



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

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FY2021 Annual Report for the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave

Department of Paid 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 law requires the Department of Family and Medical Leave (DFML) to issue annual reports containing information on applications for PFML benefits made to DFML (M.G.L. c. 175M s. 7(e)).

Because M.G.L. c. 175M established January 1, 2021 as the date on which payments were to commence, this report provides a summary of data on applications for paid leave benefits from January 1 to June 30, 2021, including cases subsequently approved from the appeals process. The data used in this report is derived from various sources including, DFML's claims processing system, the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, and the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles. The report provides information on benefits, applications, and certain characteristics of applicants during Fiscal Year 2021 (FY 2021).

Claims information

- In the first six months of the program (FY 2021), DFML approved 43,440 applications.
- Medical leave accounted for 58.13% of applications (25,252 applications).
- Family leave to bond with a child following birth, adoption or foster care placement accounted for 41.81% of applications (18,165 applications). There were no applications for leave to care for a family member in FY 2021, as that leave type was, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 175M, not available until July 1, 2021.
- There were 18 applications for military exigency leave (.03% of applications).
- There were 6 applications for leave to care for a service member (.01% of applications).

Approved applications

In FY 2021, DFML approved 43,440 applications. 3,207 of the applications that were initially denied were subsequently approved during the appeals process.

Denied applications

In FY 2021, 9,989 applications were denied, which was 22.99% of all applications.

Reasons for denials

The following categories accounted for the denials issued by DFML:

Eligibility	The person's employer was either covered by an approved exempt plan or was exempt from the requirements of the PFML statute entirely	2113 applications
	The applicant 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	1784 applications
	The applicant had wages too low to qualify for PFML	580 applications
	The person was ineligible due to being unemployed for more than 26 weeks at the time they applied	28 applications
Documentation	The documents submitted by the applicant were insufficient or did not comply with DFML requirements	4,785 applications
Information from employers	Employer provided disqualifying information about the applicant to the Department that disqualified the person who applied (e.g., prior leave during the benefit year)	163 applications
	Employer was not notified by the employee in accordance with the timeliness requirements established under M.G.L. c. 175M of their need for leave	131 applications
Family leave	The leave did not fall within one year of the child's birth or placement	223 applications
	The person applying did not establish that they were caring for a covered family member	8 applications
	The person applying or the family member they were caring for died	7 applications
Other	The application was submitted more than 90 days after leave began	442 applications

	The leave exceeded the amount allowed for family leave	60 applications
	The leave exceeded the amount allowed for medical leave	52 applications
	The leave exceeded the total allowed for both family and medical leave	50 applications
	The person applying made false statements in their applications	21 applications

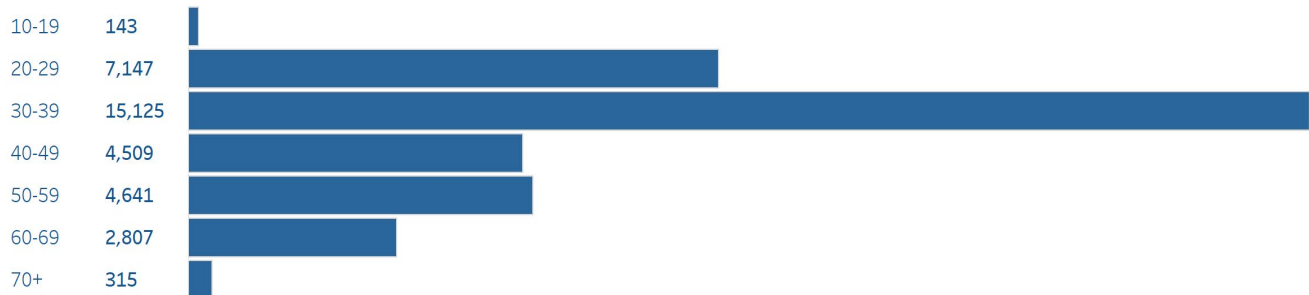
Demographics

Applicants for paid leave in FY 2021 were not asked about gender or occupation. The data for those areas is incomplete and comes from comparing paid leave benefits applications with data available from the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance and the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles. In FY 2022, the Department is already asking for gender information directly from applicants and will be asking about occupation later in the year.

Age

Applicants for paid leave benefits ranged in age from teenagers to people 70 and older. The largest share of applicants were individuals in their 30s, with almost twice as many as in any other decade of life.

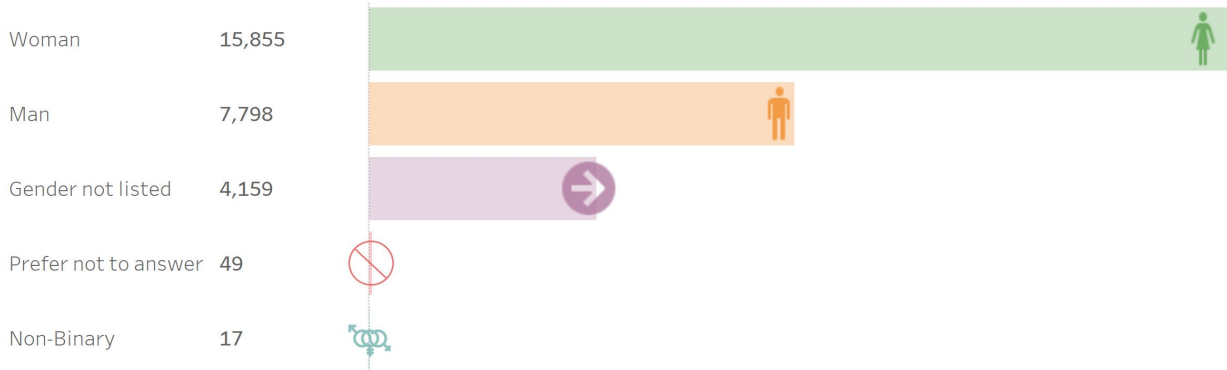
Age



Gender

More than twice as many women applied for paid leave benefits as men.

Gender



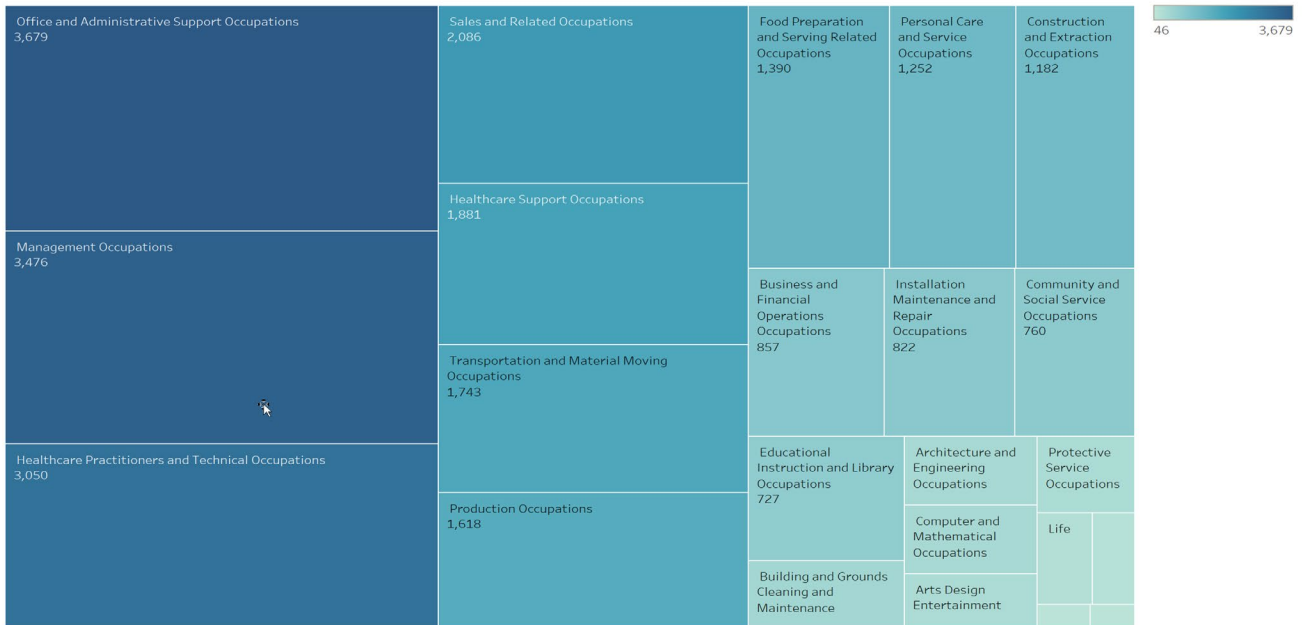
Weekly wages

The average weekly wage for DFML applicants was \$1434.52.

Occupation

Applicants for paid leave came from a wide variety of industries. The top three sectors who received paid leave benefits were office employees and administrative support, management, and healthcare practitioners.

Occupation



Occupation (crosstab)

Architecture and Engineering Occupations	345
Arts Design Entertainment Sports and Media Oc..	287
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance..	417
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	857
Community and Social Service Occupations	760
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	342
Construction and Extraction Occupations	1,182
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	727
Farming Fishing and Forestry Occupations	54
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupati..	1,390
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupati..	3,050
Healthcare Support Occupations	1,881
Installation Maintenance and Repair Occupations	822
Legal Occupations	148
Life Physical and Social Science Occupations	191
Management Occupations	3,476
Military Specific Occupations	46
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	3,679
Personal Care and Service Occupations	1,252
Production Occupations	1,618
Protective Service Occupations	282
Sales and Related Occupations	2,086
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	1,743

Types of leave

- 17,916 (45.3%) covered individuals took paid leave for their own serious health conditions.
- 17,346 (43.9%) covered individuals took paid leave to bond with a child.
- 4,236 (10.7%) covered individuals took paid leave related to pregnancy.
- 17 (<.1%) covered individuals took paid leave to manage family affairs while a family member was deployed in military service.
- 6 (<.1%) covered individuals took paid leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition related to their time serving in the military.

Please note that this calculation is made based on the total unique absence cases (n=39,521) rather than unique claim requests (43,440). This means that extensions to claims are only counted once.

Average weekly benefit

During the first six months of the program, the average weekly benefit was:

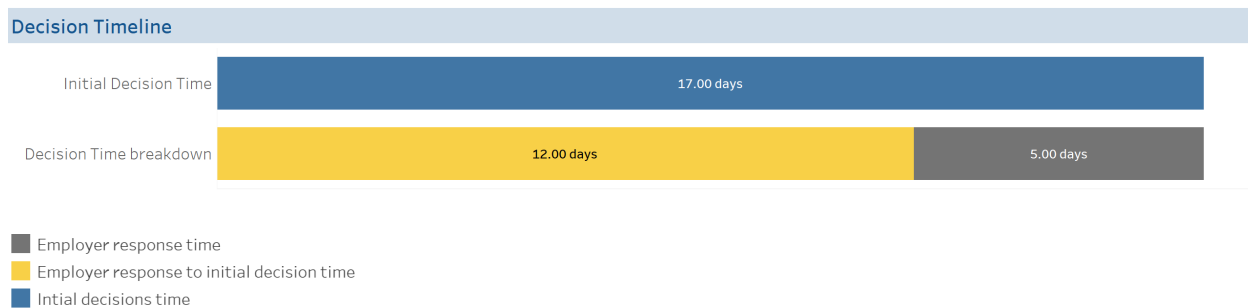
- \$705.98 for family leave

- \$699.00 for medical leave

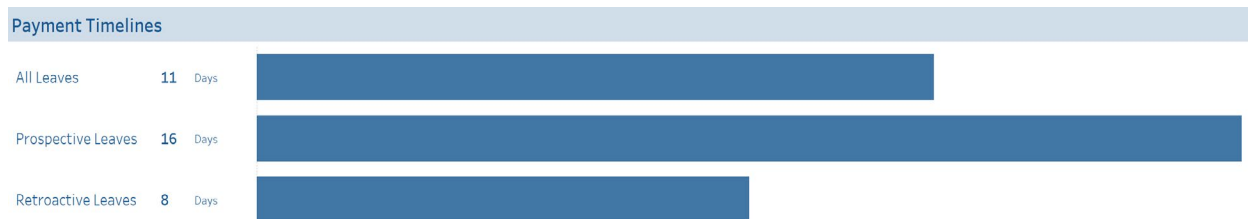
Processing times

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

In FY21, the majority of applications were submitted by the applicant within a single day (median value = 0 days). The median amount of time for an employer to respond to a request from DFML was 5 days. The median amount of time between when an employer responded and a decision was reached by DFML was 12 days. Combined, the median amount of time from the point at which an individual submitted an application for benefits until they received a decision from the Department was 17 days.



Payment timelines differ by when the application for benefits was submitted in relation to the start of an individual’s leave. For individuals that applied prior to the start of their leave (and were thus subject to a one-week waiting period), the median amount of time between approval and first payment was 16 calendar days. For individuals that applied after the start of their leave, the median amount of time between approval and first payment was 8 days. For all leaves, the median amount of time between approval and first payment was 11 days.



Leave durations

Assuming a five-day work week, the average duration of a leave completed in FY 2021 was 53 days from start to finish, or 10.7 weeks.

For medical leave, the average duration of a leave completed in FY 2021 (assuming a five-day work week), was 57 days or 11.44 weeks.

For family leave, the average duration of a leave completed in FY 2021 (assuming a five-day work week) was 51.5 days or 10.3 weeks.

Open cases

At the end of FY 2021, there were 17,344 open cases, where employees were in the midst of taking their leave. There were 28,057 closed cases, where the leave had been completed.

Total benefits distributed

In FY 2021 (January 1 to June 30, 2021), DFML paid out a total of \$167,915,781.01 in family and medical leave benefits.

- Medical leave benefits paid out amounted to \$92,047,826.80
- Family leave benefits paid out amounted to \$75,867,954.21