

Location	Department of Social and Health Services / Office Building 2- Lookout Conference Room, 4 th floor 1115 Washington Street SE Olympia WA
Time	2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Attendees	Department Representative: Carla Reyes Employee’s Interests Representative: Joe Kendo (phone) Employer’s Interests Representative: Julia Gorton (phone) Employer’s Interests Representative: Christine Brewer (phone) Employee’s Interests Representative: Marilyn Watkins Employee’s Interests Representative: Samantha Grad (phone) Employer’s Interests Representative: Bob Battles (phone) Employee’s Interests Representative: Maggie Humphreys Employer’s Interests Representative: Tammie Hetrick Paid Family and Medical Leave Act Ombudsman: Edsonya Charles
Guests	PFML Operations Manager: John Mattes PFML Communications Manager: Clare DeLong PFML Business Systems Product Manager: Matt Buelow
Members Absent	None
Scribe	Liz Merrick

Introductions Members in the room and on the phone introduced themselves.

Approve November & December Meeting Minutes – both approved by Advisory Members.

Update on Benefits Version 1.0 Launch – Paid Leave Team

Paid Family and Medical Leave program launched days early (12/30/2019), kept the system open to the public even during New Year’s Day when staff support was unavailable. There have been no major incidents. Reviewed the data covering submitted applications and program determinations (see slide, data from 1/12/2020). Reviewed current data: application processing velocity is picking up. Customer Care Team is sending emails to confirm application receipt and when information is missing. All current applications have been responded to in some way. The Advisory Committee was curious about the reasons for denials? Primary reason for denials are customers are applying too early (the event hasn’t occurred).

ACTION Carla: to double check the answer to Maggie and Marilyn’s question about application and denial dates.

In order to mitigate the large volume of application, the Program identified 2,500 bonding claims and has a team of people working on just those claims. Carla confirmed the birth certificate is not required for the bonding applications. What is required is: Date of Birth, leave start date, demographic information, work history which is standard information required in other applications.

The Advisory Committee is still concerned about the application processing to weekly claim payment timeframes. Carla committed to provide updates and the data offered to the Committee. She also reiterated the paper application process will continue despite the low use of this option. Any decisions to change this would need to be based on more data. While it is too early to determine the trends, the first two weeks show that Monday's are the busiest, and the overall volume is higher than early projections (from legislation). She highlighted key takeaways in the last 2 weeks: thousands of Washingtonians are taking advantage of this new program. First 5 days we received more applications than originally thought we would receive in the first month. This could be caused by the carryover from 2019 (bonding applications and medical events).

Marilyn reflected on the data and suggested the Program analyze how much actually happened in 2019, this analysis could give indication of event demands. Carla agreed with approach and shared she is engaged with Customer Care team and the team is analyzing the data.

Question was raised by the Committee around medical and bonding: Are birth parents understanding the amount of leave available to them at time of application? Matt shared when he sat with Customer Care Specialists on calls, he heard them explain the law doesn't allow for automatic 4 weeks of leave after birth. When having conversations with Customers, the Customer Care Specialists are specifying what is available to them based on the different qualifying events. The Committee suggested the online application could outline what is available for each qualifying event to eliminate the need to call ESD. Carla asked the Committee to provide specific changes to the online application and the Program will gladly consider for improvements.

Carla reviewed the mitigations underway to expedite claims processing (see slide 9). She shared they just received approval to hire an additional 35 staff to help with the large volumes. She reiterated the application processing time goal is two weeks and due to the large volumes we already have seen, this will take at least four weeks. The good news is the prepaid card is sent in advance and later loaded with the funds so there isn't a delay for those customers.

Launch update: Clare

Clare shared the website is up, the team added a page "After you Apply" which lets customers know what to expect and what to do next.

ACTION: Clare to follow up with Maggie regarding additional languages. **Update:** *The paper application is translated into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Korean and Khmer. Additional languages are being added.*

A Ribbon cutting Launch Event is scheduled for February 3 with Governor. More details to follow. **Note:** *this event was postponed by the Steering Committee 1/23/2020.*

Open Comment

Bob Battles thanked the Program for all the work on this project. Marilyn & Maggie echo's Bob's thank you. Carla shared she received a call from a Congressional office asking for more information regarding the program and updates.

For those joining publicly, please send your questions to paidleave@esd.wa.gov.

Next Meeting: Friday February 21, 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm | Department of Social and Health Services / Office Building 2- Lookout Conference Room, 4th floor | 1115 Washington Street SE
| Olympia WA