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

MAURA HEALEY
GOVERNOR

KIM DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LAUREN E. JONES
SECRETARY

WILLIAM J. ALPINE
DIRECTOR

FY2026 Annual Report for the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

Department of Family and Medical Leave

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 includes:

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 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, 2025, to June 30, 2026 (FY26).[1]

[1] 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 applications with an appeal in the subsequent fiscal year, application extensions, and applications that were pending at the end of each fiscal year.

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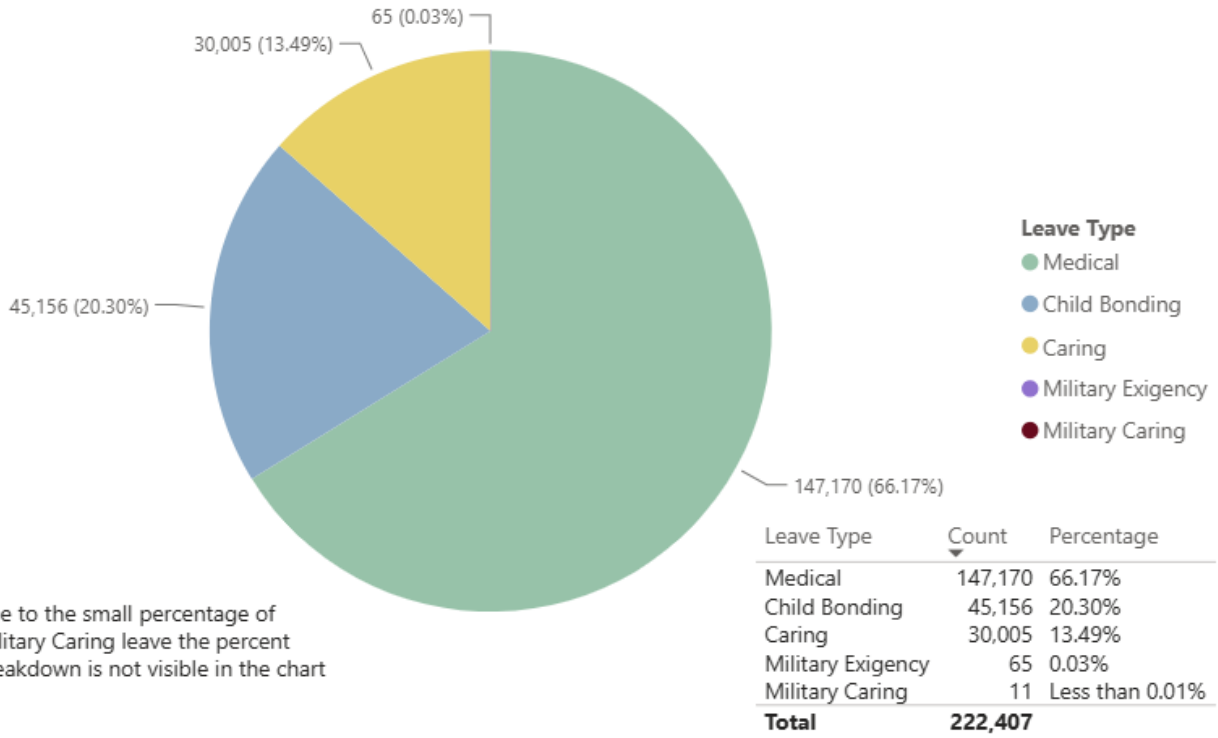
Information on Approved Applications in FY26:

Approved application data is based on application approvals that occurred between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026 (FY26).

In FY26:

- Total applications approved: **222,407**
    - Applications were approved for **142,459** unique individuals. (This number is lower than total approved applications because applicants can file for multiple leaves within a benefit year.)
- Applications approved for medical leave: **147,170** (66.17% of total approved applications)
    - Medical leave for one's own serious health condition, other than medical leave related to childbirth or pregnancy, accounted for 54.56% of approved applications **(121,354** approved applications).
    - Medical leave associated with recovery from childbirth or pregnancy accounted for 11.61% of approved applications (**25,816** approved applications).
- Applications approved for family leave to bond with a child following birth, adoption, or foster care placement: **45,156** (20.30% of total approved applications)
- Applications approved for family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition: **30,005** (13.49% of total approved applications)
- Applications approved for military exigency leave: **65** (.03% of total approved applications)
- Applications approved for family leave to care for a covered military service member: **11** (less than **.**01% of total approved applications)

Approved Applications by Leave Type



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

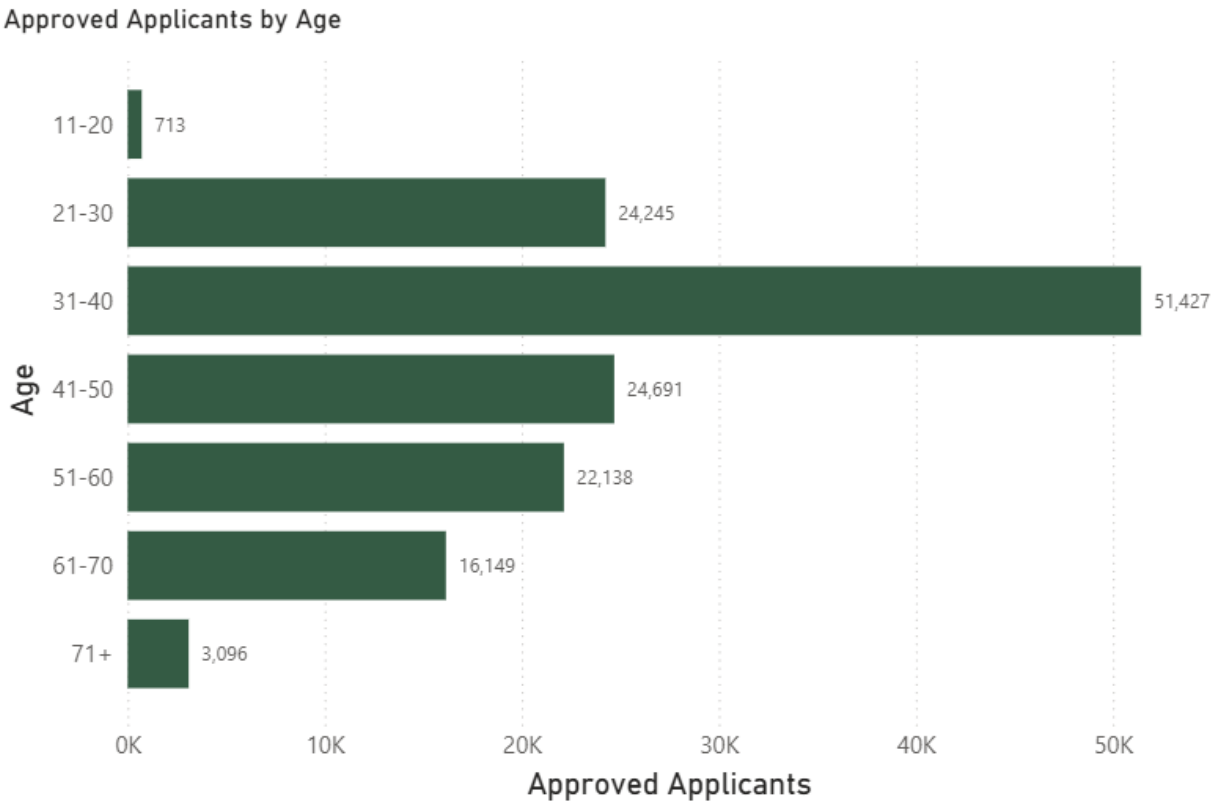
Leave Type	Count	Percentage
Medical	147,170	66.17%
Child Bonding	45,156	20.30%
Caring	30,005	13.49%
Military Exigency	65	0.03%
Military Caring	11	Less than 0.01%
Total	**222,407**	

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Medical	147,170	66.17%
Child Bonding	45,156	20.30%
Caring	30,005	13.49%
Military Exigency	65	.03%
Military Caring	11	Less than .01%
Total	**222,407**	

Demographics for Approved Covered Individuals

Age

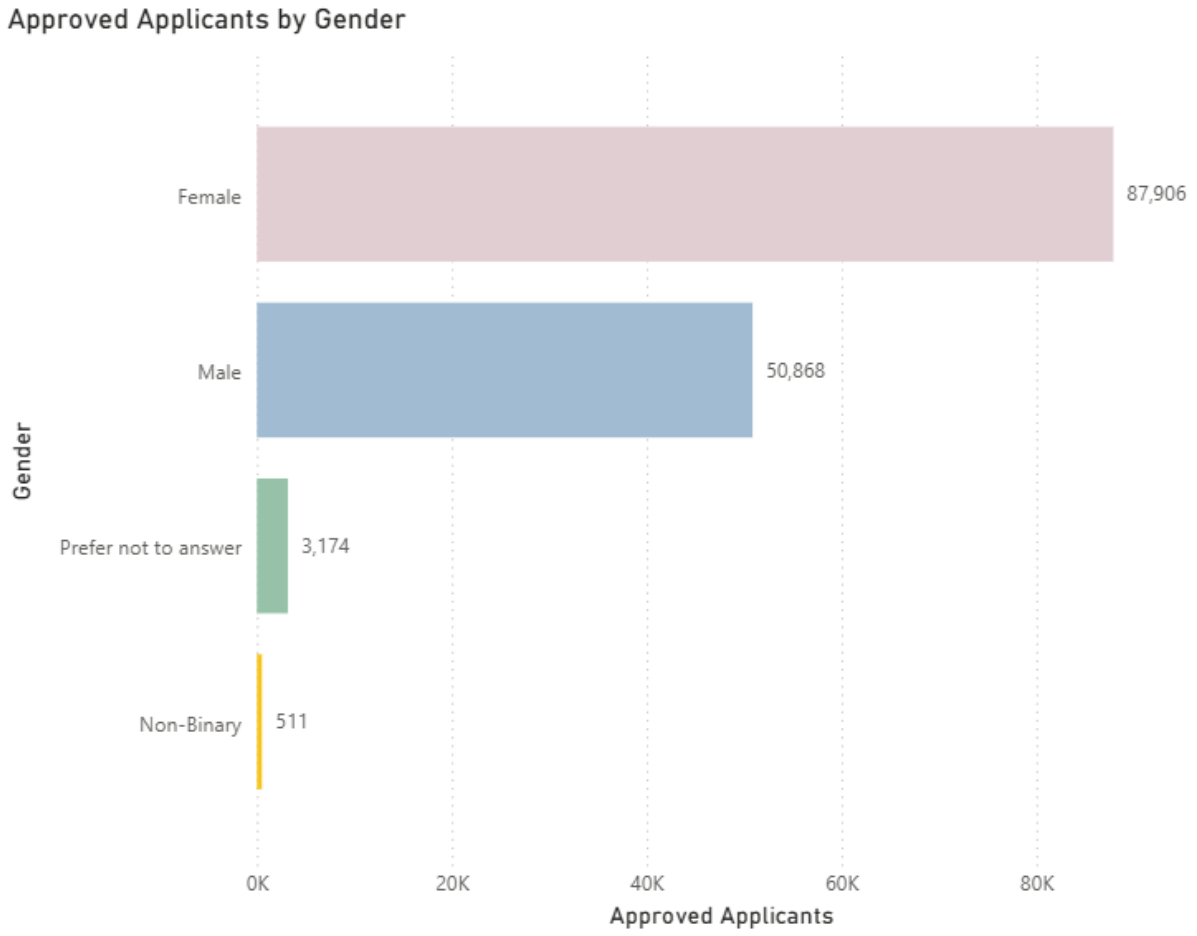
Covered individuals are required to disclose demographic information for age to DFML. In FY26 the primary age group for covered individuals was the 31-40 range, which accounted for 36.10% of the total approved covered individuals.



Age	Approved Applicants Count
11 to 20	713
21 to 30	24,245
31 to 40	51,427
41 to 50	24,691
51 to 60	22,138
61 to 70	16,149
71+	3,096

Gender

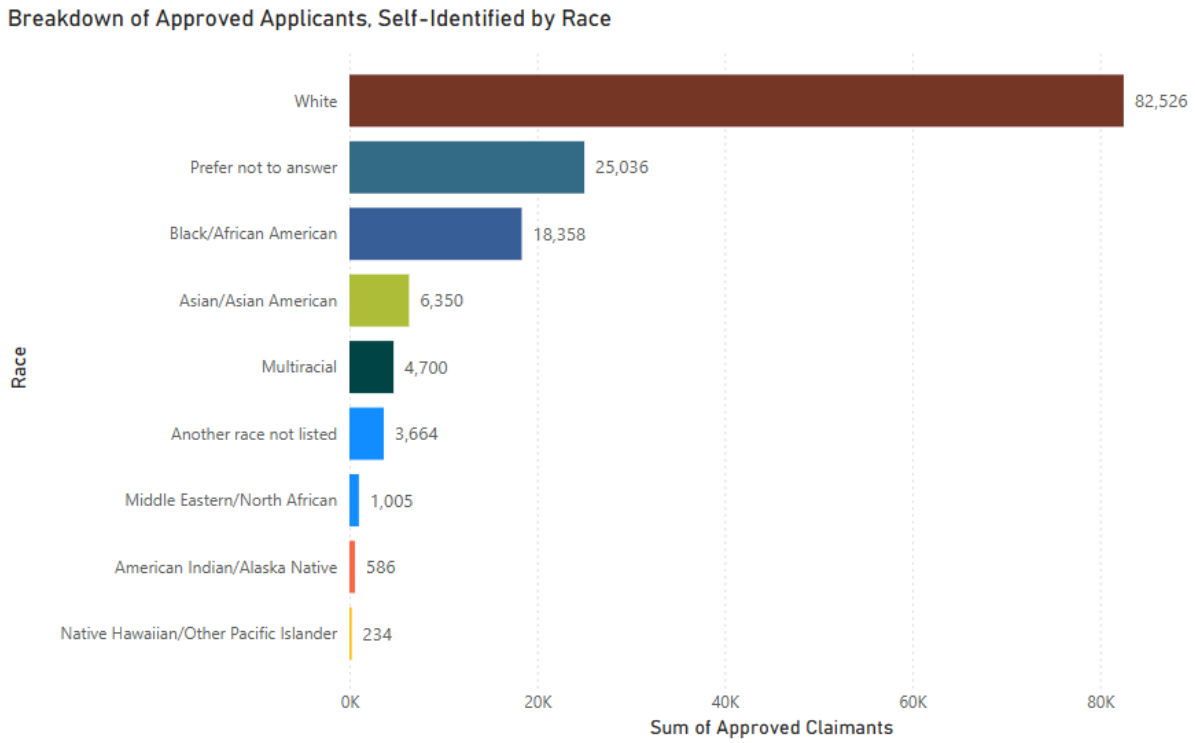
Covered individuals are not required to disclose demographic information for gender to DFML. In FY26, 61.71% (87,906) of covered individuals identified as female, 35.71% (50,868) of covered individuals identified as male, 2.23% (3,174) of covered individuals preferred not to answer, and 0.35% (511) identified as non-binary.



Gender	Approved Applicants Count
Female	87,906
Male	50,868
Prefer not to answer	3,174
Non-Binary	511

Race

Covered individuals are not required to disclose demographic information for race to DFML. In total, 17.57% (25,036) of covered individuals preferred not to answer. After excluding covered individuals that preferred not to answer, 57.93% (82,526) of covered individuals selected White as their race; 12.89% (18,358) of covered individuals selected Black/African as their race; 4.46% (6,350) of covered individuals selected Asian/Asian American as their race; 2.57% (3,664) of covered individuals selected "Another Race not Listed" as their race; 3.30% (4,700) of covered individuals selected Multiracial as their race; and less than 1% (820) of covered individuals selected American Indian/Alaska Native, Middle Eastern/North African or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander as their race.



Race	Approved Applicants count
White	82,526
Prefer not to answer	25,036
Black/African American	18,358
Asian/Asian American	6,350
Multiracial	4,700
Another race not listed	3,664
Middle Eastern/North African	1,005

American Indian/Alaska Native	586
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	234

Language

Since 2023, when the multilingual application options launched, 12,160 unique individuals, or **7.09%** of applicants, have applied and received notices in Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Chinese, French, or Vietnamese.

Occupation

Beginning July 1, 2025, DFML changed the data source used to collect occupation information and transitioned to collecting the data on its own. As a result of the transition to this new source, occupation data for claimants who filed by phone after July 1, 2025 was temporarily unavailable and are therefore excluded from the occupation counts below. This temporary issue has since been resolved and the department anticipates phone intakes to be included in reporting for future years.

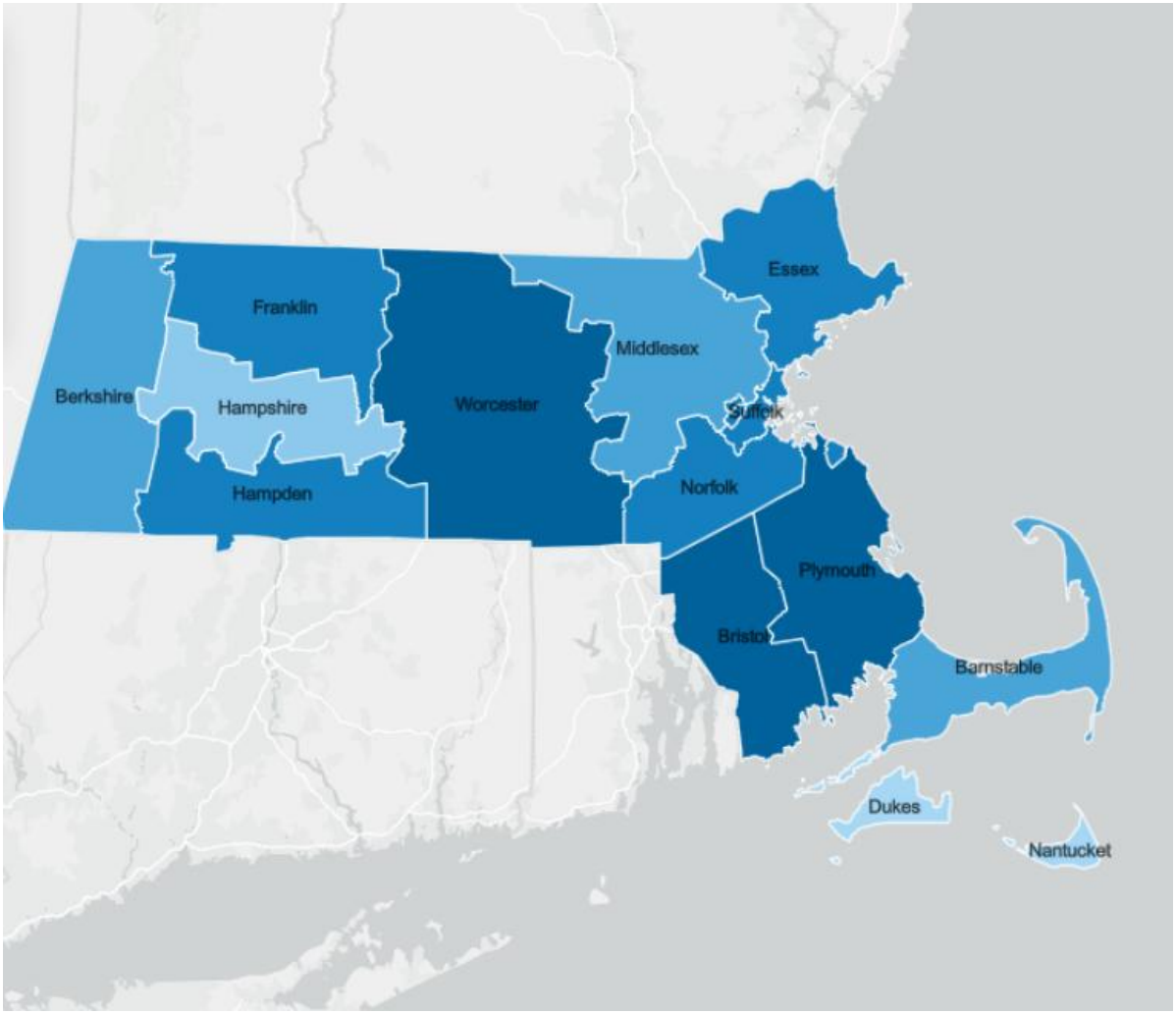
Covered individuals who were approved for paid leave worked in a wide variety of industries. The top industries are listed below.

Occupation	Approved Applicants
Health Care and Social Assistance	42,801
Other Services (except Public Administration)	23,645
Professional, scientific, and technical services	10,805
Transportation and Warehousing	10,008
Accommodation and Food Services	9,152
Manufacturing	7,733
Construction	6,888
Educational Services	6,028
Retail Trade	5,986
Finance and Insurance	4,383
Administrative and Support and Waste Management Remediation Services	3,199
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,715
Information	2,167

Occupation	Approved Applicants
Utilities	1,786
Public Administration	1,333
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,143
Wholesale Trade	591
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	507
Real Estate Rental and Leasing	413
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	97
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	56
Mining	4

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 14,967 approved applications that were submitted by an applicant with an out-of-state mailing address.



County	Approved Applications per 1,000 Residents
Barnstable County	24.39
Berkshire County	23.15
Bristol County	25.77
Dukes County	10.24
Essex County	25.61
Franklin County	36.43
Hampden County	26.39

County	Approved Applications per 1,000 Residents
Hampshire County	25.60
Middlesex County	19.38
Nantucket County	11.28
Norfolk County	31.14
Plymouth County	27.19
Suffolk County	30.26
Worcester County	27.65

Information on Denied Applications in FY26:

Total applications denied: **35,231**

Percentage of all filed applications that were denied: **13.67%**

Reasons for Denied Applications

The following categories accounted for the denials issued by DFML in FY26:

Denial category	Detailed denial reason	Denied applicants count
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	**10,494** applications
Eligibility	The applicant's employer could not be located using tax filing data	**1,437** applications
Eligibility	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	**1,064** applications
Eligibility	The employee had wages too low to qualify for PFML	**4,794** applications
Eligibility	The person was ineligible due to being unemployed for more than 26 weeks at the time they applied	**148** applications
Documentation	The applicant did not complete the application or did not submit the required documents	**6,725** applications
Documentation	The documents submitted by the applicant did not comply with DFML requirements	**6,161** applications

Denial category	Detailed denial reason	Denied applicants count
Information from Employers	Employer provided disqualifying information about the applicant to DFML (e.g., that applicant had taken prior leave during the benefit year)	**673** applications
Information from Employers	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	**392** applications
Family leave	The leave did not fall within one year of the child's birth or placement	**76** applications
Family leave	The person applying did not establish that they were caring for a covered family member	**25** applications
Other	The application was submitted more than 90 days after the leave began	**351** applications
Other	The requested leave exceeded the amount allowed for family leave	**1,107** applications
Other	The requested leave exceeded the amount allowed for medical leave	**1,434** applications
Other	The requested leave exceeded the total allowed for both family and medical leave	**84** applications
Other	The application contained false statements	**266** applications

Abandoned Applications

From time to time, an applicant may abandon their application. In FY26, 6,725 applications were reported as denied because 'the applicant did not complete the application or did not submit the required documents.' Among these applications, 5,141 were denied because an individual initiated their application on the website but did not complete and submit their application. The remaining 1,584 applications were denied because the applicant submitted their application but did not submit their required certification documents within 90 days.

Average Weekly Benefit

During FY26, the average weekly benefit was: **$880.09**

- **$934.19** for family leave
- **$854.43** for medical leave

Total Benefits Distributed Year Over Year

Fiscal Year	Total of family and medical leave benefits paid out by DFML
FY26 (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026)	**$1,409,139,430.93**
FY25 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025)	**$1,241,998,293.24**
FY24 (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)	**$1,049,721,590.56**
FY23 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023)	**$832,548,618.16**
FY22 (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)	**$602,767,692.31**
FY21 (January 1, 2021-June 30, 2021)	**$174,729,366.12**

Previous Fiscal Year Comparison

- **Increase in Approved Applications:** 222,407 applications were approved in FY26. That represents a **9.64%** increase in **approved applications** over FY25, when the department approved **202,846** applications.
    - The increase in approved applications correlates with a **8.10%** increase in total applications (approved and denied applications).
    - The approval percentage for applications in FY26 increased by **1.21%** to **86.15%.**
    - The number of denied applications in FY26 decreased by **0.58%** to 35,754
- **Increase in Approved Applicants:** The number of unique covered individuals accessing PFML benefits increased by **9.32%.**
- **Approved Medical Leave Combined with Bonding Leave**: In FY26, **58.04%** of covered individuals with an approved medical leave application to recover from childbirth or due to pregnancy also had an approved child bonding family leave application, compared to 69.09% in FY25.
- **Comparison in Application Processing Time**: The median time for an **initial determination** was increased by **2 calendar days**.
- **Comparison in Application Processing Time**: The median time for a **final determination** was increased by **8 calendar days**.

Metric	FY25	FY26	Percent Change
Approved Applications	202,846	222,407	9.64% Increase
Average Leave Duration	8.45 weeks	11.63 weeks	37.63% Increase

Metric	FY25	FY26	Percent Change
Covered Individuals Who Took Leave	130,309	142,459	9.32% Increase
Denial Rate	15.06%	13.67%	9.23% Decrease
Denied Applications	35,964	35,231	2.04% Decrease
Individual Average Weekly Wage - Average	$1,583.00	$1,616.62	2.12% Increase
Individual Average Weekly Wage - Median	$1,251.00	$1,273.00	1.76% Increase
Total Benefits Paid Out	$1,241,998,293.24	$1,409,139,430.93	13.46% Increase

Application Processing Times

To apply for paid leave benefits, a covered individual must submit an application with 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 **2.85 calendar days**.
- The median initial determination (from application submission to initial decision) was **11 calendar days**. The median final determination (from application submission to final decision, including the appeal process) was **19 calendar days**.

Leave Duration

The average duration of a leave completed in FY26 was **11.63 weeks**.[2]

- For medical leave, the average duration of a leave completed in FY26 was **12.52 weeks.**
- For family leave, the average duration of a leave completed in FY26 was **9.59 weeks.**

Open Cases

At the end of FY26, there were **48,215** open leaves, where covered individuals were in the midst of taking their leave. There were **162,624** 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 FY26 DFML paid out a total of **$930,324.34** in family and medical leave reimbursements across **32** employers.

- **$475,537.96** for family leaves
- **$454,786.38** for medical leaves

[2] Note that in fiscal years FY23 and prior, leave duration was calculated based on a 5-day work week and excluded intermittent leave schedules. Beginning in FY24, leave duration was calculated based on actual work weeks reported by applicants.

As of June 30, 2026, total application data from the beginning of the PFML program consists of:

- **933,623** approved applications
- **176,065** denied applications

As of June 30, 2026, the total of benefit payments disbursed from the beginning of the PFML program is **$5,310,905,943.60.**