THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

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FY2024 Annual Report for the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

Department of Family and Medical Leave

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Law, M.G.L. c. 175M on June 28, 2018, created Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) in Massachusetts.

The PFML program provides benefits to covered individuals. A covered individual is either:

1) an employee who meets the financial eligibility requirements of M.G.L. c. 151A, § 24(a); provided, however, that all such employment shall have been with an employer in the Commonwealth.
2) a self-employed individual who has:
   a) elected coverage under M.G.L. c. 175M, § (2)(j), and
   b) reported earnings to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue from self-employment that meet the financial eligibility requirements of M.G.L. c. 151A, § 24(a) as if the individual were an employee, and
   c) made contributions as required by M.G.L. c. 175M, § 6, for at least two of the previous four calendar quarters.
3) a covered contract worker, as that term is defined in M.G.L. c. 175M, § 1.

The Department of Family and Medical Leave (DFML) is required by M.G.L. c. 175M, § 7(e) to issue annual reports containing information about applications for PFML benefits made to DFML. This report provides a summary of data on applications for paid leave benefits from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024 (FY24). [FN1]

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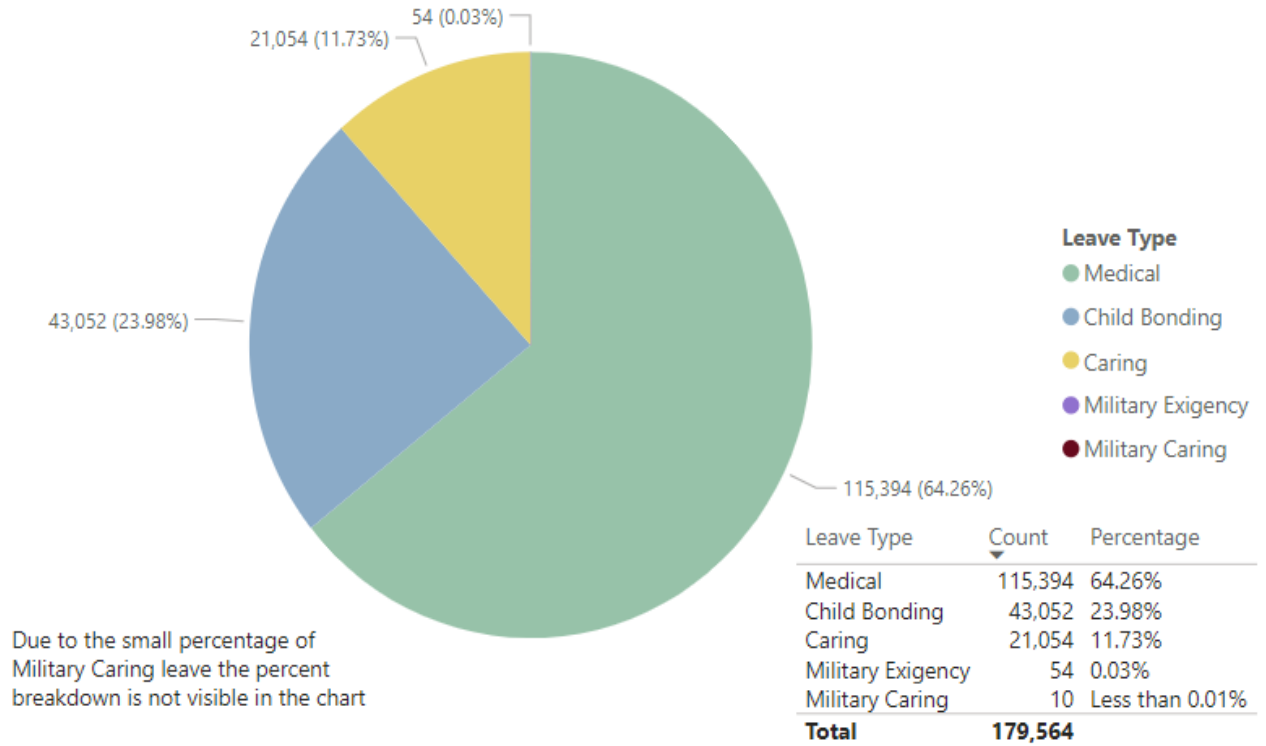# Information on Approved Applications in FY24:

Approved application data is based on application approvals that occurred between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024 (FY24).

In FY24:

- Total applications approved: **179,564**
    - Applications were approved for **117,152** unique individuals. (This number is lower than total applications because applicants can file for multiple leaves within a benefit year.)
- Applications approved for medical leave: **115,394** (64.26% of total approved applications)
    - Medical leave for one's own serious health condition, other than medical leave related to childbirth or pregnancy, accounted for 51.43% of approved applications **(92,354 approved applications).**
    - Medical leave associated with recovery from childbirth or pregnancy accounted for 12.83% of approved applications (**23,040** approved applications).
- Applications approved for family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition: **21,054** (11.73% of total approved applications)
- Applications approved for family leave to bond with a child following birth, adoption or foster care placement: **43,052** (23.98% of total approved applications)
- Applications approved for military exigency leave: **54** (.03% of total approved applications)
- Applications approved for family leave to care for a covered military service member: **10** (less than **.**01% of total approved applications)

Approved Applications by Leave Type

54 (0.03%)

21,054 (11.73%)

43,052 (23.98%)

115,394 (64.26%)

Leave Type

- Medical
- Child Bonding
- Caring
- Military Exigency
- Military Caring

Due to the small percentage of Military Caring leave the percent breakdown is not visible in the chart

| Leave Type	Count	Percentage
Medical	115,394	64.26%
Child Bonding	43,052	23.98%
Caring	21,054	11.73%
Military Exigency	54	0.03%
Military Caring	10	Less than 0.01%
Total	**179,564**	

Demographics for Approved Covered Individuals

Age

Covered individuals are required to disclose demographic information for age to DFML. In FY24 the primary age group for covered individuals was the 31-40 range, which accounted for 36.88% of the total approved covered individuals.

Approved Applicants by Age
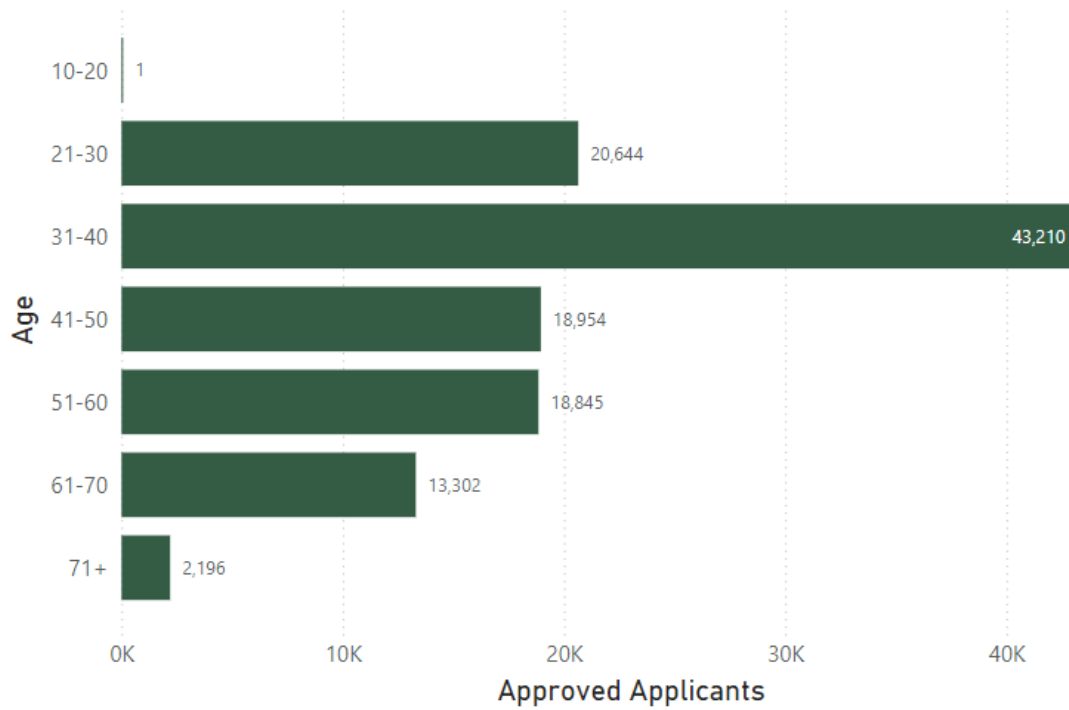
Gender

Covered individuals are not required to disclose demographic information for gender to DFML. In FY24, 61.09% (71,563) of covered individuals identified as female, 36.11% (42,302) of covered individuals identified as male, 2.55% (2,990) of covered individuals preferred not to answer, and 0.25% (297) identified as non-binary.

Approved Applicants by Gender

Gender	Sum of Approved Applicants
Female	71,563
Male	42,302
Prefer not to answer	2,990
Non-Binary	297
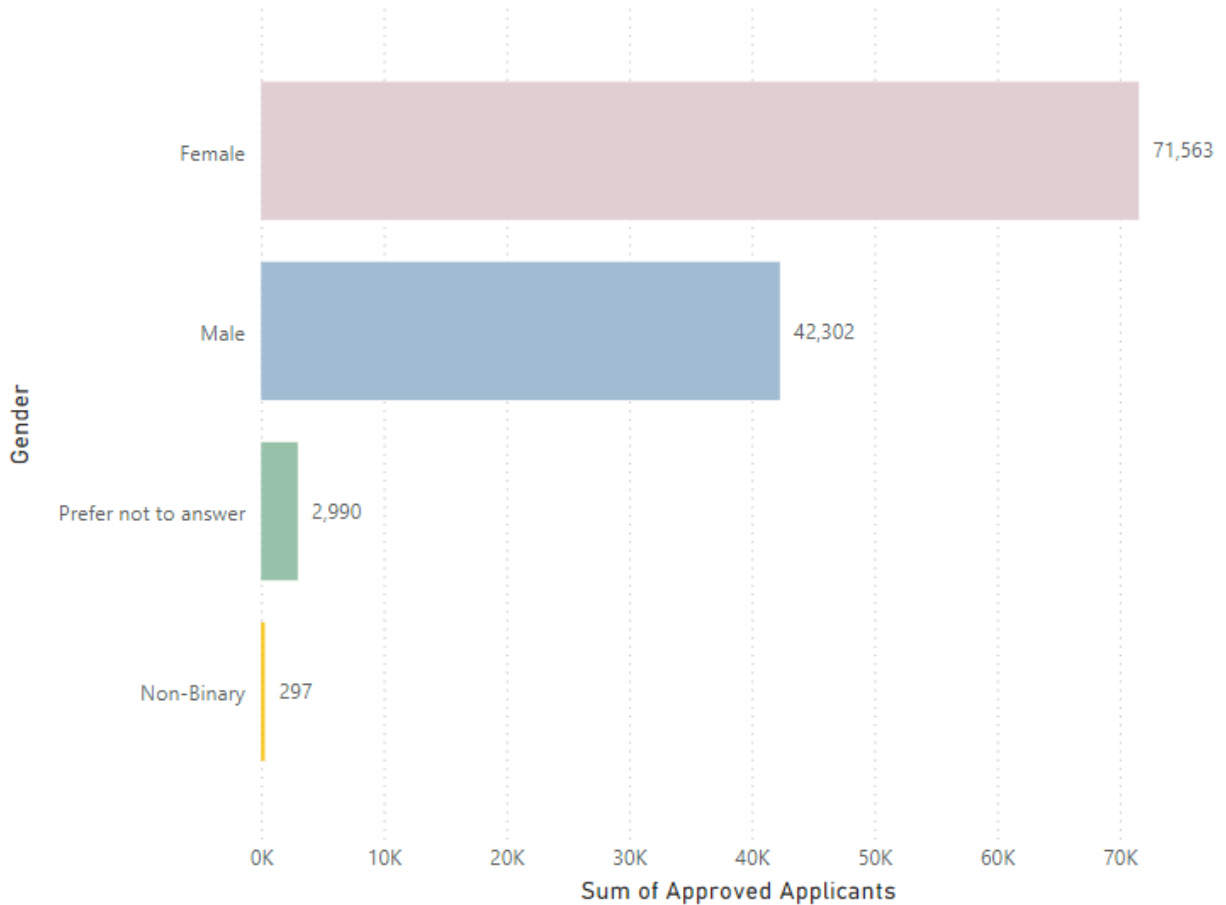
Race

Covered individuals are not required to disclose demographic information for race to DFML. In total, 18.74% (21,949) of covered individuals preferred not to answer. After excluding covered individuals that preferred not to answer, 59.30% (69,469) of covered individuals selected White as their race; 11.19% (13,105) of covered individuals selected Black/African as their race; 4.44%% (5,205) of covered individuals selected Asian/Asian American as their race; 2.57% (3,014) of covered individuals selected "Another Race not Listed" as their race; 3.18% (3,730) of covered individuals selected Multiracial as their race; and less than 1% (680) of covered individuals selected American Indian/Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander as their race.

Breakdown of Approved Applicants, Self-Identified by Race

Race	Sum of Approved Claimants
White	69,469
Prefer not to answer	21,949
Black/African American	13,105
Asian/Asian American	5,205
Multiracial	3,730
Another race not listed	3,014
American Indian/Alaska Native	413
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	267
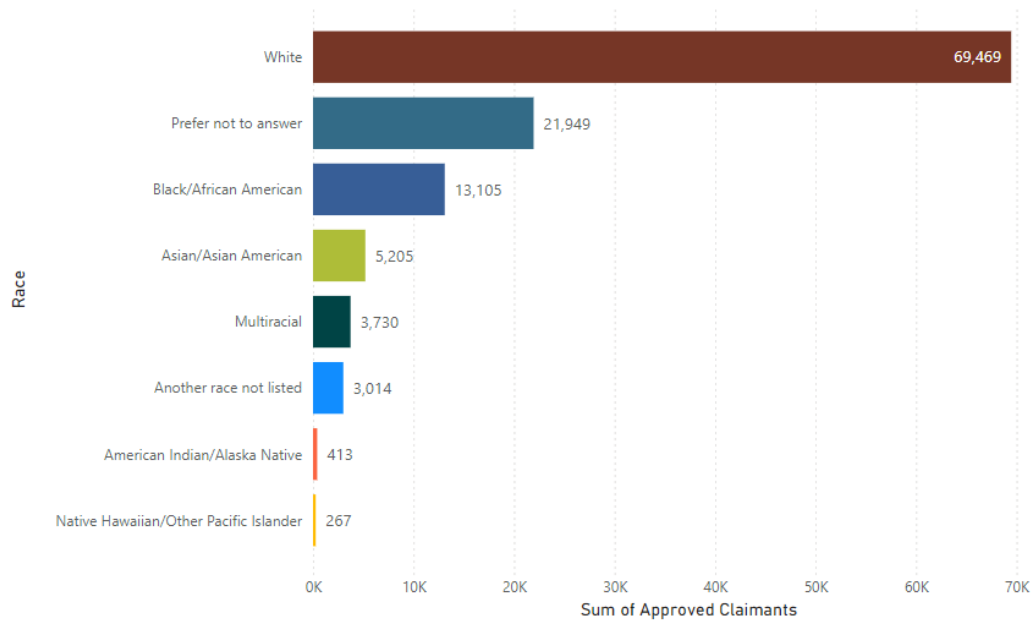
Language

Since the launch of increased language access in 2023, **3.82%** of total covered individuals have applied and received notices in Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, or Chinese.

Occupation

Covered individuals who were approved for paid leave worked in a wide variety of industries. The top industries are listed below. This data is derived from occupational information that employers self-disclosed to the Department of Unemployment Assistance.

Occupation	Sum of Approved Applicants
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	13,414
Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	4,291
Other General Government Support	3,907
Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (except Convenience Retailers)	2,820
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	2,618
Undisclosed	2,509
Home Health Care Services	1,865
Full-Service Restaurants	1,849
Scheduled Passenger Air Transportation	1,691
Other Individual and Family Services	1,690
Child Care Services	1,644
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	1,590
Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse) Hospitals	1,549
Offices of Dentists	1,515
Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services	1,407
Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability Facilities	1,406
Residential Mental Health and Substance Abuse Facilities	1,320
Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	1,286
Temporary Help Services	1,211
Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Centers	1,071

In addition to the categories listed above, responses in "other occupations" account for **66,499** respondents.

Geography

The below figure shows utilization of PFML by county. Since population size varies by county, the data is presented on a scale of number of approved applications per 1,000 residents in each county. The darker colors indicate more approved applications versus the lighter colors which indicate fewer approved applications per 1,000 residents. There were 15,229 approved applications that were submitted with an out-of-state mailing address.
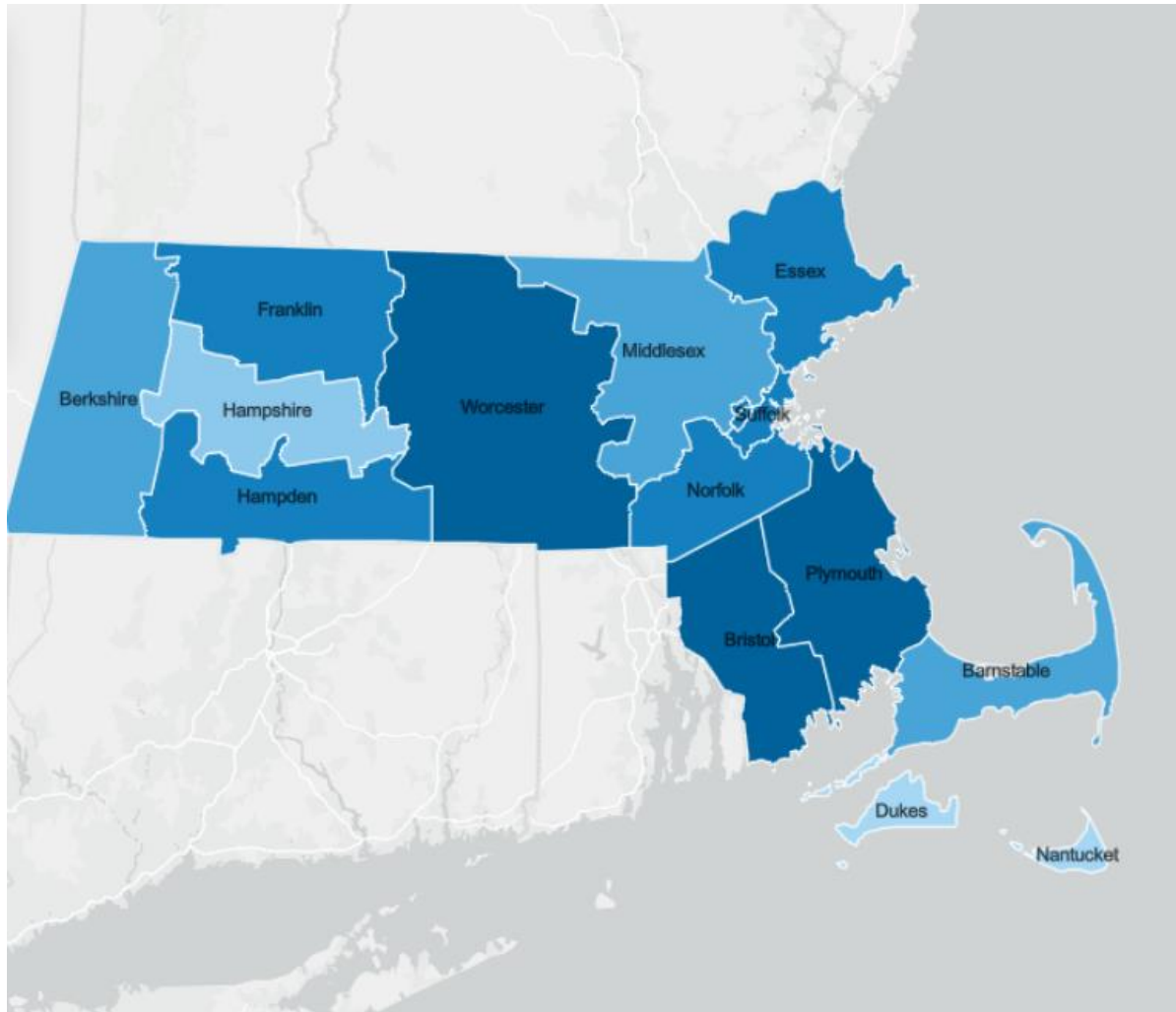
County	Approved Applications per 1,000 Residents	Percentage of Total Approved Applications
Barnstable	21.48	2.47%
Berkshire	21.35	1.42%
Bristol	33.45	9.71%
Dukes	12.57	0.14%
Essex	26.25	10.90%
Franklin	22.84	0.88%
Hampden	28.02	6.62%
Hampshire	18.90	1.63%
Middlesex	20.68	17.67%
Nantucket	12.56	0.10%
Norfolk	22.68	8.50%
Plymouth	30.09	8.12%
Suffolk	23.05	9.55%
Worcester	31.23	13.86%

Information on Denied Applications in FY24:

Total applications denied: **32,323**

Percentage of all filed applications that were denied: **15.25%**

Reasons for Denied Applications

The following categories accounted for the denials issued by DFML in FY24:

Eligibility	The applicant's employer was not identified as participating in the PFML program, for reasons that include coverage by an approved exempt plan or exclusion from the requirements of the PFML statute	**6,863** applications
	The applicant's employer could not be located using tax filing data	**2,350** applications

	The employee had not satisfied the financial eligibility test under M.G.L. c. 175M in that they did not earn 30 times their weekly benefit amount over the 12 months preceding the individual's application	**3,001** applications
	The employee had wages too low to qualify for PFML	**3,227** applications
	The person was ineligible due to being unemployed for more than 26 weeks at the time they applied	**217** applications
Documentation	The applicant did not complete the application or did not submit the required documents	**6,745** applications
	The documents submitted by the applicant did not comply with DFML requirements	**4,985** applications
Information from Employers	Employer provided disqualifying information about the applicant to DFML (e.g., that applicant had taken prior leave during the benefit year)	**575** applications
	Employer was not notified by the employee of their need for leave in accordance with the timeliness requirements established under M.G.L. c. 175M	**285** applications
Family leave	The leave did not fall within one year of the child's birth or placement	**142** applications
	The person applying did not establish that they were caring for a covered family member	**37** applications
	The person applied to care for a family member with a serious health condition and the family member died before the leave date.	**9** applications
Other	The application was submitted more than 90 days after the leave began	**378** applications
	The requested leave exceeded the amount allowed for family leave	**1,330** applications
	The requested leave exceeded the amount allowed for medical leave	**1,592** applications
	The requested leave exceeded the total allowed for both family and medical leave	**229** applications
	The application contained false statements	**183** applications

Abandoned Applications

In FY24, of the 6,745 applications reported above as denied for the reason that the applicant did not complete the application or did not submit the required documents, 6,183 of those applications were denied because an individual started an application on the website but did not complete and submit the application.

Average Weekly Benefit

During FY24, the average weekly benefit was: **$848.83**

- **$892.31** for family leave
- **$824.63** for medical leave

Total Benefits Distributed Year Over Year

In **FY24** (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024), DFML paid out a total of **$1,049,721,590.56** in family and medical leave benefits.

In **FY23** (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023), DFML paid out a total of **$832,548,618.16** in family and medical leave benefits.

In **FY22** (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022), DFML paid out a total of **$602,767,692.31** in family and medical leave benefits.

In **FY21** (January 1, 2021-June 30, 2021), DFML paid out a total of **$174,729,366.12** in family and medical leave benefits.

Previous Fiscal Year Comparison

- **Increase in Approved Applications:** 179,564 applications were approved in FY24. That represents a **25.26%** increase in **approved applications** over FY23, when the department approved **143,356** applications.
  - The increase in approved applications correlates with a **23.76%** increase in total applications (approved and denied applications).
  - The approval percentage for applications in FY24 increased by **1.02%** to **84.75%.**
  - While the overall number of applications denied in FY24 was higher than in FY23

due to an overall increase in applications, the percentage of applications denied decreased in FY24 when compared to FY23.

- **Increase in Approved Applicants:** The number of unique covered individuals accessing PFML benefits increased by **19.98%.**

- **Increase in Approved Medical Leave Combined with Bonding Leave**: In FY24, **74.10%** of covered individuals with an approved medical leave claim to recover from childbirth or due to pregnancy also had an approved child bonding family leave claim which is an **11.22%** increase from FY23.

- **Improvement in Application Processing Time**: The median time for an initial determination was reduced by **4 calendar days**.
    - Overall, there was a **30.77%** decrease in the time for an initial determination, from a median of 17 calendar days in FY23 to a median of 13 calendar days in FY24.

- **Improvement in Application Processing Time**: The Department issued final determinations, including the time spent completing decision appeals, faster, reducing the median time it takes to issue a final determination by **9 calendar days**.
    - Overall, there was an **33.33%** decrease in the time it takes the Department to issue a final determination, from a median of 27 calendar days in FY23 to a median of 18 calendar days in FY24.

Metric	FY23	FY24	Percent Change
Approved Applications	143,356	179,564	25.26% Increase
Average Leave Duration	9.40 weeks	8.66 weeks	7.87% Decrease
Covered Individuals Who Took Leave	97,640	117,152	19.98% Increase
Denial Rate	16.28%	15.26%	6.27% Decrease
Denied Applications	27,863	32,330	16.03% Increase
[FN2] Individual Average Weekly Wage - Average	$1,483.77	$1,541.80	3.91% Increase
Individual Average Weekly Wage - Median	$1,189.60	$1,222.00	5.76% Increase
Total Benefits Paid out	$832,548,618.16	$1,049,721,590.56	26.00% Increase

Application Processing Times

To apply for paid leave benefits, a covered individual must submit an application and upload supporting documentation. The application is then sent to their employer, which has 10 business days to review and respond. After the employer responds or the 10 business days have lapsed, the application is adjudicated by DFML, and a decision is reached within 14 business days.

- The average response time from employers was **2.61 calendar days**.
- The median initial determination (from application submission to initial decision) was **13** calendar days, which was a four full calendar day reduction from the FY23 median initial determination time. The median final determination (from application submission to final decision, including the appeal process) was **18 calendar days**, which was a nine full calendar day reduction from the FY23 median final determination time.

Leave Duration

The average duration of a leave completed in FY24 was **8.66 weeks**. [FN3]
- For medical leave, the average duration of a leave completed in FY24 was **8.57 weeks.**
- For family leave, the average duration of a leave completed in FY24 was **8.85 weeks.**

Open Cases

At the end of FY24, there were **35,261** open leaves, where covered individuals were in the midst of taking their leave. There were **144,303** approved completed leaves, where the leave had been completed.

Employer Reimbursement

Employers may qualify for reimbursement of benefits paid to their employees on or after January 1, 2021, if they offer a paid temporary disability, family or medical leave policy, or an extended illness leave bank that provides equal or more generous benefits than those provided under the PFML law.

In FY24 DFML paid out a total of **$1,666,335.92** in family and medical leave reimbursements across **58** employers.

- **$844,272.25** for family leaves
- **$822,063.67** for medical leaves

Information on PFML Program Data

FN1. The data used in this report is derived from various sources, including DFML's application processing system. Numbers for reported data may be rounded. The data reported in each fiscal year is accurate at the time of June 30 to the best of DFML's knowledge. Any inconsistencies in year-over-year data, such as the rise in the number of approved and denied applications compared to prior fiscal year annual reports, can be attributed to several factors, including claims with an appeals process in the subsequent fiscal year, application extensions, and applications that were pending at the end of each fiscal year.

FN2. Comparative Individual Average Weekly Wage data is based on updated data and updates the average Individual Average Weekly Wage listed for FY23 PFML approved claims.

FN3. Note that in previous fiscal years leave duration was calculated based on a 5-day work week and excluded intermittent leave schedules. Leave duration for FY24 was calculated based on actual work weeks reported by applicants and includes intermittent leave hours.

As of June 30, 2024, total application data from the beginning of the PFML program consists of:
- **508,370** approved applications
- **104,347** denied applications

As of June 30, 2024, total benefit payments disbursed from the beginning of the PFML program is **$2,659,768,219.40.**