people who attend to gain additional information on special topics, allowing the program to reach more employers and self-employed persons. Elective coverage education is a core event topic. In the last year, the Paid Leave program also conducted dozens of virtual and in-person employer presentations, and several webinars. The program continued to share information with employers monthly in an agency employer newsletter. Engagement around emerging topics and program changes also continued with employer and third-party administrator organizations, such as the National Payroll Reporting Consortium.

## Engagement with health care

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Healthcare providers, clinical staff, and related health support staff (such as social workers and community health workers) play a pivotal role in helping customers access and apply for Paid Leave benefits. They provide a broad spectrum of support, ranging from low-touch support, such as providing high-level information about the program and referring clients elsewhere for application assistance, to high-touch support, such as providing in-depth application assistance and case management. Clinical providers also certify medical documentation, such as for serious health conditions or birth, required to access most types of leave.

Providers require customized outreach based on the types and level of support they provide to their patients. In FY25, Community Engagement continued to leverage existing relationships with community-based organizations and other state agencies to expand outreach and technical assistance to healthcare providers and clinic staff. The presentations cover eligibility for benefits, the application process, filing weekly claims, and frequently asked questions.

## Challenges

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Although this fiscal year has seen many successes, the main challenges the Community Engagement team continues to face in delivering community and customer education, outreach, and engagement is the limited capacity of existing staff to keep up with increasing requests and ongoing funding limitations. For example, relationship-building with WorkSource seasonal farmworker specialists has proved challenging because, without a travel budget, it can be difficult to meet with these specialists. Distrust in government among immigrants and refugees can also create outreach and engagement challenges.

In the long-term, Community Engagement's focus on improving technical assistance and increasing self-service for customers will help mitigate some challenges. The team aspires to expand its current delivery of presentations, technical assistance, outreach, and hands-on

workshops. Through continued support, Community Engagement will be able to advance the collaborative partnerships we have been developing with community and statewide partners to better serve the needs of historically and currently marginalized Washingtonians.

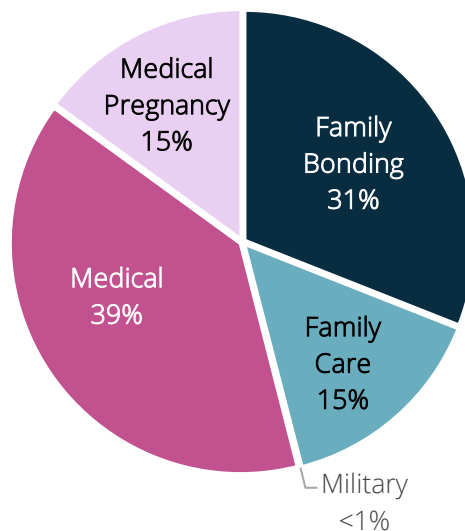
# Program participant claims and leave-taking behaviors

Of the 269,508 paid benefit applications in FY25 – meaning they were associated with at least one payment during the fiscal year – the following analysis focuses on 246,031 of these claims that ended during the fiscal year.<sup>54</sup> Those who applied and were denied, were approved but did not take leave, or who only took leave during their “waiting week” were not included.

Figure 28 shows the claim subtype composition of the claim sample. More information about monthly claim data, county level claim data and processing times can be found on the [Paid Family and Medical Leave Claims Dashboard](#).

Unsurprisingly, the percentages of claims paid are generally similar to claims submitted. The somewhat lower approval rates for serious medical condition and family care relative to family bonding are evident in the slight differences between percentages of claims submitted versus paid (see Figure 5 vs. Figure 28).

Figure 28. Paid claims by subtype<sup>55</sup>



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

<sup>54</sup> It is necessary for a claim to reach its end to assess some of the characteristics reported below, such as length of leave.

<sup>55</sup> “Medical pregnancy” here and throughout the remainder of this report refers to medical leave taken for pregnancy either before the birth of the child (prenatal) or for childbirth recovery (postnatal).

Almost all benefit applications were submitted electronically, with only 1.2% of claims in the sample submitted via paper. The average weekly benefit amount was \$1,045 and approximately 30% of claims were associated with intermittent leave use.<sup>56</sup> **Figure 29** shows how these figures differ by leave type. The most striking differences are among intermittent leave use. Claims for pregnancy and childbirth recovery are least likely to be taken in an intermittent fashion (only 13%). This contrasts with claims for family care (40%) and serious medical condition leave (33% intermittent use), which have higher instances of intermittent leave-taking. Family bonding (31%) and family military (27%) claims land in the middle (**Figure 29**).

**Figure 29. Select summary statistics on leave use by leave type**

	Percent of applications submitted by paper	Average weekly benefit amount	Percent of claims with intermittent leave <sup>55</sup>
Family Bonding	1%	\$1,096	31%
Family Care	1%	\$1,005	40%
Family Military	0%	\$1,072	27%
Serious Medical Condition	1%	\$1,036	33%
Medical Pregnancy	1%	\$1,006	13%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>\$1,045</b>	<b>30%</b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

## Multiple claims within a claim year

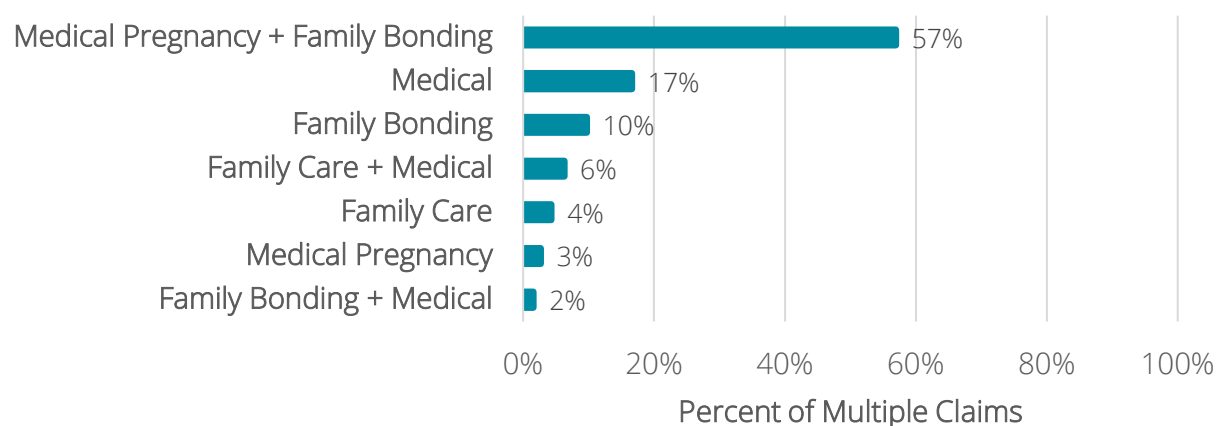
Customers may have multiple leave claims within a year. For example, a birthing parent may have a medical claim for pregnancy and childbirth followed by a family bonding claim to bond with their child in the year following the birth. Twenty percent of customers filed two or more claims within their claim year. **Figure 30** shows the seven most common leave type combinations for customers with these multiple claims. When only one leave type is listed, it means that customers were approved for multiple claims of that leave type within the same claim year. This may happen, for example, when customers are experiencing chronic or recurring conditions, or cases in which a customer took leave in two chunks during the year and preferred to submit a new application for the second chunk rather than submit weekly

<sup>56</sup> Intermittent leave use is defined as any claim with at least one weekly claim, other than the waiting week, where a customer either (1) skips a week of leave, thereby using no leave hours, which can be due to electing non-payment or because a weekly claim is denied; or (2) the customer uses less leave than they have available for the week, relative to their typical workweek, resulting in receiving less benefit that week than their full weekly amount.

claims throughout the whole period to keep the first claim active. Customers may also experience multiple qualifying events in a 12-month period.

Leave taken around the introduction of a new child (medical pregnancy and family bonding) makes up the majority (57%, **Figure 30**) of multiple claims, followed by customers filing multiple medical claims for a serious health condition (17%), and customers filing multiple bonding claims within their claim year (10%).<sup>57</sup> Customers with multiple medical pregnancy claims (3%) filed both a pre- and postnatal medical pregnancy claim.

**Figure 30. Most common leave types and combinations among Paid Leave customers paid for two or more claims in a claim year**



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

## Lengths of leave

Lengths of leave are not calculated in terms of calendar weeks, but rather workweeks as determined by each customer's typical workweek hours. A customer's typical workweek hours are determined based on whether they are salaried or otherwise at the time of filing the initial application. For salaried employees, their typical workweek hours are 40 hours, regardless of the number of hours worked in the qualifying period. For all other employees, the program determines typical workweek hours by dividing the sum of all hours reported in the qualifying period by fifty-two and rounding down to the nearest hour. Once an individual is approved to take leave, they must file weekly claims, taking a minimum of eight consecutive hours of leave

<sup>57</sup> Customers may take leave to bond with a new child, whether through birth, placement, or adoption, during the first 12 months after the child's birth or after placement or adoption. Thus, customers may file an initial claim application earlier in their claim year in which they do not exhaust all their leave and could file additional claim(s) throughout that 12-month period until leave is exhausted. Additionally, customers may have multiple bonding qualifying events within the same claim year, for example, around the birth of a child and a placement or adoption.

to receive benefits.<sup>58</sup> Customers may use leave intermittently; the weekly payment amount is prorated based on reported hours worked and non-supplemental paid time off used each week.

A claim's average leave length in weeks was calculated by dividing the sum of all leave hours used by each customer's typical workweek hours. If a customer had more than one claim in a claim year, each of their claims was included. **Figure 31** shows the average length of leave overall and by claim type for all claims. The overall average leave length taken per claim was 7.2 weeks, shown below the dotted line in **Figure 31**. Family bonding claims had the longest average leave at 8.1 weeks, followed closely by medical leave for a serious health condition and medical pregnancy claims at 6.9 weeks. Family care claims were slightly shorter at 6.5 weeks on average, and family military claims were the shortest at just under 4 weeks.

**Figure 3131. Average length of leave in weeks by claim type (per claim)**



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

Since nearly 20% of customers take multiple leaves and thus potentially in different combinations<sup>59</sup> of leave types, the program also averaged weeks of leave taken by each customer.<sup>60</sup> For reference, the overall average length of leave was 7.9 weeks for customers filing only a single claim in their claim year and 13.2 weeks for customers with multiple claims,

<sup>58</sup> See **Legislative changes** section (page 6) for information on upcoming changes to the consecutive hours requirement.

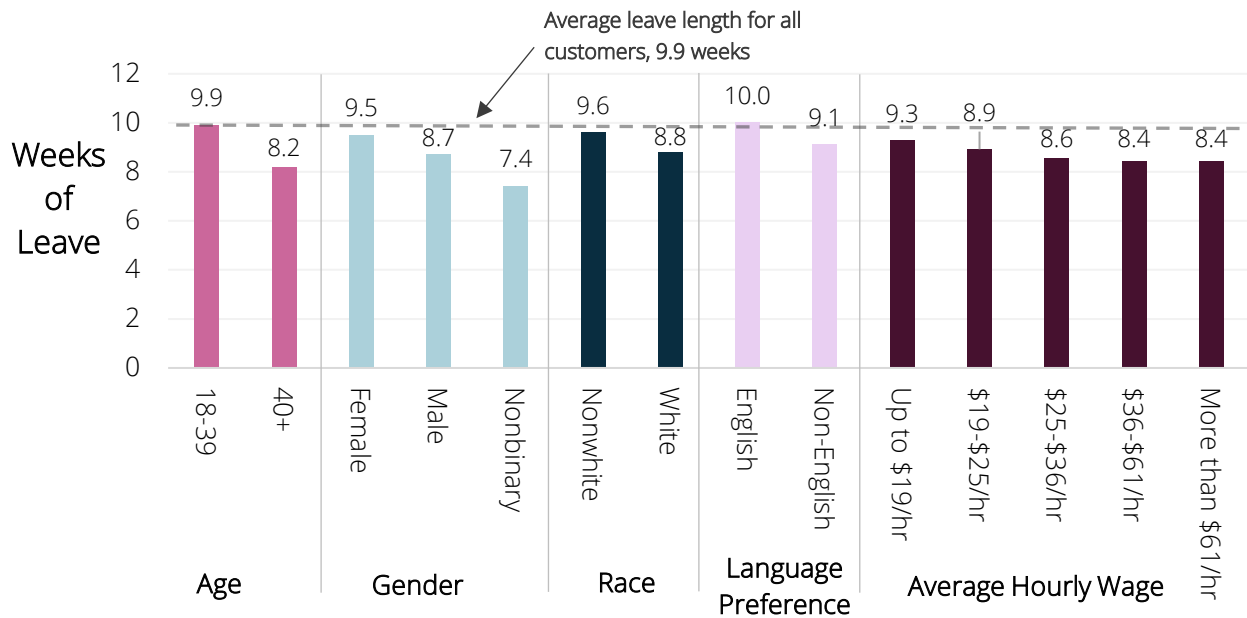
<sup>59</sup> These combinations are mutually exclusive. Each customer is only counted once and placed into the corresponding category of leave use taken.

<sup>60</sup> Only customers whose claim years ended between July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, and who received at least one payment were included in this calculation. A customer's claim year starts the Sunday of the week when they submit their first application for leave, have worked at least 820 hours in Washington during their qualifying period and ends approximately one year later. Those still within their claim year could file another claim to take additional leave if they experience another qualifying event and still have leave available to them, which is why we are only examining average lengths of leave at the customer level for those who have completed their claim year.

with an overall average leave of 9.9 weeks. Customers taking leave around the introduction of a new child – medical pregnancy leave followed by bonding – on average took 15.6 weeks of leave.<sup>61</sup>

Figure 32 shows the average length of leave used in a 12-month period across various subgroups, compared to the average overall length of leave of 9.9 weeks, denoted by the dotted line. Lengths of leave tended to be shorter for older customers, those who identify as male or nonbinary, white customers, those who have a preferred language other than English, and those in higher wage groups.

Figure 32. Average length of leave in weeks by across customer subgroup



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data 07/01/2024–06/30/2025

<sup>61</sup> The maximum leave length without any pregnancy- or birth-complications for new child (medical pregnancy followed by bonding) is 16 weeks. For customers with complications, an additional 2 weeks of leave is available to them for a total of 18 weeks. This average includes customers with and without complications.

# Program participant demographics

As part of the application process, the Paid Leave program asks benefit customers for information about their age, gender, race and ethnicity, and language preference. The program does this to better understand program participants and identify gaps that could be addressed through improvements to outreach, product, and operations efforts.

The following section focuses on the characteristics of 213,718 customers with paid<sup>62</sup> benefit claims between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. To understand participation patterns, we draw a comparison of these customers to census data estimates of Washington workers meeting Paid Leave work history eligibility requirements.<sup>63</sup> This information is also displayed on the [Paid Family and Medical Leave Demographics Dashboard](#).

## Key takeaways include:

- Customers aged 30–39 comprise the largest portion of approved Paid Leave customers and have higher participation relative to other age groups, while all other ages appear to have lower participation. The high participation of those in the 30–39 age group is related to use of family bonding and pregnancy-related medical leave (**Figure 35**).
- Female-identifying Paid Leave customers had higher use of leave around a new child than male-identifying, nonbinary, or those who prefer not to identify (**Figure 36**). This is largely driven by female use of leave for pregnancy and childbirth recovery. That said, male-identifying customers had higher relative bonding claim usage. Over three-fourths of claims from customers who identify as non-binary and over half of all claims for those who prefer not to identify their gender are for medical leave to care for their own serious medical condition (**Figure 38**).
- When looking at racial-ethnic identity alone, it appears that some groups have relatively high participation compared to their share of the eligible worker population. For Latina/o/x or Hispanic customers this continues to hold even when binary gender identity and age group are considered (**Figure 42**).

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<sup>62</sup> Customers filed at minimum one weekly claim and received at least one payment.

<sup>63</sup> Here, the 1-Year American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates, Public Use Microdata Sample (2023) was used. As of the time of this writing, the 2024 data (for FY25) had not yet been released. “All Washington workers” approximated the WA workforce and included employed civilians 18 years and older, including self-employed or Federal government employees, members of the Armed Forces, or those unemployed but actively seeking work. Those not in the labor force, unemployed for more than five years, or never worked were excluded. “Eligible Washington workers” were drawn from the broader pool of all WA workers and includes those employed by a private company, non-profit, local or state government. Further, this pool approximated the Washington Paid Leave eligibility requirement by working at least 16 hours per week in the last twelve months. Self-employed and Federal employees were excluded. Using this approximation of Paid Leave eligibility is a likely overestimate and does not allow identification of who has or will experience a qualifying event. However, it is the best data source identified to date and offers the most complete view of Washington workers and their demographic characteristics.

- A total of 8.5% of customers using leave in the fiscal year indicated they prefer a language other than English on their benefit application. The most common non-English languages preferred by customers are Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Amharic, Tagalog, and Amharic.
- The five counties with the most claims approved and paid per 1,000 residents are: Grant, Yakima, Adams, and Franklin. The four with the fewest paid claims per 1,000 residents are: Ferry, Skamania, Pend Orielle, and Asotin.

## Age

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A comparison of Paid Leave customers using leave to all Washington workers and those estimated to have eligible work history for Paid Leave showed variation in leave usage by age group. **Figure 33** shows the breakdown by age group for paid customers, Washington workers who are work history-eligible, and all Washington workers.

**Figure 34** shows the same information in a graphical view. When the bar for Paid Customers exceeds that of work history-eligible Washington workers and/or all Washington workers, there is higher relative participation than might be expected given the proportion of work-history eligible workers. Similarly, comparatively small bars would indicate lower participation. It is important to note that these comparisons only assess estimated eligibility based on work history; they do not account for population differences in rates of experiencing qualifying events.

Specifically:

- Workers aged 30–39 comprise the highest portion of approved customers and have higher participation relative to their share of Washington workers (**Figure 34**). Workers aged 18–29 and 40–49 comprise the next largest shares of Paid Leave customers.
- Workers aged 18–29 and, to a much lesser extent, those aged 40–49 and 50–59 years have lower participation relative to their share of Washington workers (**Figure 34**).
- Workers aged 60 years and older, in addition to comprising the lowest portion of Paid Leave customers, are approximately equally represented relative to their share of Washington Workers (**Figure 34**).
- The largest portion of paid customer claims is around the introduction of a new child,<sup>64</sup> which tends to be taken by customers under the age of 40 years. This is followed by

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<sup>64</sup> Leave around the introduction of a new child includes leave taken either to bond with a new child (birth, adoption, or placement) and/or pregnancy-related medical leave.

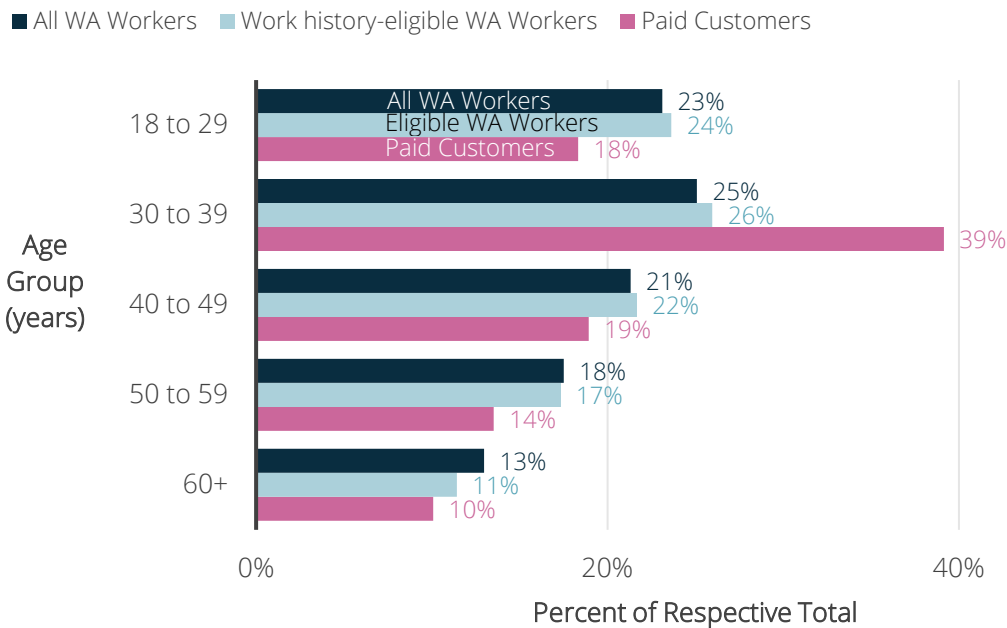
leave for a worker’s serious medical condition, which tends to be taken by those over the age of 40 years. Leave to care for a family member’s serious medical condition is also higher among customers over 40 years of age, whereas military leave is taken by customers under the age of 60 years.

Figure 33. Comparison of Paid Leave customers to work history-eligible and all WA workers by age group.

	Paid Customers	Work History-Eligible WA Workers	All WA Workers
Ages 18–29	18%	24%	23%
Ages 30–39	39%	26%	25%
Ages 40–49	19%	22%	21%
Ages 50–59	14%	17%	18%
Ages 60+	10%	11%	13%

Sources: American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata, 2023; WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

Figure 34. Comparison of Paid Leave customers to work history-eligible and all WA worker by age group.



Sources: 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2023; WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

A breakdown of the 269,508 paid claims (as opposed to customers, as shown above) by age group and leave type shows further differences in the distribution. New child leave – both to bond with a new child and for medical-related pregnancy conditions – is predominantly taken by those under the age of 40 years (Figure 35). Those over 40 years old have higher utilization

of leave for a serious medical condition and to care for a family member's serious medical condition.

Figure 35. Comparison of approved Paid Leave customers' leave type by age group.

	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>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

## Gender

The program similarly compared Paid Leave customers with at least one payment to all Washington workers and those estimated to have eligible work history. **Figure 36** shows the breakdown by gender identity for paid customers, Washington workers who are estimated work history-eligible, and all Washington workers. **Figure 37** shows the same information as **Figure 36** in a graphical comparison, except not showing the <1% groups. The share of paid customers that identified as female (55%) was higher relative to the portion of the Washington workforce and work history-eligible workforce that identified as female (both 46%).

Overall, those who identify as female have the highest Paid Leave usage, compared to those who identify as male, nonbinary, or who prefer not to disclose their gender (**Figure 36**). In addition:

- Relative to their respective shares of the worker population, participation by customers identifying as female is higher while male-identifying participation is lower. Female participation is approximately nine percentage points higher while male participation is approximately ten percentage points lower (**Figure 37**).
- Female-identifying Paid Leave customers had higher use of leave around a new child than male-identifying, nonbinary, or those who prefer not to identify. This is largely driven by female use of leave for pregnancy and childbirth recovery. That said, male-identifying customers had higher relative bonding claim usage (**Figure 38**).

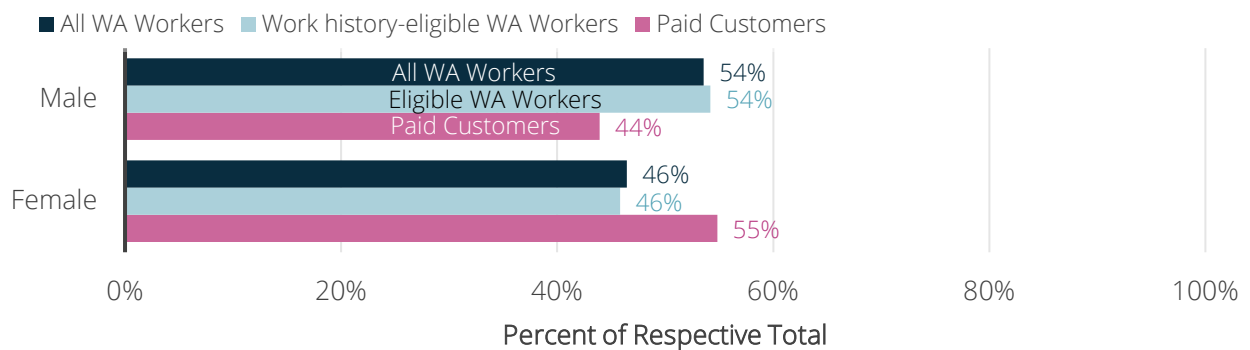
- There was the highest participation in medical leave for a worker’s serious condition among customers who prefer not to identify or identify as non-binary, but it was similar between males and females (Figure 38).
- There were similar percentages of leave to care for a family member with a serious condition across all genders, whereas women and those who preferred not to share gender identity used more family leave for military exigencies. (Figure 38).

Figure 36. Comparison of Paid Leave customers to work history-eligible and all WA workers by gender identity.

	Paid Customers	Work History-Eligible WA Workers	All WA Workers
Female	55%	46%	46%
Male	44%	54%	54%
Prefer not to say <sup>65</sup>	<1%	-	-
Nonbinary <sup>65</sup>	<1%	-	-

Sources: 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

Figure 37. Comparison of Paid Leave customers to work history-eligible and all WA workers by gender identity



Sources: 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

Figure 38 compares Paid Leave claims by leave type by gender identity. In total, female-identifying Paid Leave customers took slightly more leave around a new child (48%) versus males (44%), although technically males had higher use of bonding leave (44%) than females

<sup>65</sup> “Prefer not to say” and nonbinary identities are not available on the 1-year ACS and thus could not be compared between Paid Leave customers and all or eligible Washington workers.

(23%). This may seem contradictory at first but is partly related to how the program is structured with the need to separate medical and family leave. Most birthing parent customers take both medical and family leave, and since most people giving birth identify as female, that makes their bonding leave participation appear lower (23%) even though 48% of them took leave for a new child.

**Figure 38. Comparison type of leave claims used by gender identity**

	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>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

## Racial-ethnic identity

The program next compared race and ethnic identity of Paid Leave customers with at least one payment<sup>66</sup> to all Washington workers and those potentially eligible for Paid Leave from among the Washington workforce. We found:

- Workers who identify as Latina/o/x or Hispanic have higher participation in the Paid Leave program relative to their proportion of eligible and all Washington workers (Figure 40).
- Workers who identify as Asian or Asian American, white, or another racial-ethnic identity<sup>67</sup> appear to have lower participation relative to their share of eligible and all Washington workers (Figure 40).
- Workers who identify as Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or Native American or Alaska Native have similar participation relative to their share of eligible and all Washington workers (Figure 40).

<sup>66</sup> Customers may be represented more than once in this comparison if they selected more than one race and/or ethnicity.

<sup>67</sup> For paid claims, “Other” includes the <1% of customers who identified as Middle Eastern or Arab American on the Paid Leave application. These individuals were grouped with “Other” because a similar racial identity is not available on the 1-year ACS for comparison.

- All racial ethnic identities appear to be similarly work history-eligible relative to their respective share of all Washington workers, indicating that differences in eligibility are unlikely to drive differences in usage (Figure 40).

These differences vary in magnitude for each group relative to their population size. For example, the data shows that customers identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native have lower participation than would be expected relative to their proportion of the eligible worker population. However, they represent a small group of Washington workers overall (3%).

Figure 39. Racial-ethnic identity<sup>68</sup> of Paid Leave customers relative to eligible and all WA workers

	Paid Customers <sup>69</sup>	Work History-Eligible WA Workers	All WA Workers
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%	3%	3%
Asian or Asian American	11%	14%	14%
Black or African American	7%	6%	6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2%	1%	1%
Other	5%	12%	12%
White	64%	76%	76%
Prefer not to say <sup>70</sup>	5%	-	-
Latina/o/x or Hispanic	19%	14%	14%

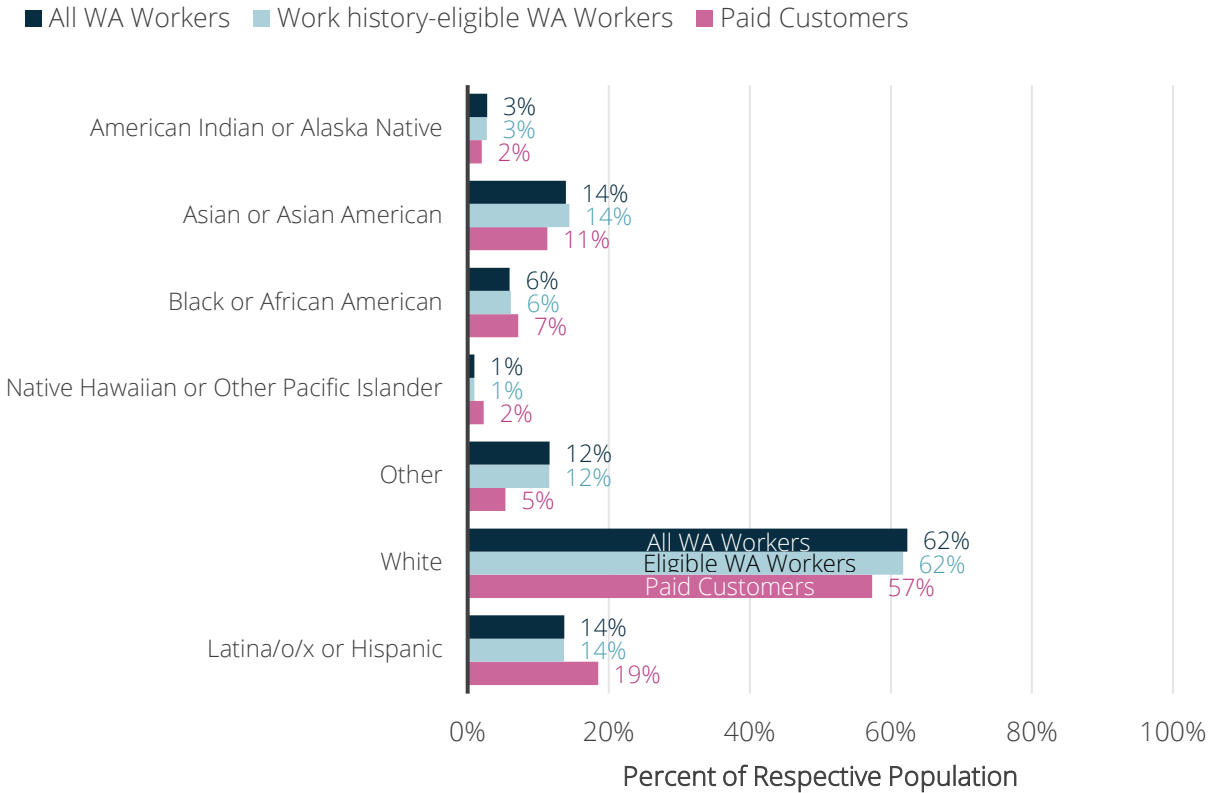
Sources: 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

<sup>68</sup> Customers may be represented more than once in this comparison if they selected more than one race and/or ethnicity in either Paid Leave administrative data or the 1-year ACS. Thus, column sums will exceed 100%.

<sup>69</sup> The 1-year ACS does not record “Prefer not to say” or similar responses, thus these data could not be compared.

<sup>70</sup> Not included here are the 14.5% of customers who left blank the racial identity question on their FY25 Paid Leave application.

Figure 40. Comparison of Paid Leave customers to eligible and all WA workers by racial-ethnic identity



Sources: 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2023 & WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

Figure 41 below shows the distribution of claims from customers by leave type and racial-ethnic identity. Although participation is largely similar among the racial-ethnic groups for military leave, there are differences for other leave types. For example, customers who identify as Asian or Asian American have higher representation (38%) and Black or African American and American Indian or Alaska Native have lower representation (both 26%) in leave use for bonding claims, relative to the overall of 31%.

Figure 41. Paid Leave claims by leave type and race<sup>71</sup>

	New Child Leave		Family Care	Family Military	Serious Medical Condition
	Family Bonding	Medical Pregnancy			
American Indian or Alaska Native	26%	13%	14%	0.02%	47%
Asian or Asian American	38%	18%	15%	0.04%	30%
Black or African American	26%	13%	25%	0.03%	37%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	31%	15%	18%	0.06%	35%
Other	30%	12%	19%	0.05%	39%
Prefer not to say	31%	12%	16%	0.04%	41%
White	30%	15%	12%	0.05%	43%
Latina/o/x or Hispanic	32%	16%	21%	0.05%	30%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

## Age, racial-ethnic identity, and gender

A closer examination of age and racial-ethnic identity by binary gender identity gives a more nuanced picture of participation relative to the eligible Washington worker population. As seen previously (Figure 34), customer age appears to be the main driver of participation in certain types of paid leave claims. A clear divide is apparent between customers aged 18–39 years and over 40 years. However, upon closer examination of a comparison<sup>72</sup> between eligible Washington workers and approved customers, it appears that male gender identity seems to be highly related to lower program use, between both age groups and across nearly all racial identities (Figure 42).

One subgroup for which this is an exception, regardless of both age and gender identity, are Latina/o/x or Hispanic customers (Figure 42). Although only comprising about 10% of customers using leave, both male and female customers aged 18–39 and, to a lesser extent, 40+ years, have high program usage among our customers as relative to the eligible Washington workforce.

<sup>71</sup> Breakdown is given row-wise, such that within each identity the percent of customers approved and paid for a given claim subtype is compared to others who share their identity.

<sup>72</sup> We have opted not to include the comparison to all Washington workers for readability and because the percentages tend to be similar between all WA workers and eligible WA workers.

Figure 42. Comparison of paid customers versus work-history eligible WA workers in terms of age group, racial-ethnic identity, and binary gender identity

		Paid Customers		Work history-eligible WA Workers	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Age 18 to 39 years	American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	2%	2%
	Asian or Asian American	7%	6%	7%	8%
	Black or African American	4%	3%	2%	2%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%	1%	0%	1%
	Other	0%	0%	4%	6%
	White	31%	24%	28%	33%
	Prefer Not to Say	10%	11%	2%	2%
	<i>Latina/o/x or Hispanic</i>	11%	11%	6%	8%
Age 40+ years	American Indian or Alaska Native	2%	1%	2%	2%
	Asian or Asian American	7%	5%	6%	6%
	Black or African American	5%	5%	2%	2%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%	1%	0%	0%
	Other	1%	1%	3%	4%
	White	46%	3%	34%	38%
	Prefer Not to Say	12%	10%	1%	1%
	<i>Latina/o/x or Hispanic</i>	11%	8%	4%	5%

Sources: 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2023; WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

## Language preference

In May 2021, the Paid Leave program began asking customers if they preferred a language other than English when communicating about their benefit application. The program now tracks 17 language preferences other than English and Spanish, and in FY25 8.5% of customers in the past year indicated they prefer a language other than English on their benefit application. The proportion of customers who prefer a language other than English is growing; it increased from 5% in FY22 to 6% in FY23 and 7% in FY24.

Figure 43 shows the percentage breakdown of customers using leave by language preference. This is compared to both eligible and all other Washington workers. The question on the American Community Survey data used for these comparisons asks respondents whether a language other than English is spoken at home (and if so, which language), rather than their preferred language. Here we assume that if someone speaks a language at home it is likely preferred, although this may not be the case for all individuals. However, this is the closest approximation we currently have for language preference among Washington workers.

Figure 43. Comparison of language preference among paid customers, Paid Leave eligible, and all other Washington workers

	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: 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2023; WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

Figure 44 below shows the distribution of claims from customers in the sample by leave type and language preference. Notably, there are some groups with higher relative usage among some leave subtypes and lower among others. For example, family care leave participation is especially high among those who prefer Amharic, Somali, or ‘other’ preferred language and especially low among those who prefer Lao and Ukrainian.

This could suggest variation in customer group awareness of the different eligible qualifying events for Paid Leave. It may also be affected by population health disparities and fertility rates, differences in access to health care, cultural expectations around family care, and other factors. The program will continue to monitor shifts in both language preference and program participation to better identify customers who experience language as a potential barrier to better assist these customers in accessing the leave for which they are eligible.

Figure 44. Customer language preference by claim subtype; darker colors indicate higher usage within a given preference

	New Child Leave				
	<i>Family Bonding</i>	<i>Medical Pregnancy</i>	<i>Family Care</i>	<i>Family Military</i>	<i>Serious Medical Condition</i>
Amharic	21%	4%	61%	-	14%
Arabic	32%	3%	32%	-	33%
Chinese	40%	6%	15%	-	39%
English	36%	4%	15%	0.05%	44%
Farsi	43%	3%	29%	-	26%
French	34%	3%	47%	-	17%
Japanese	21%	12%	19%	-	48%
Khmer	28%	2%	27%	-	43%
Korean	25%	2%	26%	-	47%
Lao	15%	10%	10%	-	65%
Oromo	55%	14%	20%	-	11%
Other	15%	6%	69%	-	10%
Punjabi	26%	5%	33%	-	37%
Russian	33%	5%	14%	-	48%
Somali	20%	5%	59%	-	16%
Spanish	29%	3%	39%	0.01%	29%
Tagalog	13%	3%	35%	0.26%	48%
Ukrainian	50%	3%	11%	-	36%
Vietnamese	28%	5%	25%	-	42%
Other	35%	5%	30%	-	31%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

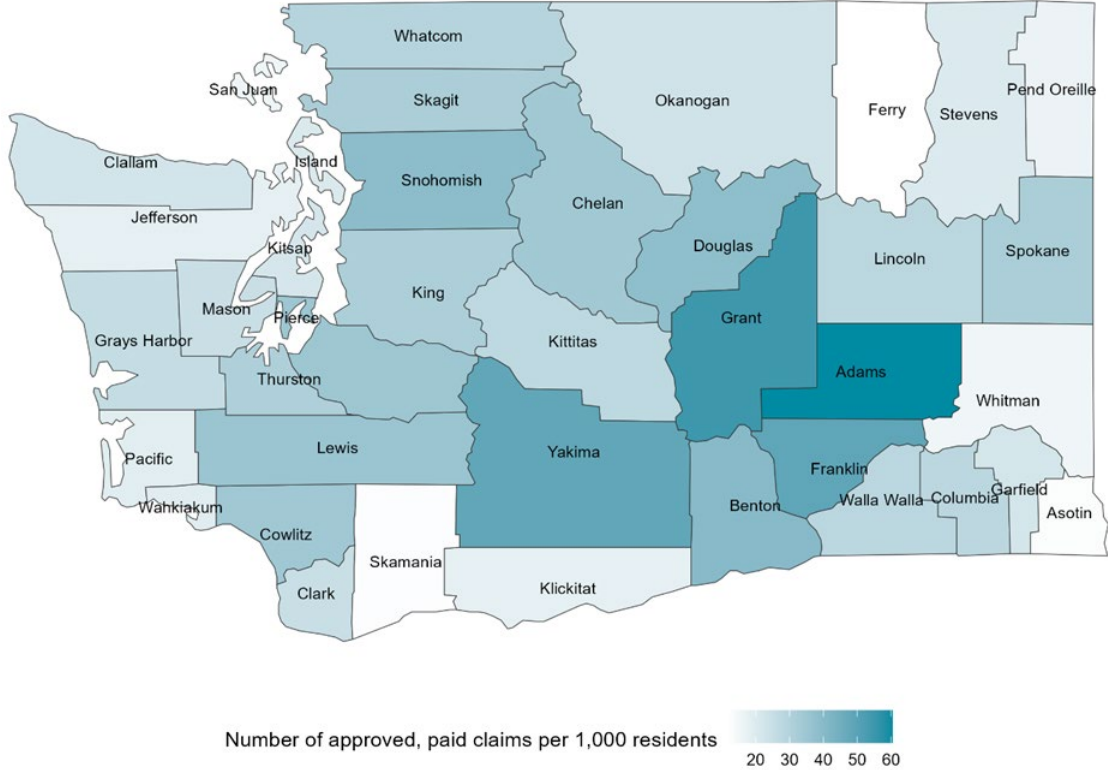
Similarly, the program continues to examine other indicators of differences in program experience. For example, it is important to note that customers whose preferred language is not English did have higher proportions of application denial (18%) compared to customers whose preferred language is English (12%); however, the reasons for denial were similar.

# Geography

Figure 45 shows claims with at least one payment by Washington county.<sup>73</sup> Program participation and population size vary drastically by county, so claims submitted are presented on a scale per 1,000 residents in each county for comparability. The counties that are darker in color have more paid claims while the counties lighter in color have fewer.

Adams, Grant and Franklin counties have the most claims approved and paid per 1,000 residents. Ferry, Asotin and Skamania have the fewest paid claims per 1,000 residents. In addition to the claims shown in the map, 5,147 (2%) paid claims were to customers with an out-of-state mailing address. Workers must have Washington employment to qualify for Paid Leave, but they may reside or be temporarily living with family members they provide care for out of state. More information on claims by county is available on the [Paid Family and Medical Leave Claims Dashboard](#).

Figure 45. Paid claims by county, per 1,000 residents



Sources: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/1/2024–06/30/2025; State of Washington Office of Financial Management County Population Data

<sup>73</sup> Counties are approximated using mailing address zip codes so may not match future data reports once address allocation to counties is built into the data system. At that time, legislative district reporting will also become available. While several free geocoding and mapping applications exist, using them would require uploading applicant address data to an external site, which would compromise applicant privacy by disclosing identity.

Figure 46 shows claims paid by leave type and county. In general, the breakdown of leave type by county generally follows a similar pattern, with some variations. For example, Garfield County customers used more new child leave types (medical pregnancy and family bonding) relative to customers in other counties and had lower use of family care leave.

Figure 46. Paid Leave claims with at least one payment by leave type and county

	New Child Leave		Family Care	Family Military	Serious Medical Condition
	Family Bonding	Medical Pregnancy			
Adams	29%	13%	33%	0.00%	25%
Asotin	22%	16%	12%	0.00%	49%
Benton	32%	15%	16%	0.01%	38%
Chelan	29%	14%	24%	0.00%	33%
Clallam	25%	13%	17%	0.00%	46%
Clark	30%	15%	12%	0.03%	43%
Columbia	27%	15%	14%	0.00%	43%
Cowlitz	30%	14%	13%	0.03%	43%
Douglas	30%	12%	27%	0.00%	31%
Ferry	24%	8%	22%	0.00%	47%
Franklin	32%	15%	23%	0.00%	31%
Garfield	47%	20%	10%	0.00%	24%
Grant	29%	13%	28%	0.00%	30%
Grays Harbor	25%	14%	14%	0.05%	47%
Island	30%	16%	15%	0.49%	39%
Jefferson	23%	12%	16%	0.00%	49%
King	32%	15%	14%	0.01%	38%
Kitsap	28%	17%	13%	0.25%	42%
Kittitas	31%	14%	21%	0.00%	34%
Klickitat	31%	15%	14%	0.00%	40%
Lewis	30%	15%	15%	0.00%	41%
Lincoln	32%	15%	18%	0.00%	35%
Mason	25%	13%	17%	0.06%	44%
Okanogan	30%	14%	24%	0.00%	32%
Pacific	32%	16%	17%	0.00%	36%
Pend Oreille	27%	13%	17%	0.00%	43%
Pierce	30%	15%	14%	0.10%	41%
San Juan	29%	15%	15%	0.00%	41%
Skagit	33%	16%	14%	0.05%	38%
Skamania	32%	15%	15%	0.00%	38%

	New Child Leave		Family Care	Family Military	Serious Medical Condition
	Family Bonding	Medical Pregnancy			
Snohomish	35%	15%	14%	0.01%	36%
Spokane	31%	16%	12%	0.04%	41%
Stevens	31%	13%	15%	0.10%	41%
Thurston	28%	15%	14%	0.12%	43%
Wahkiakum	21%	11%	14%	0.00%	54%
Walla Walla	27%	15%	20%	0.00%	38%
Whatcom	30%	14%	15%	0.01%	42%
Whitman	34%	18%	10%	0.13%	38%
Yakima	29%	14%	25%	0.03%	32%
Unavailable	33%	15%	15%	0.04%	37%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data, 07/01/2024–06/30/2025.

# Program participant employment characteristics

During the application and eligibility verification process, the Paid Leave program links claims to a customer's wage records. This allows the program to determine the leave hours available and weekly benefit amount. Quarterly wages, quarterly hours worked, average employee count and employer information from the employer wage reports are used to estimate average hourly wage, business size and employer industry for each customer and to construct a comparison sample of eligible and all Washington workers.<sup>74</sup> For additional information, see the [Paid Family and Medical Leave Demographics Dashboard](#).

The key takeaways are:

- The median hourly wage of program participants was \$34 per hour, and the average was \$48 per hour.
- Workers making less than \$19 per hour have lower participation relative to their proportion of the worker population. However, most of this difference (about 80%) appears to be a function of work history eligibility.
- Those who work for small employers appear to have lower participation relative to the eligible worker population, as well as lower work history eligibility.
- Closer examination employer size and average hourly wage together revealed that lower participation for those making less than \$19 per hour and more than \$61 per hour persist across all employer sizes.
- Those who work in Accommodation and Food Services, Retail Trade, and Administrative and Waste Services have lower participation relative to their respective shares of the eligible worker population as well as lower eligibility relative to their share of all Washington workers.

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<sup>74</sup> Under [RCW 50.04.020](#), Paid Leave customer eligibility is determined by looking at wages across a qualifying period, defined as either the first four of a customer's last five quarters preceding their qualifying event or the four quarters preceding a customer's qualifying event. Estimates of work-history eligible workers were created through establishing a pseudo-qualifying period spanning a timeframe that could appear as a qualifying period in the paid customer sample (Q2 2023- to Q1 2024) and identifying WA workers who had worked at least 820 hours during the period. The same period was used for employment characteristics of all Washington workers for comparability.

## Average hourly wage

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Figure 47 and Figure 48 show the percentage of approved customers along with estimates of eligible and all workers in Washington by average hourly wage range. The average hourly wage was calculated using quarterly wages and hours worked for each customer in each quarter of the qualifying period that reports were available and linked to a claim. Here, all Washington workers are compared to work history-eligible Washington workers over the same period as paid customers.

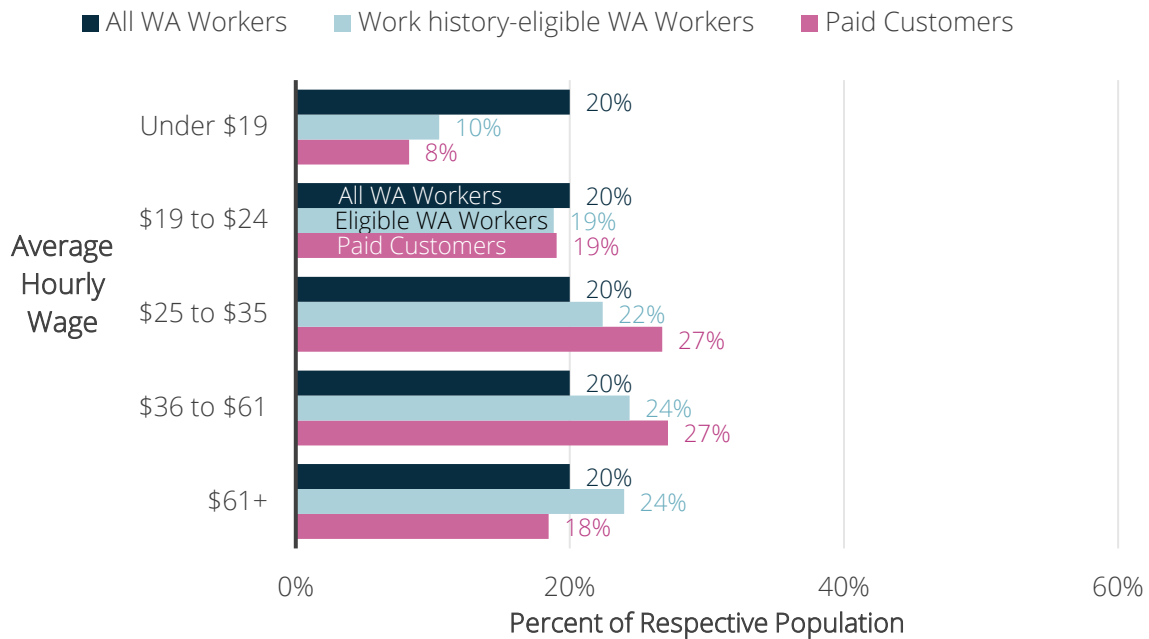
- Workers making less than \$19 per hour appear to have lower participation relative to work history-eligible workers and all Washington workers (Figure 48). Most of the difference (about 80%) comes in at the point of work history eligibility. Of all workers, 20% earn less than \$19 per hour. Of these, only 10% have eligible work history, and 8% used Paid Leave.
- Workers making \$19–\$24 per hour appear to participate approximately proportional to work-history eligibility. These workers also have estimated work history eligibility approximately on par with their representation in the Washington workforce (Figure 48).
- Workers in two middle wage groups (\$25–\$35 per hour and \$36–\$61 per hour) have higher participation relative to work-history eligible workers and higher eligibility relative to all Washington workers (Figure 48).
- Workers in the top wage group (more than \$61) appear to have lower participation relative to eligible workers despite higher work history eligibility relative to all Washington workers (Figure 48).

Figure 47. Paid Leave customer comparison to eligible and all WA workers by average hourly wage group<sup>75</sup>

	Paid Customers	Work History-Eligible WA Workers	All WA Workers <sup>76</sup>
Under \$19	8%	10%	20%
\$19 to \$24	19%	19%	20%
\$25 to \$35	27%	22%	20%
\$36 to \$61	27%	24%	20%
More than \$61	18%	24%	20%

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 7/1/2024 – 6/30/2025.

Figure 48. WA Paid Leave customer comparison to eligible and all WA workers by average hourly wage group



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025.

<sup>75</sup> These wage groupings were determined by looking at the quintile distribution of wages of all Washington workers; thus, they will change and increase every year as wages increase.

<sup>76</sup> Because the wages earned by all WA workers was used to determine the quintile wage groups, each wage group will represent 20% or one-fifth for all WA workers.

Figure 49 below shows the distribution of claims from customers in the sample by leave type and average hourly wage. Variation in leave type use is seen across all the wage groups. For example, workers earning more than \$61 have higher participation in family bonding leave (41%) relative to the other wage groups, but lower participation in family care leave (10%).

Figure 49. 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>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025.

## Employer size

The program compared Paid Leave customers to all Washington workers and those estimated to have potentially eligible work history in terms of the size of their employer. This analysis by employer size showed:

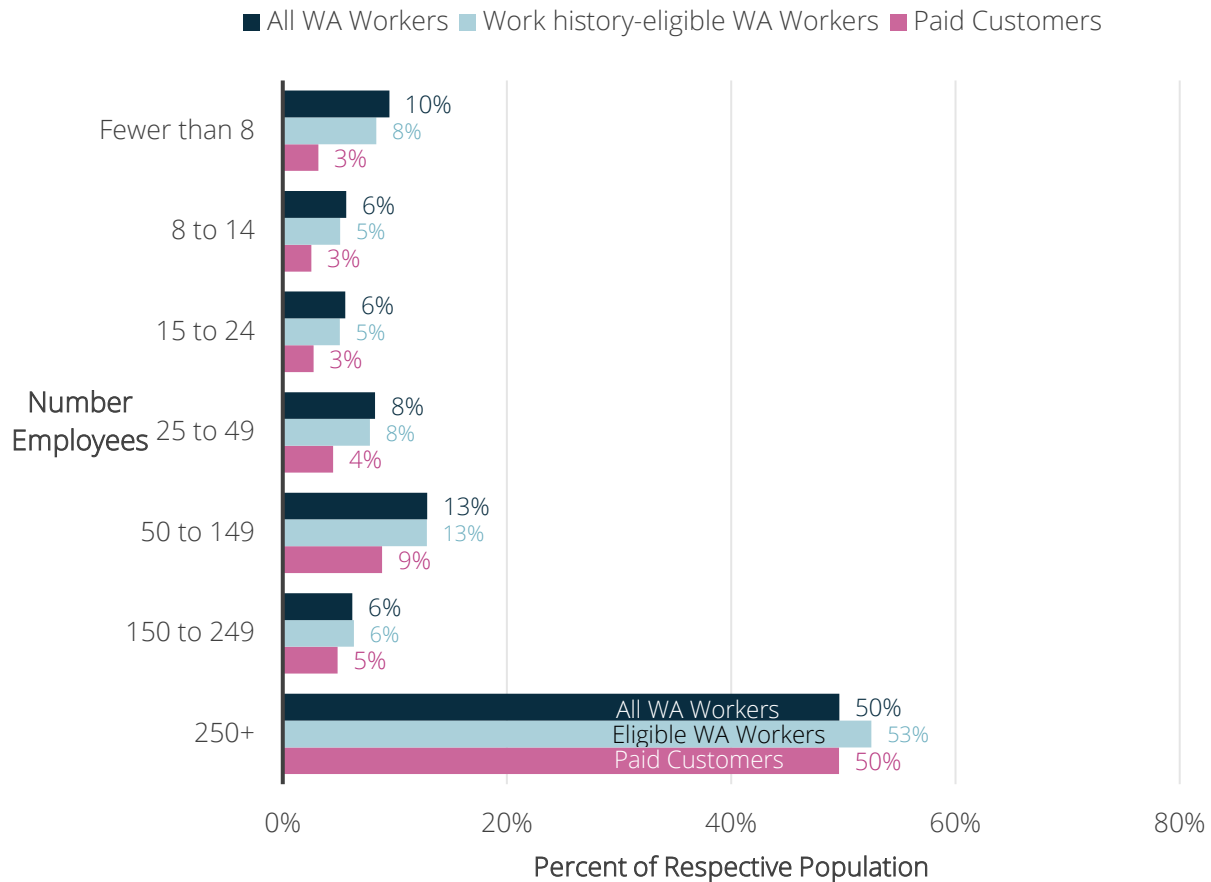
- 50% of all customers work for an employer with 250 or more employees, which is about on par with their representation in the workforce and among work-history eligible workers (Figure 51).
- Fewer customers work for small- and medium-sized organizations (up to 159 employees) as compared to their proportion of the workforce. The biggest gap is seen for customers working for employers with fewer than eight employees. Participation in the program is lowest for these employees relative to their representation among work-history eligible workers (Figure 51).

Figure 50. WA Paid Leave customer comparison to eligible and all WA 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%

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025.

Figure 51. Employer size comparison among Washington Paid Leave customers, work-history eligible workers, and all workers



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025.

Figure 52 below illustrates variation in leave use across employer size. For example, participation in family bonding leave is particularly high (42%) for employees of very small employers (fewer than 8 employees) but relatively low for employees of large employers (27%). This may reflect differences in availability of employer-provided parental leave, which tends to be more common among larger employers, or could reflect differences in other factors.

Figure 52. Paid Leave claims by leave type and employer size

	New Child Leave		Family Care	Family Military	Serious Medical Condition
	Family Bonding	Medical Pregnancy			
Fewer than 8 employees	42%	21%	9%	0.02%	28%
8-14 employees	31%	13%	16%	0.03%	40%
15-24 employees	37%	20%	10%	0.08%	33%
25-49 employees	35%	17%	12%	0.07%	36%
50-149 employees	34%	14%	14%	0.04%	38%
18-249 employees	38%	21%	9%	0.03%	31%
250+ employees	27%	13%	17%	0.05%	42%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025.

## Average hourly wage and employer size

Closer examination of participation by employer size and average hourly wage together in Figure 53 revealed that lower participation persists for the lowest and highest wage groups across all employer sizes. Those in the middle wage groups appear to have participation that depends on employer size. At smaller employers, participation is close to on par, but at larger employers middle wage groups have higher participation relative to the work history eligible population.

Figure 53. WA Paid Leave customer comparison to work-history eligible WA workers by wage & employer size

		Paid Customers	Work history-eligible WA Workers
Small employer (< 50 employees)	Under \$19	2%	4%
	\$19 to \$24	3%	5%
	\$25 to \$35	5%	6%
	\$36 to \$61	5%	6%
	\$61+	2%	4%
Large employer (50+ employees)	Under \$19	6%	7%
	\$19 to \$24	15%	14%
	\$25 to \$35	22%	16%
	\$36 to \$61	23%	18%
	\$61+	18%	20%

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025.

## Employer industry

In addition to employer size and average hourly wages, the program compared employer industry through the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), a standard used by federal and state government agencies to describe employer industries.<sup>77</sup>

- Those who work in Health Care and Social Assistance, followed by Public Administration, have slightly higher participation relative to their respective shares of the work history-eligible worker population. These were the only industries for which higher participation was seen. Eligibility based on work history was also highest in Health Care and Social Assistance.
- Those who work in Accommodation and Food Services have the lowest participation relative to their respective shares of the work-history eligible population.
- Those who work in all other industries have slightly (1-2 percentage points) lower participation relative to their respective shares of the eligible worker population. They have varying eligibility relative to their share of all Washington workers.
- There is a high percentage of customers (30%) for whom we do not have industry NAICS codes in our administrative data.

<sup>77</sup> Learn more about the [NAICS classification system](#) on the U.S. Census Bureau website.

Figure 54 shows the percentage breakdown of customers, work-history eligible workers, and all workers in Washington by industry. Figure 55 shows the same comparison for the ten industries with the largest share of employment in the state in graphical form.

Figure 54. WA Paid Leave customer comparison to eligible and all WA workers by employer industry<sup>78</sup>

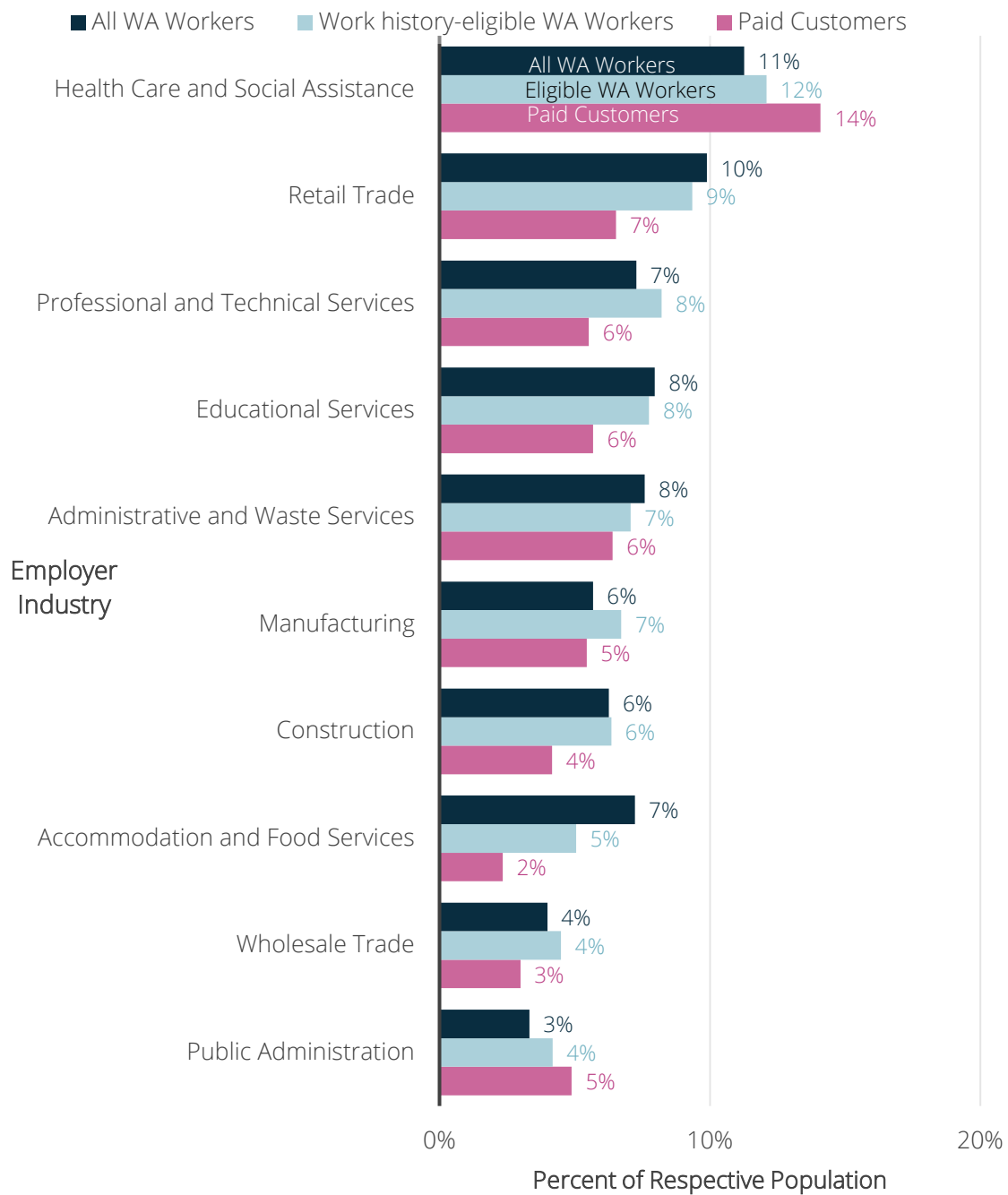
	Paid Customers	Work History-Eligible WA Workers	All WA Workers
Accommodation and Food Services	2%	5%	7%
Administrative and Waste Services	6%	7%	8%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1%	2%	2%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1%	1%	2%
Construction	4%	6%	6%
Educational Services	6%	8%	8%
Finance and Insurance	2%	3%	2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	14%	12%	11%
Information	1%	2%	2%
Manufacturing	5%	7%	6%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	2%	3%	3%
Professional and Technical Services	6%	8%	7%
Public Administration	5%	4%	3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1%	2%	1%
Retail Trade	7%	9%	10%
Transportation and Warehousing	2%	3%	3%
Utilities	1%	2%	2%
Wholesale Trade	3%	4%	4%
Unknown	30%	12%	12%

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025.

Customers at employer industries have lower participation in leave relative to work history eligible with two notable exceptions: customers who work for employers in Health Care and Social Assistance and Public Administration. Given the proximity of both industries to knowledge about Paid Leave, as well as outreach efforts the program has undertaken to health care providers (given their responsibility to certify medical conditions), this is not surprising.

<sup>78</sup> Not shown are the industries "Management of Companies and Enterprises" and "Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction" because there were too few employers that the percentages were zero or effectively zero.

Figure 55. WA Paid Leave customer comparison to work-history eligible and all WA workers by employer industry



Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025.

Figure 56 below shows the distribution of claims from customers in the sample by leave type and employer industry. There is strong variation in participation among types of leave by industry. For example, those who work in Agriculture participate strongly in family care leave but less so in new child leave (which includes both medical-pregnancy and bonding leave), relative to other industries. On the other hand, those who work in Information participate highly for new child leave types relative to other industries but participate in family care leave at a lower relative fraction.

Figure 56. Paid Leave claims by leave type and industry

	New Child Leave		Family Military	Family Care	Serious Medical Condition
	Family Bonding	Medical Pregnancy			
Accommodation & Food Services	30%	24%	0.08%	12%	34%
Administrative & Waste Services	36%	13%	0.04%	13%	37%
Agriculture	21%	5%	0.00%	41%	33%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	33%	17%	0.07%	11%	39%
Construction	48%	5%	0.02%	12%	35%
Education	28%	20%	0.03%	15%	37%
Finance	32%	19%	0.15%	11%	38%
Health Care	22%	19%	0.05%	17%	42%
Information	45%	18%	0.03%	8%	28%
Management	27%	16%	0.11%	14%	43%
Manufacturing	33%	7%	0.04%	17%	43%
Mining	44%	3%	0.00%	9%	44%
Other Services	31%	19%	0.02%	13%	36%
Professional & Technical Services	39%	19%	0.06%	11%	31%
Public Administration	23%	11%	0.08%	21%	45%
Real Estate	33%	16%	0.00%	12%	39%
Retail Trade	26%	12%	0.03%	14%	47%
Utilities	26%	6%	0.02%	21%	47%
Transportation	37%	8%	0.08%	17%	38%
Wholesale Trade	31%	9%	0.03%	20%	40%
Unavailable	33%	16%	0.03%	15%	36%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Source: WA Paid Leave Administrative Data and Wage Reports, 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025.