

Location	Association of Washington Businesses (AWB) 1414 Cherry St. SE Olympia, WA
Time	10:00 am – Noon
Attendees	Employee's Interests Representative: Joe Kendo Employee's Interests Representative: Maggie Humphreys Employee's Interests Representative: Marilyn Watkins (phone) Employee's Interests Representative: Samantha Grad Employer's Interests Representative: Bob Battles Employer's Interests Representative: Tammie Hetrick (Phone) Paid Family and Medical Leave Act Ombudsman: Edsonya Charles
Guests	Department Representative: Matt Buelow (representing Carla Reyes)
Members Absent	Carla Reyes, Paid Family and Medical Leave Director Employer's Interests Representative: Julia Gorton Employer's Interests Representative: Christine Brewer
Scribes	Tracy Moore / Liz Merrick

1. Introductions – Matt Buelow

Members in the room and on the phone introduced themselves.

2. Approve August Meeting Minutes

August Meeting minutes were handed out and approved by Advisory Members.

3. Benefit Application Preview / Input – Matt Buelow

Matt Buelow walked the Committee through the power point reflecting possible benefit application online screens and answered questions, as well as received suggestions from the Advisory Committee, other attendees in the room and on line.

Benefit Account Creation Confirmation (slide 9):

- Add language on this page to suggest employees write their customer ID number down for future reference
- Add a “print this page” option

Manage Benefit Application (slide 10):

- Will ESD implement a process with a situation where the employee has split employment with a Voluntary Plan and employer using the ESD Plan?

Additional Information (slide 14):

- Add a box to the forms/website for LGBTQ citizens.
- Will voluntary plans have to capture this information?

ACTION – Matt: (working with Policy)- investigate whether the Voluntary Plans have to collect that same demographic information for the legislative reporting requirements?

- Add whether the household speaks multiple languages.
- Move the opt-out of providing additional information box to the top of the list rather than the bottom.

ACTION – Matt: (working with Policy)- explore rules around the order of the demographic information and what is listed.

Employment Information (slide 15):

- The two boxes here are confusing, either add a box “I’ve never worked here” or remove the two boxes.
- Provide context on this slide as well, or work on the questions as it is very confusing. For example- I can be a salaried employee and not work 40 hours a week; also indicate the time period, is this the entire work history or for a specified period of time.

Marilyn provided more questions on this page in her written response; and asked what the options around full time are, versus self-employed, versus salaried/hourly. Matt said PFML has received Marilyn’s feedback and is looking into it. What is PFML doing to protect employee and employer ID’s? Leave Information (slide 19):

- What are the drop downs?
 - “Select the type of leave requested” – Options will include: Medical leave for yourself, Leave to care for a family member, Bonding after the birth or placement of your child and Military exigency.
 - “Which family member are you taking leave for” – Options will include: Parent (or spouses’ parent), Spouse, Child, Sibling, Grandchild, Grandparent (or spouses’ grandparent) and Other.
- For the end date- add an option for “estimated” or “unknown”- as we don’t want to make it where the employee over shoots what they will take.
- What if this is the 2nd case, will it take one or two applications?

ACTION – Matt: provide the outcome ESD has determined (currently looking at options).

- Marilyn asked for more explanation around the intermittent leave option | ***future meeting agenda topic.**

Note: Heavy questions regarding intermittent leave, along with many other questions coming in on the Web Ex instant message system. PFML Web Ex host sent out the phone number to everyone along with the website address to those who didn't get a chance to write it down.

Preferred Payment Method: Pre-paid Card (slide 22)

- "Preferred Payment Method"- sounds like the employee is making payments TO ESD, consider alternate language/header on this screen
- Add language around what a prepaid card is, as it may not be commonly understood, and the fact traditional banking is not required will be important to some employees.
- Matt outlined the process how the Bank issues one card which is filled continually. 1st card is issued free, may be a fee for replacement cards. Cards are through US Bank.
- How long it would take for cards to be issued. Concerns were brought about of the possibility of lag time between application, approval and receipt of card/money.

ACTION - Matt: Share the Pre-paid card fee schedule with Advisory Committee.

- Add a "very big warning" to the page with a statement that the benefit payment may be taxable. It is encouraged the site strongly suggests that employees work with their tax preparer in readiness for filing of their 2020 taxes. As for the Federal Withholding, ESD/PFML has written and is currently working with the ATG and the IRS to get a statement regarding withholding of taxes. Current law does not allow ESD/PFML to withhold until the IRS makes a ruling that the benefits are taxable.

Preferred Payment Method: Direct Deposit (slide 23):

- Can someone else can apply on behalf of a claimant if they need benefits but are unable? Matt confirmed this is possible. A designated representative can apply on the employee's behalf. Refer to this rule for more info: <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=192-800-003>. How the application might change based on that person applying rather than the employee is still under development.
- Add a picture of a check illustration to guide the employee on where to look for the bank's routing number.

Upload Document (slide 24):

- Add language on to notify the employee of the next steps (e.g. go file your weekly claim).

- List the types of documents that would be uploaded to the instructions on this page, as well as the website.
- Is the online portal mobile compatible as it pertains to uploading documents?
 - PFML Answer: Yes, it should as long as you have it in your image gallery
- Why can't you delete files on this page?" Please allow the option to replace an incorrect or updated document.

General comments and discussion (throughout the application slide review):

- What date do we plan to make account creation available online? Is a Beta test planned? Matt explained ESD is currently discussing alternatives; acknowledged the actual application cannot begin until 1/1/2020. Advisory Committee members would like to see early access to allow for account creation. ****Note: future agenda topic / Timing of Launch / Beta Test.**
- ESD expects a spike in applications at the beginning of January for those who have been waiting to apply and submit a claim.
- Are you prepared for a system crash on 1/1/2020 due to all claims? Matt shared performance testing has been occurring based on anticipated system loads. Additionally, the teams conduct contingency planning for continuity of operations to ensure there are fall back plans for various scenarios.
- Recognizing January 1 is an official holiday, will ESD be open on 1/1/2020?
- Paper application? Matt indicated an alternative will be provided. More info to follow. A paper application would include translations beyond English.
- Voluntary plan employers can make their applications available whenever they want to (even now) so long as the benefits paid starting 1/1/20 are the same or better than the state plan benefits.
- The way to reach the Customer Care Team is either by calling 833-717-2273/ or emailing paidleave@esd.wa.gov
- The online application is only translated in English as of 1/1/2020. Will translation services be available on the 1/1/2020 holiday?
- Will there be webinars or presentations on weekly claim?
- Can there be a brochure created for the employer's mandatory requirements (beyond the poster)?

ACTION - Clare: update on plans for the weekly claim presentations and employer's mandatory requirements.

4. Alternate to online wage filing – Matt Buelow

Matt presented the data collected by the Customer Care Team for Employer's reasons why they would like to paper report (see presentation). This only pertains to employer

wage reporting. In review of the data, the Paid Family and Medical Leave Executive Steering Committee decided to provide alternate method for one (1) year, paper form will only be offered upon demand and the Customer Care Team will enter the wage data based on the form. Effective January 2021, no paper filing. Bob has grave concerns that there are employers even in King County where internet accessibility prohibits them from filing. Joe believes that the Executive Steering Committee and Advisory Committee must keep an open mind on this matter.

5. November re-schedule– Matt Buelow

The Advisory Committee agreed to reschedule the November meeting to Wednesday November 13th, 10:00 AM to Noon, in Seattle.

ACTION - Liz: work with Committee members to identify the meeting location; send the revised meeting notice to block time on the calendars.

6. Open Comment

Questions raised / Response:

- Are leave dates protected? It depends (e.g. size of the employer, tenure with the employer, whether the employer has a voluntary plan)
- How will employers know about the approval/and specific dates?
- Status of the Elective Coverage? Employers now have the ability to opt-in, and file wage reports.

Because we have had so many questions, For the sake of time, and to ensure everyone has their questions answered, with his approval, I'm providing Jason Barrett's email address. He is our Lead Policy Analyst and would be more than happy to answer your questions. jbarrett@esd.wa.gov.

You can also go to Feedback -

https://www.opentownhall.com/portals/289/forum_home