

Supporting Connecticut workers, families, and businesses.



Connecticut
Paid Leave

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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“CT Paid Leave is something I, as a small business owner, only ever hoped to be able to give to my employees.”

—Corey Tolkin, Owner of Unbakeables



LETTER FROM CEO & BOARD CHAIR



Erin Choquette
Chief Executive Officer,
CT Paid Leave Authority



Fran Pastore
Chairperson, CT Paid Leave
Board of Directors

CT Paid Leave: From start-up to steady state



Since paid family and medical leave benefits began in January 2022, people across Connecticut are no longer forced to choose between making ends meet and caring for their own health, caring for a loved one, or having the ability to expand their family. Within the first 17 months of paying claims, from January 2022, through May 2023, the Connecticut Paid Leave Authority has provided \$375 million in CT Paid Leave benefits to over 65,935 workers in Connecticut.

CT Paid Leave acts as a lifeline for families by providing financial relief during life’s most critical moments. Paid leave supports parents by making the option of taking time to bond with a new child an economic possibility. It allows workers to focus on healing from their own serious illness or injury or serving as a caregiver for a family member in their time of need. For Paula, CT Paid Leave provided steady income after a cancer diagnosis and during rounds of chemotherapy so she could focus on her recovery.

Employers benefit from CT Paid Leave, too. Studies show that the existence of paid leave programs improves recruitment, retention, and productivity. Because the CT Paid Leave program is employee-funded, small businesses can reap these advantages as well. “CT Paid Leave is something I, as a small business owner, only ever hoped to be able to give to my employees,” says Corey Tolkin, owner of Unbakeables, a small business in Norwalk. As of the writing of this report, nearly 145,000 employers are registered with CT Paid Leave.

Since our last report, we’ve experienced a year of change and growth. In January 2023, we welcomed new Chief Executive Officer, Erin O’Brien Choquette, who previously served as the Authority’s General Counsel and Chief Operating Officer. Now well into the third year of collecting employee payroll contributions and second year of providing paid leave benefits to workers, quarterly actuarial reports and metrics show the program is fiscally sound.

Over the past several months, we’ve listened to feedback from claimants and key stakeholders across the state and taken several steps to improve the program. In response to this feedback, we updated the online claims portal and created a document dashboard to provide applicants an easier way to view their claims and submit the necessary documentation for their claims to be processed. We also combined pregnancy and bonding leave claims into one when the birthing parent plans to take bonding leave immediately after their pregnancy ends, enabling new parents to

spend the time they need after a child is born without worrying about submitting a separate claim. We continue to explore ways to ensure that all workers understand the program and can access the benefits they need.

Claims processing times have continually improved, and claims are currently being decided an average of 4.1 days after all necessary documentation has been submitted. Our commitment to customer service is demonstrated by our increased responsiveness to claimants’ inquiries. For calendar year 2023 to date:

- ➔ **87% of calls are answered** in 30 seconds or less
- ➔ **92% of issues are resolved** within a single phone call
- ➔ **83% of phone calls requiring a call back are returned** within 1 day and 99% are returned within 3 days
- ➔ **93% of portal messages are returned** within 3 days and 100% are returned within 5 days

Finally, because every employee counts, it is critical to ensure that all workers know about the program and all covered employers understand and fulfill their obligation to deduct and remit their employees’ contributions. Accordingly, this year, we engaged in a multi-phase effort to recover contributions from all covered Connecticut employers to ensure compliance with the law and safeguard the program’s long-term solvency.

It has been a great honor to implement one of the most comprehensive paid family and medical leave programs in the nation. We’ve been fortunate to be invited to participate in multiple events on the national level to share the best practices that have helped us grow and improve. This annual report reflects the ongoing work of so many individuals who have ushered CT Paid Leave from start-up to steady state, including the CT Paid Leave Authority staff, the Board of Directors, our partner state agencies, and our external vendors. We are proud of what we have accomplished to date and pledge to continue our important work to deliver this indispensable benefit to the workforce of Connecticut.

Fran Pastore

Fran Pastore,
Chairperson,
CT Paid Leave
Board of Directors

Erin Choquette

Erin Choquette,
Chief Executive Officer,
CT Paid Leave
Authority

Our Mission

The CT Paid Leave Authority provides financial relief to Connecticut families and allows individuals to care for a loved one, or themselves, without worrying about lost income.

Additionally, we provide tools and education for employers, employees and other constituents to help them understand their roles and navigate the CT Paid Leave process.

We aim to provide an easy process that is accessible to all Connecticut workers. We recognize that our state's paid family and medical leave program strengthens not only workers, but also the diverse business community that makes Connecticut a unique and desirable place to live, work, and raise a family. We have made tremendous strides in this past year, and we are dedicated to continuous improvement in the years to come to ensure that CT Paid Leave is available when needed for all of life's important health events, both expected and unexpected.



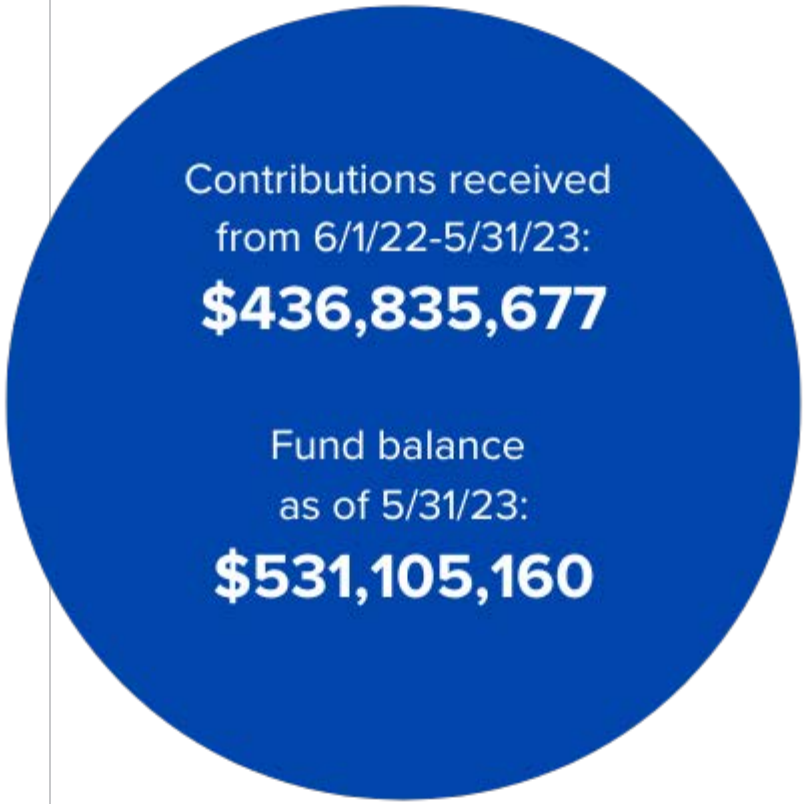
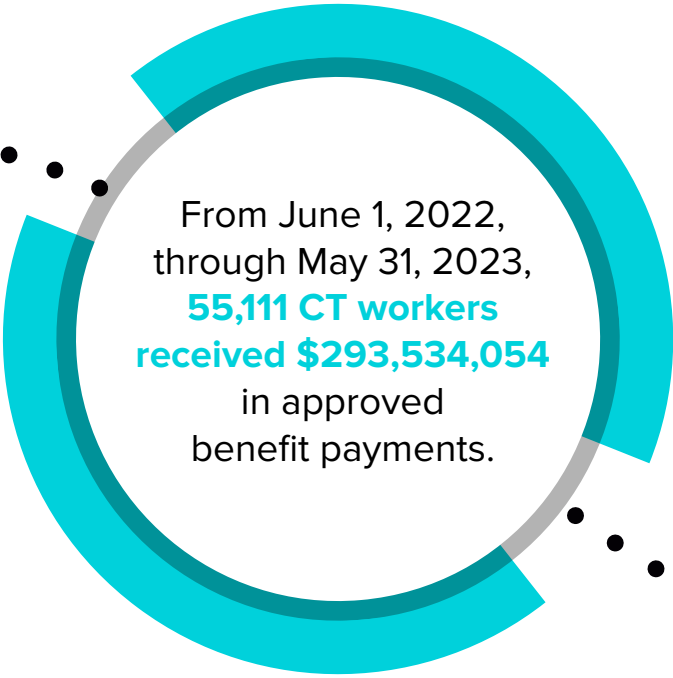
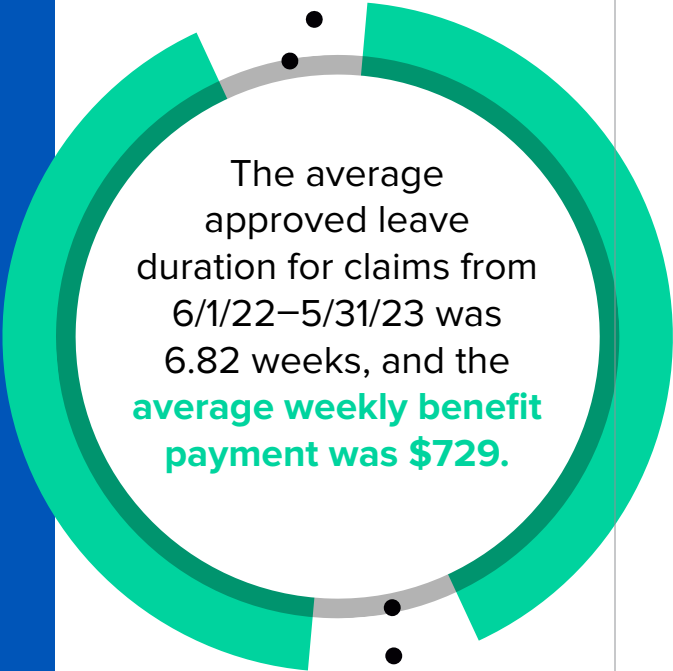
This report summarizes the activity of the Authority for the period of June 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023, and includes the following data as specified by section 31-49t of the Connecticut General Statutes:

- ➔ Projected and actual participation in the program
- ➔ Balance of the trust
- ➔ Reasons claimants are receiving family and medical leave compensation
- ➔ Success of outreach and education efforts
- ➔ Demographic information of claimants, including gender, age, town, and income level
- ➔ Total number of claims approved and denied

For organization information, the Authority's Consolidated Policies, and background regarding the establishment of the CT Paid Leave Authority, see Appendix A.

Highlights

- ➔ The CT Paid Leave program not only launched benefits administration on time and under budget in 2022, but recent metrics also show the fund continues to be fiscally sound.
- ➔ Claim applications have come from all 169 cities and towns in Connecticut, demonstrating the need for paid leave regardless of claimants' geographical locations.
- ➔ Of the 90,393 applications received from June 1, 2022, to May 31, 2023, 82,008 applications received a decision:
 - 57,192 were approved (69.74%)
 - 24,469 were denied (29.84%)
 - 5,253 were pending as of the close of the reporting period
 - 3,479 were canceled/withdrawn
- ➔ Most approved applications were for leave for an employee's own illness or injury (25,580, 44.73%), followed by bonding with a child following birth (15,527, 27.15%), pregnancy/childbirth leave (10,595, 18.53%), and care of a family member (5,309 9.28%).
- ➔ The Authority also approved applications for other qualifying leave reasons: bonding with a child following adoption or foster care placement (108, 0.19%), family violence leave (34, 0.06%), organ or bone marrow donation (26, 0.05%), and military family leave (13, 0.02%).
- ➔ Of all applications submitted, 64% of claimants identified as female and 34% identified as male. Most of the remainder chose not to specify a gender, and 0.25% of claimants identified as non-binary.



“The process is hassle free and the approval process is quick, and payment (is) made on time.”



KEY INITIATIVES

June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023 marked a year of improvement for CT Paid Leave as we learned from the experiences of employees, employers, and other stakeholders after the program’s initial launch of contribution collections in January 2021, and benefits became available in January 2022.



Claim Process Enhancements



Fund Recovery



Website Redesign & Replatform



Private Plan Audits



Claim Process Enhancements

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Over this past year, the Authority has worked tirelessly to implement enhancements to make the claims process easier and more streamlined for claimants. Together with our claim administrator, Aflac, we have implemented numerous changes to existing processes and developed new processes that are already having a marked impact on the claims process for Connecticut workers.

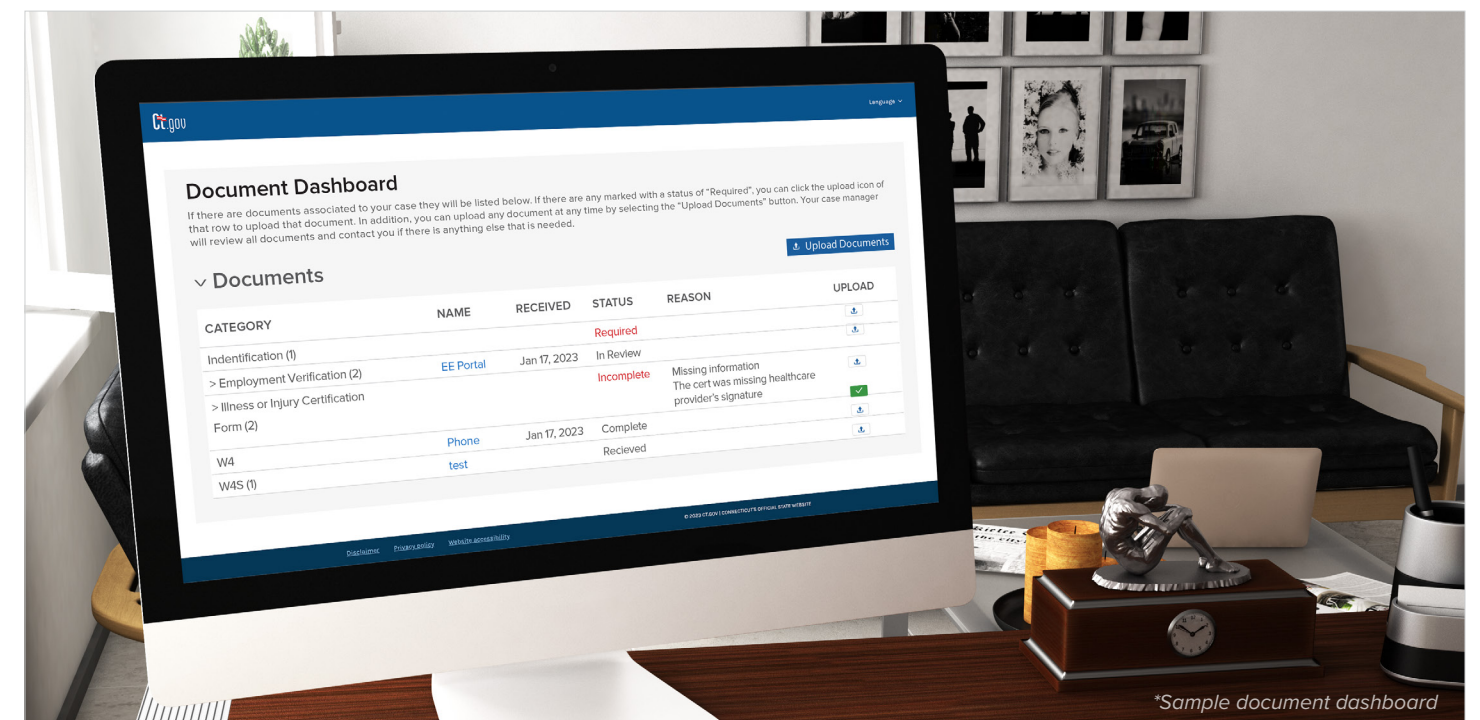
Document Dashboard

The most significant improvement is the development and launch of the document dashboard on the online claim portal. The number one reason for claim denials is incomplete or insufficient documentation to support the claim. As we explored the reason for this, we learned that a significant pain point for claimants was confusion about the document requirements, exacerbated by the lack of visibility into the document review process. From June 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023.

The document dashboard allows a claimant to see, in real time, a list of the documents that they need to submit for their claim to be considered complete and ready for a decision, which reinforces the information provided in the Notice of Application received by each claimant after they initiate their claim. More significantly, when a claimant logs into their online

portal, they can see in the dashboard exactly what has been submitted (including documents that may have been submitted by their employer or healthcare provider) and where that document is in the overall process—if it has been reviewed, if there are any deficiencies that the claimant needs to fix for it to be considered a complete document, or if it is complete.

Sixty-two percent of all applications were filed through the online portal. Even if an applicant initiates a claim by phone, they will have access to the document dashboard if they set up an online portal account. The document dashboard was introduced in February 2023, and we have already seen substantial improvements in claimants submitting complete paperwork by the required due dates.



*Sample document dashboard

In March 2023, the Authority began consolidating claims if the birthing parent intended to take bonding leave immediately after the childbirth recovery period to streamline the application process.



Streamlining of Pregnancy/Childbirth and Bonding Claims

Another improvement is the streamlining of pregnancy/childbirth leave and bonding leave claims. When benefit administration began in January 2022, the Authority treated pregnancy/childbirth cases and bonding cases as two separate leaves. The pregnancy/childbirth portion of the leave was typically 6 to 8 weeks after delivery, or the time that the medical professional indicated was necessary for the birthing parent to be medically cleared to return to work. In theory, the birthing parent then has the option to return to work and take bonding leave later in the 12-month period following the child’s birth. However, in practice, we realized that most birthing parents opted to take bonding leave immediately after that recovery time. Requiring a claimant to file two separate claims, with separate and often duplicative documentation, when the individual was taking one continuous leave added complexity, delay, and unnecessary confusion to the claim experience.

To address these problems, in March 2023, the Authority changed our process by asking the birthing parent if they intended to take bonding leave immediately after the childbirth recovery period. If the answer is yes, a single claim is created to address both leave reasons, simplifying the process for the claimants. As a result, the number of bonding cases appears to have declined, but this is simply the result of them being combined with pregnancy/childbirth cases. We have already heard from claimants that they appreciate this new approach. Customer feedback has been very positive on the new process, with claimants reporting back comments such as “Very easy process and very helpful during pregnancy.” The change has resulted in shorter processing and payment timelines for claimants.

Implementation of Text Messaging Reminders

Another process improvement is the implementation of text message reminders for claimants. If the claimant has opted in to receiving text message communication (which more than 70% of claimants do), we can now remind them to provide their documentation 10 days prior and five days prior to the due date. These reminders are especially helpful as claimants are navigating stressful life events when they apply for CT Paid Leave.

Improved Claimant Letters

The Authority has enhanced claimant letters (both email and mailed) to provide greater detail about the documentation requirements and deadlines in the initial Notice of Application letter. The Notice of Incomplete or Insufficient Information letters have also been revised to provide claimants with clearer information about the deficiencies a claimant may have in their documentation and better instructions about how to resolve these issues.

As a result of these system and process enhancements, the program has experienced a sustained decrease in customer call volume over the past several months, averaging a 13% reduction, while total claims per day remained consistent. This demonstrates that claimants are finding the process easier to navigate and decisions are being made in a more timely manner.



Fund Recovery

Although the CT Paid Leave program is designed to be entirely employee-funded, employers have a critical role in the process: they or their payroll processors must deduct the 0.5% contributions from their employees’ wages and remit those funds to the Authority on a quarterly basis. Throughout the reporting period, the Authority engaged in a multi-disciplinary, multi-phase project to better identify and recover past-due contributions from employers. This project has required the dedication of a significant portion of our IT resources to procure and implement a software solution that will interface with our existing contribution platform.

This solution will track all contributions, identify missed or insufficient contributions, issue notices of contributions that are past due, assess penalties and interest, and allocate payments to penalty, interest, and contributions. It will also enable the Authority to identify and track accounts that must be sent to a third-party fund recovery vendor. While the work to set up this system has been extensive, automating these processes will enhance efficiencies and increase employer compliance.

In addition to the substantial investment of our IT staff’s time and resources, this project also involved extensive efforts to identify non-compliant employers and notify them that penalties and interest would begin to be imposed in the Spring of 2023. These efforts included mailing letters to over 7,000

employers who were enrolled in CT Paid Leave but had not remitted contributions for one or more quarters since January 1, 2021. Additional outreach included email messaging, publishing notices in newsletters to employers and payroll processors, as well as various trade organization publications, and a public media campaign. As a result of these efforts, 793 registered but non-compliant employers remitted past-due contributions of \$290,000 and 195 employers reported that the missed quarters were the result of paying \$0 wages for such quarters. Additionally, these efforts enabled the Authority to correct over 1,000 employer registration records in our contribution platform.

Year/Quarter	Contributions	Count of Payments
2021	\$96,050.08	476
1	\$21,900.61	104
2	\$22,977.22	115
3	\$23,476.63	123
4	\$27,695.61	134
2022	\$194,736.10	1,009
1	\$35,358.13	172
2	\$35,028.52	188
3	\$47,706.88	286
4	\$76,642.57	363
Grand Total	\$290,786.18	1,485



The media campaign was also intended to encourage employers who had never registered with the Authority to become compliant. Since January 1, 2023, 8,503 new accounts have been registered with the Authority, with 4,346 employers remitting contributions of \$1.5 million and 820 employers reporting \$0 in quarterly returns.

Year/Quarter	Contributions	Count of Payments
2021	\$209,050.87	507
1	\$44,997.41	137
2	\$50,988.58	146
3	\$54,033.42	148
4	\$59,031.46	166
2022	\$461,679.66	1,657
1	\$78,728.53	226
2	\$87,887.31	254
3	\$91,448.07	269
4	\$203,615.75	908
2023	\$841,010.38	4,186
1	\$839,397.70	4,170
2	\$1,612.68	16
Grand Total	\$1,511,740.91	6,440

In response to these efforts, \$1.8 million dollars were recovered in past-due contributions. Past due contributions will be issued in July 2023.

The media campaign was also intended to encourage employers who had never registered with the Authority to become compliant.



Website Redesign and Replatform 3

When the Authority launched its website in the fall of 2020, the key area of focus was to educate employers and third-party administrators on compliance obligations and to provide a mechanism by which to remit employee contributions. The secondary area of focus was to provide workers with information on the basics of the CT Paid Leave program. Since the initial website was built, the program has evolved and matured substantially, necessitating much more detailed information for all audiences, including more in-depth information related to the claims process.

To this end, the Authority has been working with Tyler Tech Connecticut to redesign and re-platform the CT Paid Leave website. The design process consisted of the review and refinement of the personas of the various users who visit the site to develop their unique journeys and goals when using the site. The Authority also completed an extensive review of all website content, revising existing content and

writing new content to provide more clarity around the program, especially the claims process, and more substantial information about the relationship between CT FMLA and CT Paid Leave. The Authority worked closely with a designer and an ADA accessibility expert during the design phase. The site is now in development and expected to go live in fall 2023.

Private Plan Audits 4

Employers may comply with their obligations under the CT Paid Leave Act by obtaining permission from the Authority to offer paid leave benefits through an approved private plan in lieu of participation in the public plan. Under an approved private plan, the employer or its third-party administrator is responsible for administering the appropriate paid leave benefits. The Authority is tasked with oversight of the plans, which it fulfills through the initial application process and through audits of approved plans.

During this reporting period, the Authority developed comprehensive audit policies and procedures and deployed a software solution to ensure the secure transmission and handling of data. The Authority began conducting its first audits of private plans in April 2023.

“Your response was prompt and the employee was knowledgeable, polite, and helpful in resolving my problem.”



STRATEGIC PARTNERS



United Way

Since November 2020, CT Paid Leave has partnered with United Way of Connecticut to provide customer support services for employers, third-party administrators, workers, and other constituents. United Way, a longstanding and trusted organization in Connecticut, provides a staff of 15 specially trained customer service representatives who can advise on topics ranging from general questions about the program to employer registration and remittance. Individuals submit their questions through ctpaidleave.org and receive a response from United Way staff within two business days. Bilingual representatives are available, and constituents may request to be contacted by email or phone.

From June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023, United Way customer service specialists received 15,854 inquiries through the Contact Us page at ctpaidleave.org and closed 15,294 inquiries. For a breakdown of reasons for customer service inquiries, see Appendix B.

For the past year, the Authority has been working with our partners at United Way to issue surveys to customers after their interactions with the United Way team. The survey asks respondents to rate the following factors:

- ➔ Their satisfaction with their representative's knowledge and professionalism
- ➔ How quickly the individual was contacted after submitting their inquiry
- ➔ The category that their inquiry was related to the likelihood of recommending the Contact Us center to someone else

The results of the survey have been overwhelmingly positive, with **91% of respondents stating they were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of professionalism and knowledge. Ninety-five percent of respondents received a call or email back within one business day** of submitting their inquiry, with the majority receiving a return call or email within the same day. **Over 88% stated that they were likely or very likely to recommend the Contact Center to others.**

“Thank you so much!!! The reply was within seconds of me requesting assistance. She was so courteous and helpful. I have not had that level of knowledgeable assistance anywhere in such a long time!”

“The United Way Staff member was extremely helpful and made herself available to help in any way she could. She kept on top of the issue and made sure it was resolved in a timely manner. She is so professional and kind. She is an asset to your business.”

“She was wonderful; please thank her.”



“The process was easy and very efficient. The customer service was excellent, courteous, and attentive each time I called. Thank you.”

“The service I received was very prompt and thorough from beginning to completion. The team was very helpful and explained all aspects completely. I appreciate all of your assistance.”

“Already recommend[ed] to others. Easy breezy when all paperwork is in order.”

“Aflac was always there to help me with any questions and gave me tremendous support! The employees are wonderful there!”

Aflac

In 2021, the CT Paid Leave Authority contracted with the American Family Life Assurance Company of Columbus (Aflac), leveraging Aflac’s existing infrastructure and expertise in claims administration.

Aflac has worked diligently to resolve initial stumbling blocks and has demonstrated its commitment to customer satisfaction, responsiveness, and continuous improvement, as shown by its impressive service statistics:

- ➔ 100% of eligibility decisions made within 5 days of application
- ➔ 92% of claims decisions made within 5 days of receipt of a completed claim file
- ➔ 87% of calls answered in 30 seconds or less
- ➔ 92% of issues resolved during a single phone call

Additionally, Aflac completes an independent quality audit of customer service calls and claims. The claims process enhancements detailed elsewhere in this report have generated positive feedback from claimants. The Authority works closely with Aflac, meeting with their team several times per week to strategize and collaborate. This is essential for accountability and open, constant communication between our two organizations to ensure that we are continually improving.

The Authority has a dedicated team of four people in the benefits department who serve as liaisons between the Authority and Aflac to assist individuals with their claims. This team also validates Aflac’s quality control audits. The result of the Authority and Aflac’s continued collaboration is a program offering excellent quality, extensive knowledge, and responsive customer service for Connecticut’s workers.

CT Paid Leave continued to engage in robust outreach and engagement activities as we entered our third year of collecting employee contributions and our second year of issuing worker benefits.



OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Overview

CT Paid Leave continued to engage in robust outreach and engagement activities as we entered our third year of collecting employee contributions and our second year of issuing worker benefits.

Our outreach efforts focused on multiple distinct target audiences:

- ➔ Workers
- ➔ Employers
- ➔ HR professionals and benefits administrators
- ➔ Third-party administrators/payroll providers
- ➔ Legislators
- ➔ Individuals/groups supporting those who are likely to apply for the program (such as social workers, healthcare providers, victim services organizations, etc.)

We had two main campaigns throughout the course of the year. The first was a testimonial campaign featuring CT Paid Leave benefit recipients telling their stories about using the program in their own words. This approach allows the public to see individuals in circumstances that may resonate with them or their loved ones, such as welcoming a child or facing a serious illness and creates an emotional connection with the viewer or listener that brings to life why CT Paid Leave is a vital resource for workers in Connecticut.

The second campaign focused on employer compliance. In the first part of the reporting year, the outreach efforts largely centered on educating employers and their representatives about registering and remitting contributions and supporting their efforts in administering paid leave to their employees. In the second half of the year, we transitioned into education relating to the Authority's fund recovery efforts. We focused on notifying employers that the Authority would begin assessing penalties and interest for unpaid contributions effective May 1, 2023, and encouraging employers to become caught up on the obligations before that date.

The information presented in this report describes the tactics and metrics from June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023, for all campaigns and messaging themes.



Webinars

Webinars continued to be the Authority's main method of communicating with individuals in a live forum. The Authority hosted or participated in a total of 58 webinars over the course of the year. Some of our partners included the CT Women's Business Development Council, Office of Early Childhood Development, Aon, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence, CT Association of Healthcare at Home, Eastern CT Association of Realtors, and the National Federation of Independent Businesses. We also hosted multiple monthly webinars geared toward HR professionals, small business owners, and workers. Webinars focused on the basics of the program and responsibilities of workers and employers, the application process, and fund recovery.

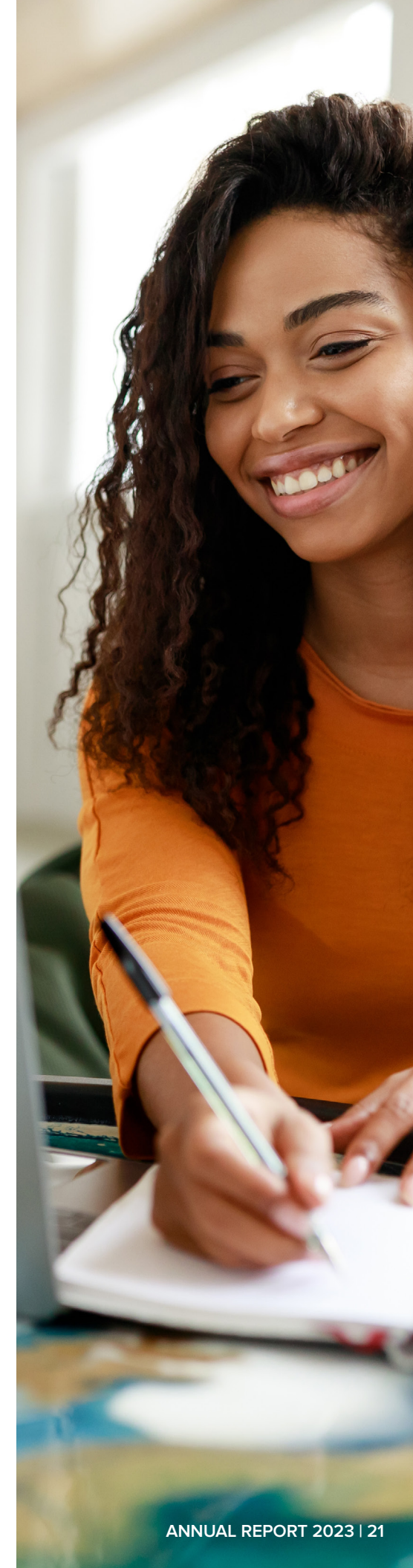
Panels and Other Speaking Events

In addition to webinars, Authority staff also participated in several virtual and in-person panel discussions and other speaking events throughout the course of the year. Some of these events included:

- ➔ Governor's Council on Women and Girls panel discussion on domestic violence
- ➔ Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro's tele-townhalls on women's economic security
- ➔ US Department of Labor Women's Bureau panel celebrating the 30th anniversary of FMLA
- ➔ WBDC's Women Owned Business Day at the Legislative Office Building
- ➔ Senator Chris Murphy's roundtable discussion on caregiving

Newsletters

The Authority maintains regular communication with employers, human resources professionals/benefits coordinators, approved private plan employers, third-party administrators, and legislators through regular email newsletters. A total of 31 newsletters were issued over the course of the year. Messaging is targeted to specific audiences, which results in extremely favorable open rates. Open rates are consistently in the 30%–50% range, with newsletter to legislators performing best, with open rates as high as 65%. The Authority's email database contains over 142,000 subscribers.



Digital Outreach & Advertising

According to Statista, a provider of marketing and consumer data, Americans are projected to spend 500 minutes per day with digital media in 2023, which is up 116 minutes per day over the past five years. Digital advertising is an important part of the Authority's outreach and engagement strategy as it allows us to cost-effectively reach consumers wherever they go online, with in-depth targeting capabilities that ensure minimal waste.

The Authority's comprehensive campaign included:

- ➔ Social media
- ➔ Search engine marketing
- ➔ Geofencing campaigns
- ➔ Programmatic display
- ➔ Streaming audio
- ➔ Streaming video (pre-roll, CTV and OTT)

Additionally, digital advertising enhances the efficacy of traditional media channels such as radio and television by increasing the likelihood and frequency of exposure to the Authority's messaging in multiple platforms.

Social Media

The Authority's social media strategy consisted of organic and paid campaigns across Meta (Facebook and Instagram) and LinkedIn, an organic campaign on Twitter, and, new this year, a paid campaign on TikTok. **Over the course of the year, the Authority grew its Twitter audience by 32%, Facebook audience by 22%, Instagram audience by 34%, and LinkedIn audience by 53%.**

The Authority delivered a total of 3.12 million impressions on Meta platforms (Facebook and Instagram) and over 60,000 clicks to ctpaidleave.org, 1.5 million impressions on LinkedIn and over 5,200 clicks to the CT Paid Leave website, and 1.71 million impressions on TikTok and over 2,300 clicks. These numbers show that the campaigns generated massive awareness and drove traffic to the CT Paid Leave website. YouTube remains an important platform for sharing educational videos and tutorials and documenting our board and committee meetings. The Authority's videos had 660,000 views over the course of the year with a total of 440,000 minutes watched.

The Authority's social media channels are also a popular way for claimants and/or potential claimants to interact with the Authority through comments and direct messages. The Authority closely monitors incoming comments and messages and provides timely responses and outreach when necessary.

Search Engine Marketing

Google is a powerful platform that the Authority uses to help guide users to ctpaidleave.org through search engine marketing. Google AdWords is used to target individuals seeking information about a specific topic by identifying certain keywords and displaying the CT Paid Leave website when those words are searched. During the year, the Authority's Google AdWords campaign drove over 289,000 clicks to the Authority's website during the year from a total of 171,000 users and generated nearly 357,000 sessions.

Geofencing

The Authority utilized geofencing campaigns to deliver digital ads to anyone who entered specifically defined geographic locations. Locations chosen included hospitals, cancer centers, and other acute healthcare facilities to reach patients and their family members as well as nurses, doctors, and other care staff. Ads were delivered on mobile devices to individuals who entered the geofenced location. If they clicked on the ad, we were then able to direct additional ads to them after they left the location to increase the frequency of exposure to CT Paid Leave messaging.

Separate geofencing campaigns were also used to target non-compliant employers who had a presence with the CT Department of Labor but not with CT Paid Leave, thus indicating that they pay unemployment insurance in Connecticut and therefore most likely have Connecticut employees (and should be remitting to CT Paid Leave) but were not.

Other geofencing campaigns were used to reach individuals who participated in health and wellness events to enhance delivery of CT Paid Leave content.

Programmatic Display, Video Pre-Roll, Streaming Audio, and CTV/OTT

Digital display, streaming audio, and streaming video including pre-roll, connected TV (CTV) and over-the-top (OTT) tactics were used to focus outreach campaigns on employed adults in Connecticut who met certain criteria indicating that they may be likely to apply for CT Paid Leave (for example, new or expectant parents, those who visited acute care facilities frequently). These campaigns allowed the Authority to reach such likely users across multiple devices as they visited websites, played games, and listened to streaming audio through various platforms (like Spotify, Bloomberg, iHeartRadio, and others). Additionally, tactics used allowed the Authority to reach users as they watched short form and long form content through streaming platforms on mobile devices, tablets, and their television through our partnership with NBC Universal, which allowed streaming ads to be shown on NBC's streaming platform Peacock, Telemundo's streaming platform, YouTube, and through third-party partners.

Google is a powerful platform that the Authority uses to help guide users to ctpaidleave.org through search engine marketing.



Traditional Advertising

The Authority strategically selected traditional advertising media including outdoor, television, radio, and select print publications to ensure a robust and comprehensive media campaign.

Outdoor Advertising

The Authority continued the use of highway boards along major Connecticut highways including Interstates 91, 95, and 84. The ads were shown 2,138,308 times and delivered 65,293,233 impressions. The creative content was an extension of our claimant testimonial campaign, featuring individuals who used CT Paid Leave for various qualifying reasons. These same individuals were featured in other media, ensuring cohesive messaging across platforms.

Linear Television

A combination of 15- and 30-second advertisements reaching the Hartford and New Haven designated market areas (DMA) ran in English on NBC (WVIT-TV) and in Spanish on Telemundo (WRDM-TV).

The Authority enhanced its Spanish language outreach with additional television presence on Univision (WU-VN-TV) and Unimás (WUTH-TV).

Terrestrial Radio

Radio is an important part of the overall media campaign as it continues to reach 93% of Americans on a weekly basis. The continued return to pre-pandemic norms led to higher levels of commuting in cars, making radio an essential part of the media mix. Radio campaigns ran on a total of 28 stations covering the entire state of Connecticut. The campaign used various formats to reach diverse audiences, and commercials ran on both English and Spanish language stations. The Authority also participated in 13 on-air interviews.



Hartford Business Journal

The Authority placed a business profile piece with Hartford Business Journal in their annual special publication to align with Small Business Week.

Public Relations

In addition to the paid digital and traditional media plans, the Authority worked closely with our public relations partner, Ethical Influence, to produce earned media coverage through press releases, media advisories, press briefings, letters to the editor, op-eds, and a media tour.



Press Releases and Media Advisories (See Appendix C)

The Authority released regular press releases and media advisories throughout the course of the year on various topics related to the CT Paid Leave program and events that the Authority hosts and/or attends. A total of 53 releases/advisories were issued on topics ranging from qualifying reasons for CT Paid Leave, to the promotion of data related to program usage. The Authority disseminated these releases to an extensive media outreach list and shared them through Authority social media channels. All releases are archived on [Medium.com](https://www.medium.com).

Press Briefing

The Authority held a press briefing in June 2022, and invited media from around the state to attend. This resulted in stories in 20 publications, including US News, News 12 CT, WTNH, CT News Junkie, El Sol News, and more.

Op-Ed Pieces and Letters To The Editor

The Authority partnered with community advocates to issue op-ed pieces and letters to the editor throughout the course of the year. Such pieces included op-eds from the CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Connecticut Women's Legal and Education Fund. Various letters to the editor were also published during the year, including from advocate Carol J. Williams, Ph.D. on her pride to live in a state with a paid leave policy and from Authority Board Member Eva Bermúdez Zimmerman.

Congresswoman Rosa Delauro Partnership: Media Tour and Tele-Town Halls

Congresswoman DeLauro and former CT Paid Leave CEO Andrea Barton Reeves conducted a media tour in summer 2022, in the New Haven area, with stops at WTNH-TV, WCKI-FM, and the New Haven Register. CT Paid Leave has continued partnering with the Congresswoman with CT Paid Leave CEO Erin Choquette participating in two tele-townhalls with a focus on women's economic security in March and April 2023.

Resources

A number of digital resources exist on our website and on our YouTube page, including one-sheet overviews for both employers and employees, toolkits for employers and human resources professionals, and tutorial videos on topics including the differences between CT Paid Leave and CT FMLA, how to file a claim for benefits, how to create a **CT.gov** account (which is a necessary precursor to applying for benefits through the online portal), laws for employees to consider when taking a leave of absence, and more. We are continually creating new resources as we become aware of topics that require further education or explanation.



The Authority partnered with community advocates to issue op-ed pieces and letters to the editor throughout the course of the year.



The Authority strives to provide support for all employers, but especially for small businesses who may not have payroll providers or human resource departments.

Small Business Outreach

The Authority strives to provide support for all employers, but especially for small businesses who may not have payroll providers or human resource departments. To reach these small employers, we have conducted focused outreach, including webinars for the Women’s Business Development Council, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, and the CT Small Business Development Council. We have also offered webinars designed especially for self-employed individuals/sole proprietors. The Authority was also present at the 2023 CBIA Small Business Resource fair and the WBDC Women Owned Business Day at the Legislative Office Building.

In-Person Events (See Appendix D)

The Authority participated in a total of 29 in-person events during the year. Some were tabling opportunities which allowed us to distribute literature and answer questions for the general public, such as the Women’s Better Living Expo in Bridgeport and the Greater Norwich Healthy Living Festival in Norwich. Other events were industry specific and allowed us to distribute information to providers and professionals providing support to those who may have a need to apply for paid leave, such as the CT Association of Healthcare at Home and the Statewide Hospice and Palliative Care conferences. CT Paid Leave staff also attended conferences where they were able to participate in conversations about CT Paid Leave in a national forum: “Next Generation PFML: A Convening of Research and Practice Experts” at the University of Washington, the Disability Management & Absence Management Conference in Denver, Colorado and a convening of Paid Leave Administrators in Boston, MA.

Podcast (See Appendix E)

The Paid Leave Podcast released two new episodes per month—24 during the course of the year—covering diverse topics related to paid leave. The podcast was downloaded over 1,300 times during the year, bringing the cumulative total to nearly 2,000 downloads. Connections made through guests on the podcast continue to serve as valuable relationships for enhanced outreach opportunities. For example, a podcast guest who was interviewed for an episode on military caregiver leave introduced the Authority to the Joint Resiliency Directorate for the Connecticut National Guard, a group of individuals who head the support services available to military guardsmen and their families. As a result of this connection, Authority staff were able to present to and share information with these leaders which they then brought back to their staff to share with the relevant audiences.



Legislative Outreach

Invitations to provide a briefing on CT Paid Leave were extended to each of the legislative caucuses and presentations were coordinated with House and Senate Democrats, Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, and Progressive Caucus. In May, the Authority was invited to table at a Women’s Wellness Fair at the State Capitol sponsored by the Bipartisan Women’s Caucus. The Authority also updated its Legislator Toolkit with information for legislators and their staff to educate their constituents on paid leave, including how to file a claim. A monthly newsletter is distributed to all members of the legislature with up-to-date information and resources. The average open rate is 43.5% and average click through rate is 15.7%. A geofencing campaign was also employed to reach legislators and their aides in and around the Legislative Office Building to increase awareness of CT Paid Leave, as these individuals often field constituent questions.

Facebook Live Events

To allow for constituents to engage directly with the Authority, CT Paid Leave CEO Erin Choquette participated in Facebook live discussions with Senator Saud Anwar and Senator Martha Marx.



Results Of Outreach and Engagement Efforts

We measure the success of outreach efforts in several ways:

- ➔ Website statistics (number of users and their engagement with sessions, pageviews, and time spent on site)
- ➔ Claims (volume and geographic distribution)
- ➔ Business Compliance (Registration and Remittance)
- ➔ Fund Recovery Results

Website Visits and Engagement

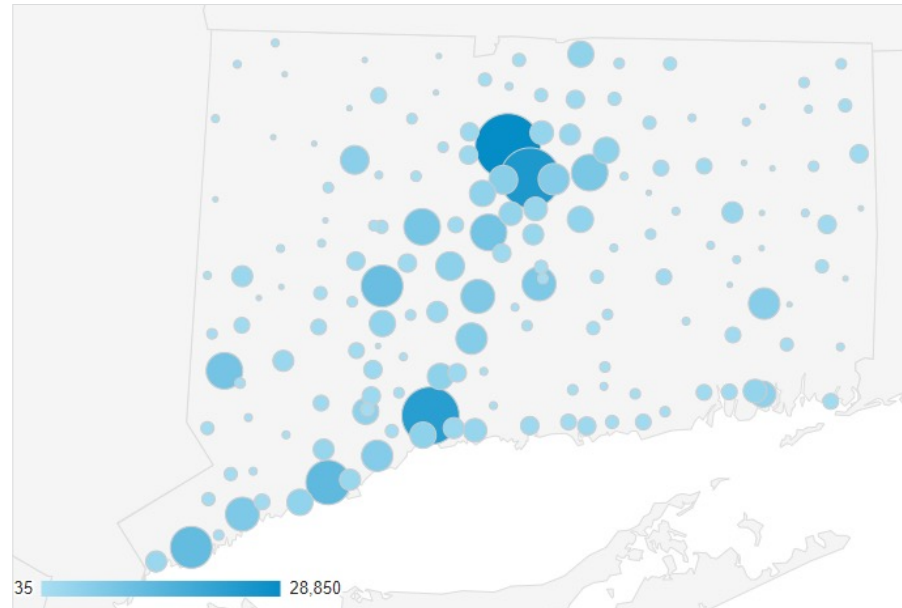
Over the course of the year, the CT Paid Leave website had 857,194 users who looked at 7,610,977 pages of content in 2,210,525 total sessions. Each user averaged 3.44 pages per session and the average session lasted three minutes and nine seconds. Seventy-one-point four percent (71.4%) of users were new to the site and 28.6% were returning users.

Compared to the prior year (June 1, 2021, through May 31, 2022), total users increased by 57%, new users increased by 54%, pageviews increased by 53%, and total sessions increased by 69%. These increases indicate that our outreach efforts are having the desired result of driving traffic to ctpaidleave.org, the first stop for workers and employers/employer representatives to learn more about CT Paid Leave or take the steps of registering/remitting contributions or filing a claim.





Website Use By Geography



The Authority’s website has had visits from nearly every town and city in the state of Connecticut. The top 10 locations for website visits are as follows:

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Bloomfield | 5. Stamford | 9. Bristol |
| 2. Hartford | 6. Waterbury | 10. Manchester |
| 3. New Haven | 7. New Britain | |
| 4. Bridgeport | 8. Danbury | |

The image above illustrates the distribution of website users throughout the state.

Business Registrations

Another gauge of the success of outreach is the number of businesses who have registered with the Authority. As of May 31, 2022, we had nearly 137,000 employers registered with CT Paid Leave. As of May 31, 2023, we now have nearly 145,000 businesses registered, a net increase of 8,000. As part of the Authority’s continuing efforts to ensure the accuracy and completeness of its registration records, the Authority identified 994 entities that had either registered in error, had duplicate entries, or had closed during the reporting year. These registrations have been deactivated. Thus, the actual number of newly registered employers was nearly 9,000. The number of registered sole proprietors increased from 2,851 to 3,364.

Claims Filed

Claims have been filed from all 169 towns and cities throughout the state, indicating that our outreach efforts are having the desired effect of reaching the entire state. Please reference the Claims section for additional information for a detailed geographical breakdown or total claims per town and claims per 10,000 residents.

On the claims intake form for CT Paid Leave claims, we ask individuals where they heard about the CT Paid Leave program. Over 65% of individuals reported hearing about it from their employer, nearly 11% reported the CT Paid Leave website, nearly 12% said from a family member or friend, and the remainder cited “other”. These statistics indicate that our broad-based approach of outreach to individuals and employers, as well as the desired outcome of driving traffic to the CT Paid Leave website, has been successful.

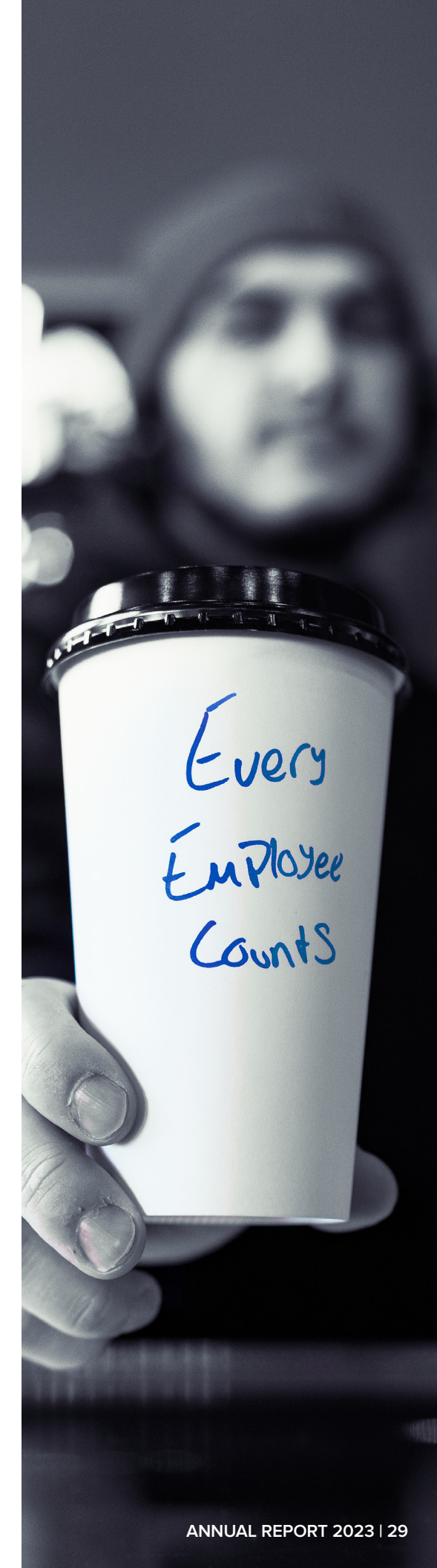
We continue to explore additional methods of discerning what prompts individuals to file claims and will use this information to assess and revise our outreach plan accordingly.

Fund Recovery Campaign Results

Starting in January 2023, we launched a robust fund recovery campaign to identify and reach employers who were not up to date on all contributions from the program inception date of January 1, 2021. The campaign theme was “Every Employee Counts” to drive home the notion that almost all Connecticut employers—even very small ones—need to comply with this program and to encourage employers to pay any past due contributions before April 30, 2023, in order to avoid being charged with interest and/or penalties. Our outreach efforts were multi-faceted, and included:

- ➔ Newsletters
- ➔ Digital display ads
- ➔ Geofencing around non-compliant employers
- ➔ Radio messaging
- ➔ Television messaging
- ➔ Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok)
- ➔ Mailers to third-party administrators/payroll providers
- ➔ Letters from our finance team directly to the individual employers who had missing payments

We saw significant results in both the number of registrations of formerly non-registered employers and in payment of overdue contributions. Please reference the Key Initiatives section of this report for the detailed analysis of fund recovery efforts.



The Authority’s website has had visits from nearly every town and city in the state of Connecticut.



From June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023, the Authority approved 57,192 claims.

Top 3 Approved Claim Reasons

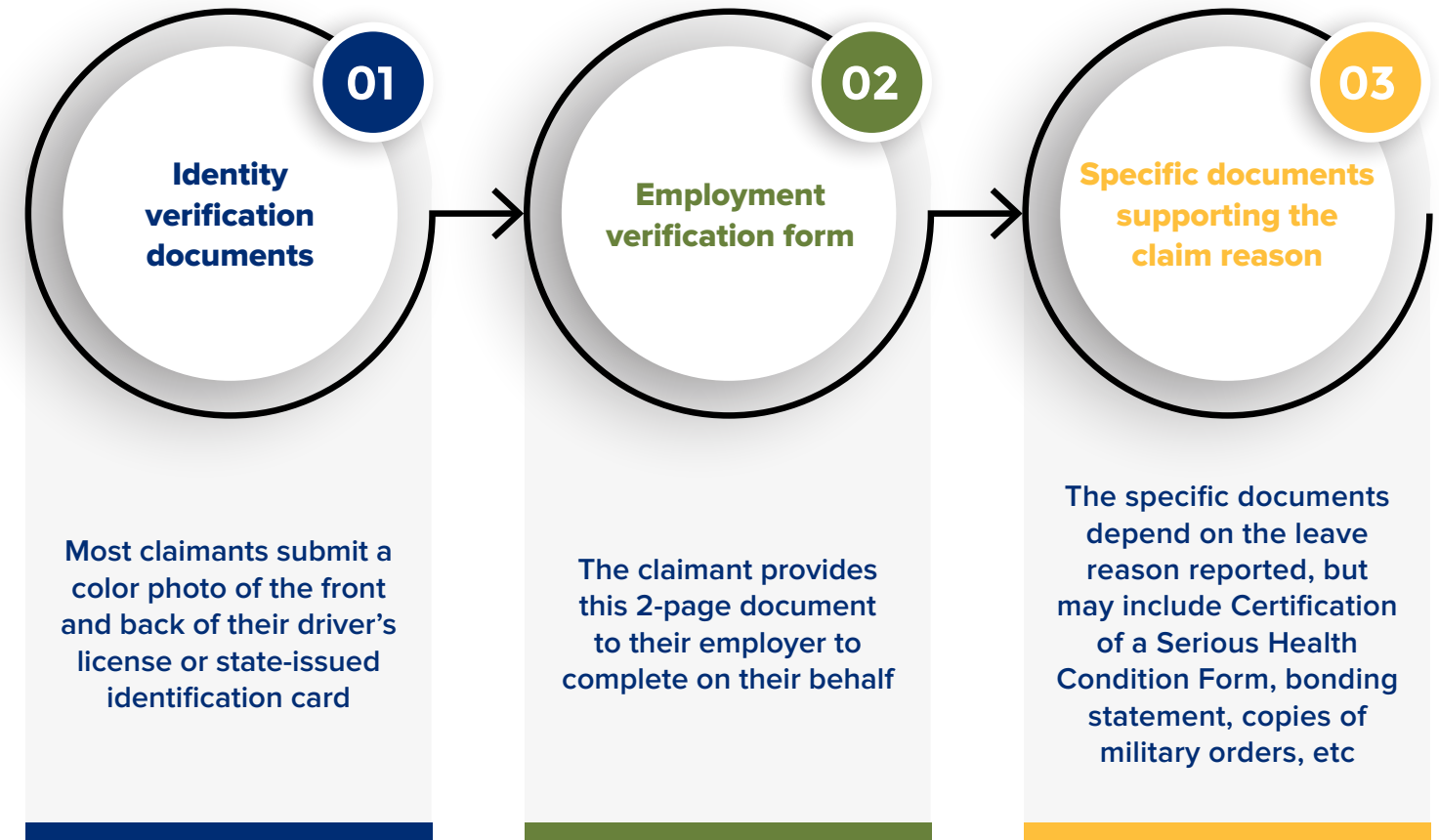
- ➔ Employee's Own Serious Health Condition
- ➔ Bonding
- ➔ Pregnancy/Childbirth



CLAIMS

Claims Process

Applicants may begin their claim by visiting ctpaidleave.org and entering their information through the online portal or by calling Aflac directly at (877) 499-8606. Once the applicant begins the claim application and specifies the reason for their leave, they will receive the documents necessary to complete the claim application. We require three types of documentation from all applicants:



The applicants are also given a due date by which these documents must be received by Aflac. Claimants can always request an extension if they need additional time by contacting Aflac. When all documents are received, if there are no inconsistencies or missing pieces of information, the case file is considered complete. The expectation is to issue a decision within five business days from receipt of a completed file.



The Authority has partnered with experts to estimate the likely number of claims that will be filed, most recently contracting with Spring Consulting Group.

Projected vs Actual Claims

The Authority has partnered with experts to estimate the likely number of claims that will be filed, most recently contracting with Spring Consulting Group. Anticipated approved claims for fiscal year 2022–2023 compared to actual approved claims and anticipated benefit payments vs. actual benefit payments were as follows:

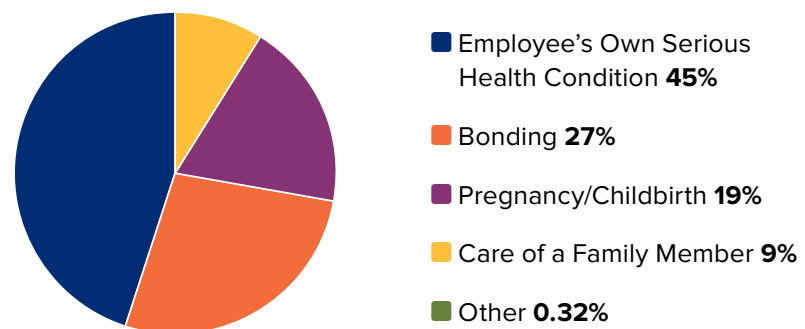
Anticipated Approved Claims	Actual Approved Claims
61,924	57,192
Anticipated Benefit Payments	Actual Benefit Payments
\$349,100,000	\$293,534,054

The anticipated number of approved claims by leave reason compared to the actual number of approved claims by leave reason.

Leave Reason	Anticipated Approved Claims	Actual Approved Claims
Employee's Own Serious Health Condition	24,997	25,580
Pregnancy/Childbirth	12,332	10,595
Bonding	19,045	15,527
Care of a Family Member	5,152	5,309
Adoption/Foster Care	125	108
Military Family Leave	16	13
Organ or Bone Marrow Donation	183	26
Family Violence Leave	95	34
Total	61,924	57,192

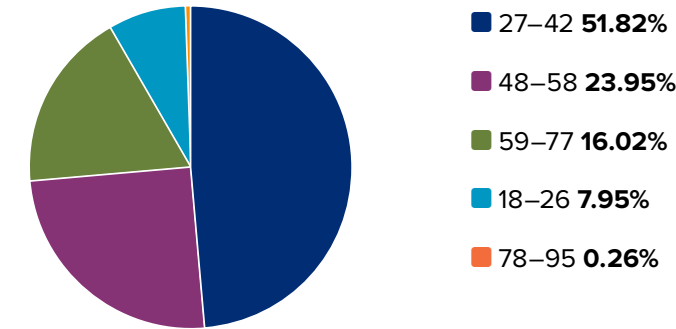
Approved Claim Reasons

From June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023, the Authority approved 57,192 claims. For approved claims, an employee's own serious health condition was the top leave reason at 44.73% of all approvals, followed by bonding at 27.15%, pregnancy/childbirth at 18.53%, and care of a family member at 9.28%. Adoption/foster care accounted for 0.19%, family violence leave accounted for 0.06%, bone marrow/organ donation accounted for 0.05%, and military family leave accounted for 0.02%.



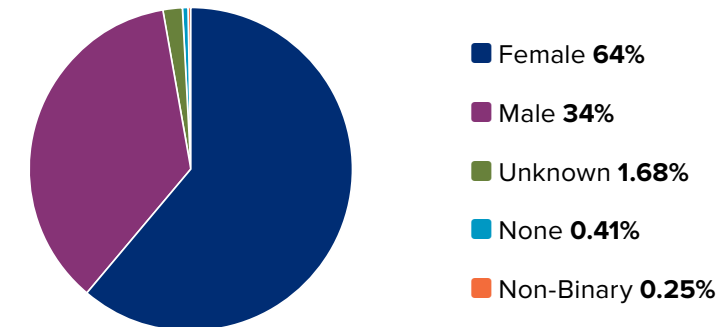
Applications By Age

The largest number of applications received was from the age group consisting of individuals aged 27–42 at nearly 52%, followed by the 43–58 age group at 24%. The 59–77 age group came in at 16%, the 18–26 age group accounted for 8% of all applications, and the 78–95 age group was at 0.26%.



Applications By Gender

The number of women applying for paid leave benefits continued to outpace men by nearly 2:1. Women accounted for almost 64% of all applications filed and men accounted for 34%. Those individuals who identified as non-binary accounted for 0.25%, and 0.41% of claimants did not specify a gender. Finally, 1.68% of claimants' genders were unknown.



It should be noted that a partial reason for the high number of claim applications filed by women as compared to men is that from June 2022, through February 2023, when a worker sought benefits in connection with pregnancy/childbirth followed immediately by bonding, two separate applications were required. As of March 1, 2023, such situations are combined within a single application. In the future, we anticipate the disparity between applications filed by women as compared to men may not be as striking.

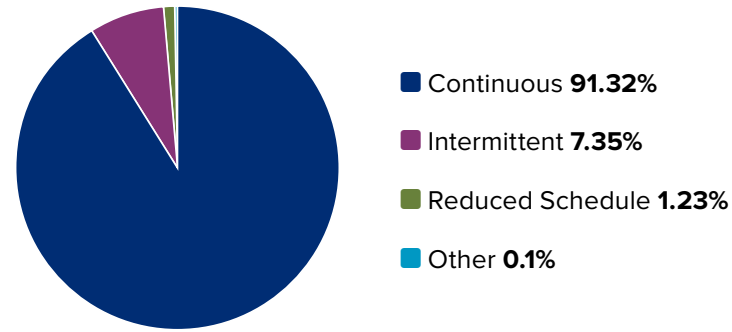
When analyzed according to specific leave reason, women continue to file more applications than men for nearly all leave reasons. One trend that we continued to see this year and which we noted in the 2021–2022 annual report is that the number of applications filed for bonding leave is split nearly equally between men and women. For a full breakdown of applications received by leave reason and gender, see Appendix F.



Applications Received By Claim Type

Most applications received were in connection with continuous leave at 91% of all applications, followed by intermittent leave at 7.41%, and reduced schedule at 1.25%.

Intermittent leave is leave in separate, non-consecutive time periods rather than a single span of time for a single qualifying reason. Reduced schedule leave is a leave schedule that reduces an employee's usual number of working hours per workweek, or hours per workday for a period of time, normally from a full-time schedule to a part-time schedule



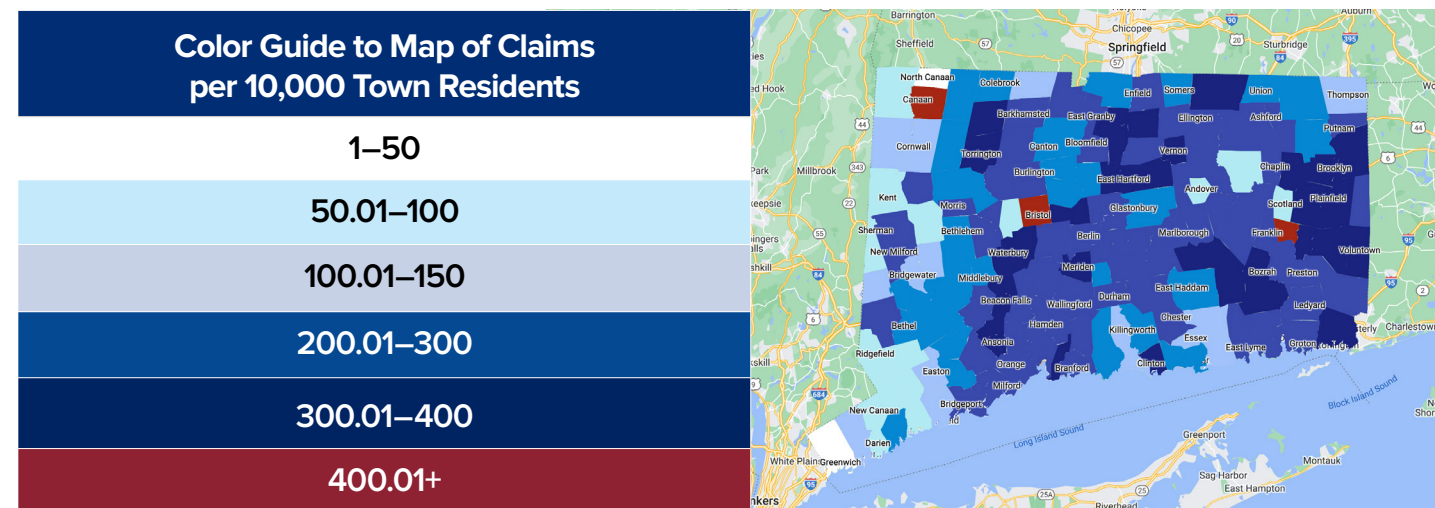
Applications Received by Location

We have seen applications from all 169 cities and towns throughout Connecticut. The highest total number of applications coming from the largest cities, with the top 10 cities by number of applications received as follows:

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Hartford | 5. New Britain | 9. Stamford |
| 2. Waterbury | 6. Bristol | 10. East Hartford |
| 3. New Haven | 7. Meriden | |
| 4. Bridgeport | 8. Manchester | |

We also analyze applications received per 10,000 residents to look at overall utilization rates by community across the state. The top 10 cities and towns with the highest utilization on a per capita basis were as follows:

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1. Canaan | 5. Meriden | 9. Derby |
| 2. Bristol | 6. East Hartford | 10. Hampton |
| 3. Sprague | 7. Ansonia | |
| 4. New Britain | 8. Naugatuck | |



For additional statistics on average annual wages by leave type, by age range, and by gender, see Appendix G.

Denied Applications

During the reporting year, the Authority received 90,393 applications for benefits and decided 82,002 applications. Of those decided, 57,192 (69.74%) were approved and 24,469 (29.84%) were denied. A total of 5253 remained pending at the close of the reporting period, and an additional 3479 were canceled or withdrawn.

Of those applications receiving a denial, 79% did not submit the requested documentation. Additional denial reasons are outlined in the table below.

Claim Denial Reasons	
Requested claim documentation was not received	79.09%
Ineligible—Did not meet minimum earning requirement	6.84%
Ineligible—CT Paid Leave excluded employer/employee	3.81%
Information received did not meet the requirements for the request	2.76%
Excluded due to receiving other income/benefits	2.22%
Benefit entitlement exhausted	1.54%
Non-qualified event	1.54%
Serious health condition not certified by healthcare provider	0.91%
Identity could not be verified	0.71%
Ineligible—working but not in CT and had not been working in CT in the 12 weeks prior to the claim	0.20%
Other	0.38%

Reconsiderations

If a claimant's application for CT Paid Leave benefits is denied, they are notified by letter and, if possible, a phone call, and provided with an explanation for the denial. The claimant has the option to file a request for reconsideration, together with any additional information or context relating to their claim. The reconsideration process is especially important if a claim was denied due to missing or incomplete/inconsistent paperwork. Reconsiderations must be filed within 10 calendar days, unless an extension is required, a decision is made within 15 calendar days after receipt of all required information.

During the reporting year, 12,907 requests for reconsideration were received. The reconsideration requests by leave reason are as follows:

Reconsideration	Number	Percent of Total
Employee's Own Serious Health Condition	7,876	61.0%
Pregnancy/Childbirth	1,824	14.1%
Bonding	1,577	12.2%
Care of a Family Member	1,562	12.1%
Adoption/Foster Care	34	0.3%
Other (Protected, Organ, Military, etc.)	34	0.3%
Total	12,907	100.0%

80.28% of initial denials were overturned through the reconsideration process. These reconsideration requests resulted in a total of 10,632 denials being overturned and the claim being approved. Between June 2022, and December 2022, the average time for a decision to be made on a reconsideration was 18 days, which has since improved to an average of 11 days between January 2023, and May 2023.

Failure to provide the required documents accounts for 79% of the denials.

Many of these denials are able to be reversed during the reconsideration process when claimants provide the missing documents.

Over 80% of denials are reversed during reconsideration.





Appeals

If a claimant chooses not to request a reconsideration, or if their reconsideration is also denied, the claimant has the right to appeal the decision with the Connecticut Department of Labor. This chart shows the total number of appeals received by the CT DOL between June 1, 2022, and May 31, 2023, and their status.

Appeals Received by CT Department of Labor	
Appeals Withdrawn by Appellant	60
Appeals Decided by Dept. of Labor	443
Pending Dept. of Labor Response	72
Appeals Pending Response by Authority	7
Total Appeals Filed	582

Of cases that have received a decision from the CT DOL, the overwhelming majority of decisions were dismissed. Only four appeals have been sustained (i.e., the DOL ordered the denial to be overturned) and a slightly larger number of appeals were sustained in part and dismissed in part. In the latter, the reason the DOL sustained in part usually relates to a dispute over the length of time a claim had been approved.

Appeals Decided	
Dismissed	428
Withdrawn	60
Sustained	4
Sustained in Part/Dismissed in Part	11

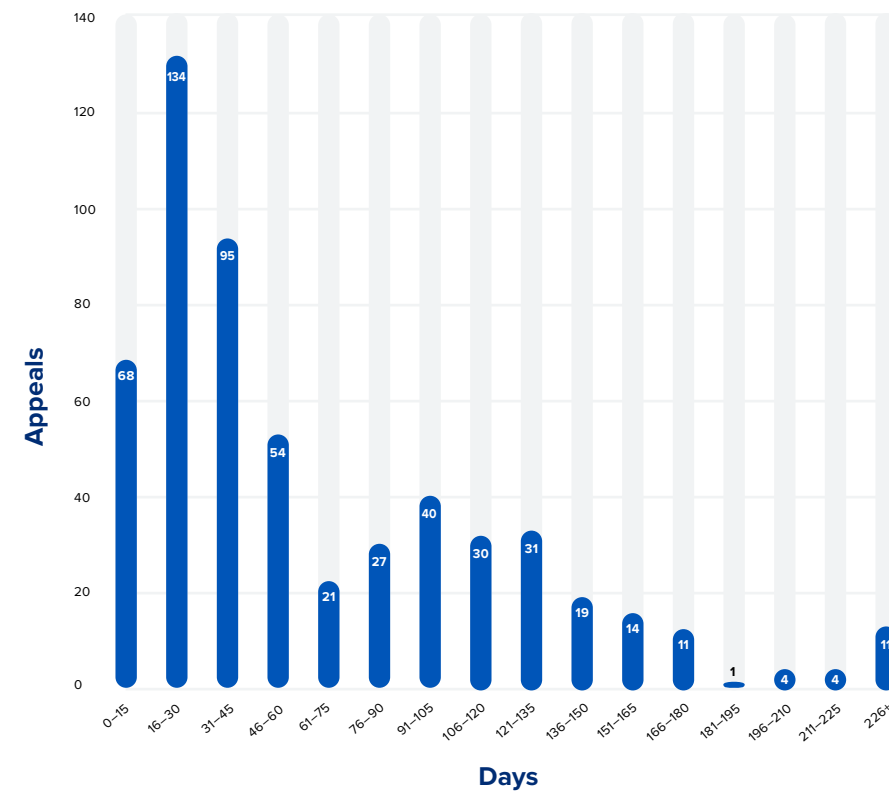
The largest category within the dismissed appeals is that the employee is no longer aggrieved, or the appeal is moot. Appeals are often moot when the Authority has already approved the request due to the claimant filing a reconsideration request while the appeal is still pending, with a smaller number involving duplicate appeals being filed. The second largest category is that the CT Department of Labor agreed with the CT Paid Leave Authority's denial and upholds the original decision.

Appeals Decisions	
Dept. of Labor Upheld CT Paid Leave Denial	152
No Aggrievement/Moot	231
Lack Of Jurisdiction—No Claim Filed With Ct Paid Leave	8
Lack of Jurisdiction—No Final Decision	6
Lack of Jurisdiction—Other	3
Appeal Not Filed Timely	28
Appellant Withdrew Request	60
Appeal Sustained in Part/Dismissed in Part	11
Denial Was Overturned After CT Paid Leave Already Approved Claim	1
Denial Was Overturned	3

Timeframe For Appeal Decision

CT Paid Leave provides the claim file in dispute, together with a letter brief, within 15 calendar days from receipt of the appeal. The Department of Labor reviews the materials filed by the Authority together with any information filed by the appellant and issues a decision. The following depicts the length of time between the date the claim file was submitted and a decision was issued by the CT DOL, for the period from June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023. This chart excludes currently pending appeals and appeals where the employee withdrew the appeal before the claim file was provided.

Average Time for an Appeal Decision to be Issued (Once Appeal Record has been Provided)





Private Plans

Under the Connecticut Paid Leave Act, employers may apply to the CT Paid Leave Authority for permission to use a private plan to meet the obligation to provide workers with income replacement benefits. Such plans may consist of either a paid family and medical leave insurance product or a self-insured plan, supported by a surety bond.

If an employer has an approved private plan,

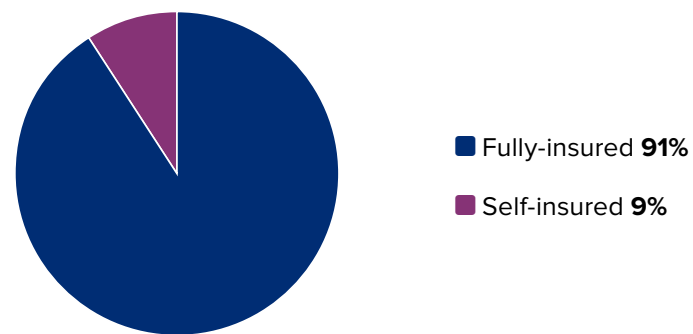
- ➔ The employer or their third-party administrator (TPA), not the CT Paid Leave Authority, administers its employees' claims for paid leave benefits.
- ➔ The employer is not required to remit employee contributions to the CT Paid Leave Authority.
- ➔ The employer may withhold a portion of employees' wages for the sole purpose of administering the plan. The withholding cannot exceed CT Paid Leave program's contribution rate.

In order to be approved, the private plan must offer the same or better benefits as the public program, cannot cost employees more than the public program, and must be approved by a majority vote of the employees working for the employer in Connecticut.

The requirements for applying for and administering a private plan are detailed in the Private Plan Policies and Procedures and the Consolidated Policy Document, both of which are posted at www.ctpaidleave.org.

As of May 31, 2023, there were 708 approved private plans: 647 plans use a private insurance policy to provide paid leave coverage while 61 provide coverage through self-insurance. Of that number, 151 plans were approved during the reporting period.

Approved Private Plans



Private Plan Annual Report Data

The following data comes from annual report data provided by the employers who had private plans that were in force at any time during the calendar year 2022. The Authority asked each approved private plan employer to complete a template report with information about the plan's claims experience during the year.

The Authority received responses from 488 plans, approximately 80% of the approved plans. Of those, 466 provided the correct template report. Those plans provide coverage for approximately 35,000 employees.

The graph to the right represents the employee contributions rates required by private plan employers.

Private Plan Application Reasons

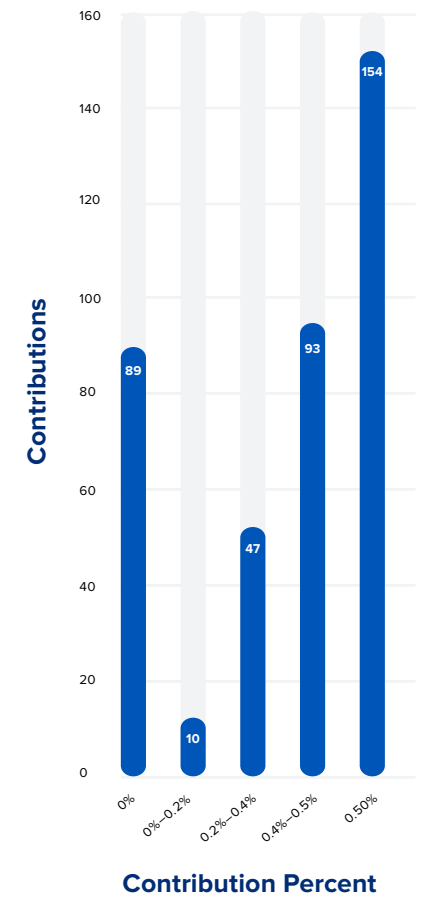
Based on the private plan employers who filed their annual reports:

- ➔ 4,076 claims were filed during calendar year 2022
- ➔ 3,554 were approved (87.2%)
- ➔ 448 were denied (11.1%)

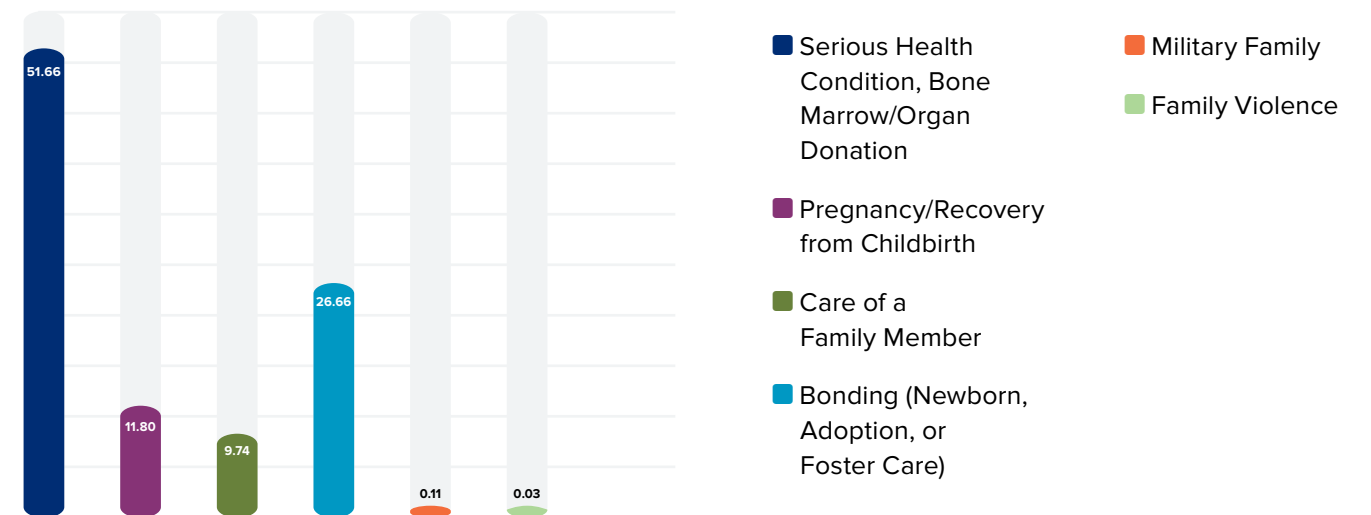
Similar to the public program, the largest category of claims are the employee's own Serious Health Condition, Pregnancy/Childbirth, and Bonding.



Private Plans by Employee Contribution Rate



Approved Private Plan Claims by Leave Reason (%)

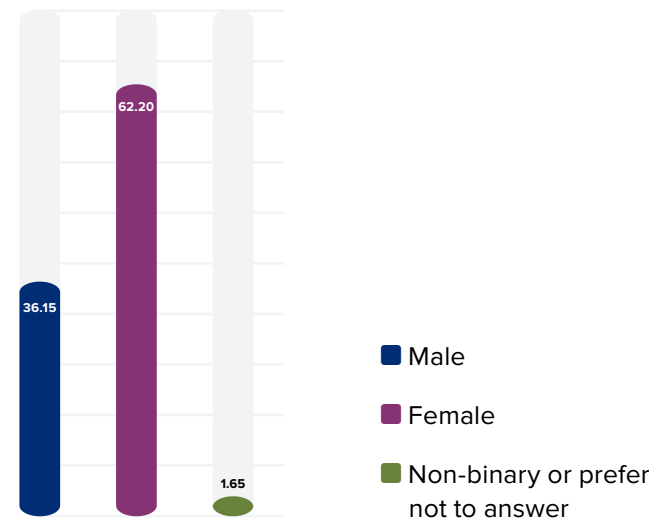


Under the Connecticut Paid Leave Act, employers may apply to the CT Paid Leave Authority for permission to use a private plan to meet the obligation to provide workers with income replacement benefits.

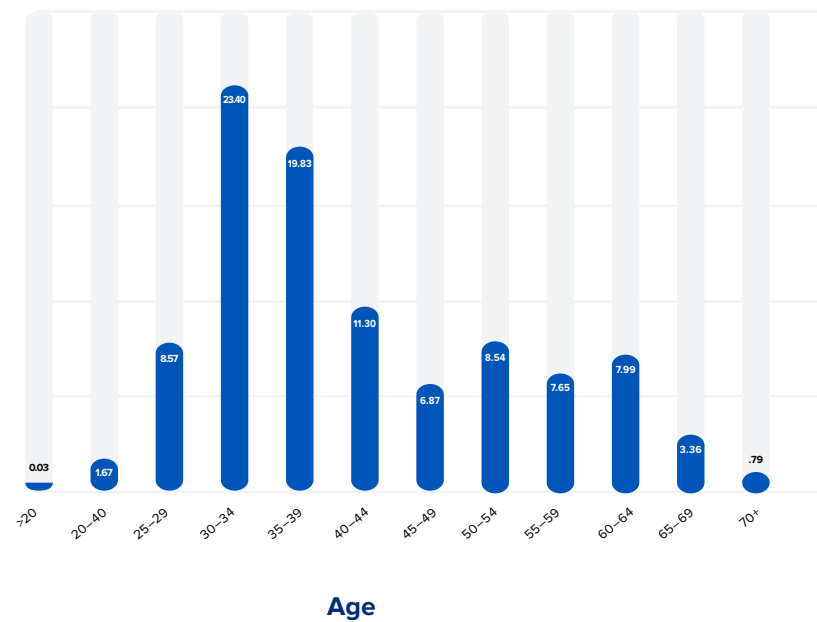


Also similar to the public program, the number of approved claims for employees identifying as female exceeds that for employees identifying as male by a 2 to 1 margin. The largest age group utilizing paid leave through private plans is 30–39 years old.

Private Plan Leaves by Gender (%)



Private Plan Leaves by Age



The latest financial projections for Fiscal Year 2023 as of March 31, 2023, show an ending anticipated fund balance of **\$542 million.**



FINANCE



Fund Solvency

In April 2022, following a competitive Request for Proposal process, the Authority selected Spring Consulting Group to provide actuarial services monitoring the Paid Family and Medical Leave Trust Fund. Spring analyzes revenues and benefit expenditures to develop projections that assist the Authority in maintaining the Trust Fund’s solvency. This analysis is shared with the Board of Directors in quarterly and annual reports.

The annual report presented to the Board in August 2022, included a three-year projection built on the program’s performance since inception, coupled with assumptions that utilized data from other states’ paid leave programs, among other information. Quarterly updates from Spring Consultant Group provide the Authority with updated performance, reserve estimates, and metrics used to measure fund solvency.

The latest financial projections for Fiscal Year 2023 as of March 31, 2023, show an anticipated ending fund balance of \$542 million.



July 2022 through June 2023 (Figures in \$ Millions)	
Beginning fund balance (net of outstanding contributions and claim payments)	\$446.3
Contributions earned	\$443.0
Investment income	\$16.5
Incurred claims	(\$318.0)
Other expenses	(\$45.8)
Net activity	\$95.7
Ending fund balance (net of outstanding contributions and claim payments)	\$542.0



Utilizing industry standards and its experience in the public benefit administration arena, Spring identified three metrics for assessing the solvency of the CT Paid Leave Trust fund.



Reserve vs. Net Fund Balance (net of outstanding contributions and claims payments):

- ➔ The reserve represents the funds required to be set aside in respect to the expected cost of claims for events that have already been incurred, but for which corresponding benefits have not yet been paid
- ➔ The proposed target recommends the net fund balance should be at least one third of the reserve as a measure of the capacity of the funds to cover additional incurred claims not yet paid

Contributions vs. Net fund balance (net of outstanding contributions and claims payments):

- ➔ Assessment of adequacy of net fund balance to cover inadequate contributions during the year should claims run higher than expected
- ➔ The proposed target recommends the net fund balance should at least cover one third of next year’s contributions

Adverse losses over one year vs. Net fund balance (net of outstanding contributions and claims payments):

- ➔ Assessment of adequacy of net fund balance to cover adverse losses
- ➔ Adverse losses were determined based on a stress test analysis of claims against changes in duration and incidence levels—the specific adverse scenario selected reflects the range of incidence rates experienced by other states
- ➔ The proposed target recommends the net fund balance should cover more than two years of adverse losses

The CT Paid Leave Trust meets the targets for all three metrics:

Funding Metrics	Actual Metric as of March 31, 2023	Target	Actual vs. Target
Reserve vs. net fund balance	0.1:1	Less than 3:1	Meets target
Contributions vs. net fund balance	0.8:1	Less than 3:1	Meets target
Adverse losses over one year vs. net fund balance	0.3:1	Less than 3:1	Meets target



Repayment of Seed and Bond Funds

The CT Paid Leave Authority was created by the legislature to be self-sufficient. To that end, section 31-49g of the Connecticut General Statutes includes the following subsection:

(h) (1) Any moneys expended from the General Fund for the purpose of administering the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program, or providing compensation to covered employees, shall be reimbursed to the General Fund not later than October 1, 2022.

(2) Any moneys expended from any bond authorizations allocated to the authority for the purpose of administering the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program shall be reimbursed to the General Fund according to a plan to be established by the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, in consultation with the State Treasurer. Such plan shall provide for a repayment schedule that provides for repayment by the authority of the debt service deemed attributable to such bond authorizations. Such repayment shall commence during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and shall continue until repayment is complete, according to the terms of the plan. The authority may repay unpaid amounts earlier than the plan established by the secretary.

Consistent with subdivision (1), the CT Paid Leave Authority repaid the full amount of seed funding that was appropriated to it—\$5.1 million dollars—by October 1, 2022. In April 2023, the Board of Directors approved by resolution an agreement with the Office of Policy and Management outlining the bond repayment terms, as required by subdivision (2).

Use Of Bond Funds

The legislature has authorized the CT Paid Leave Authority to receive up to \$50 million in bond funds. Of this amount, \$16,019,735 has been allocated to the Authority by the State Bond Commission. This reporting year, bond money has been used to fund the following projects:

- ➔ Fund recovery to improve functionality to identify employers not in compliance with their contributions, notify them that payment is due, and either collect payment or utilize outside fund recovery services
- ➔ Claim integration & security to integrate claims data into the CT Paid Leave Authority platform
- ➔ Website redesign & re-platform of the CT Paid Leave Authority website to improve navigation and accommodate expanded content, re-platform to allow for greater integration with other state IT assets add more languages, and make it easier for constituents to use

The Finance team engaged in numerous other initiatives to improve the Authority's internal practices, including:

- ➔ Processing refunds for employees who have more than one employer and may have remitted contributions beyond the Social Security contribution limit, as well as processing refunds for employers who overpaid (on behalf of their employees), particularly for those who have private plans
- ➔ Converting from QuickBooks desktop to QuickBooks online to take advantage of additional functionalities offered by the online program
- ➔ Converting to **Bill.com** to process and pay invoices, resulting in cost savings and streamlining the accounts payable process

Additionally, the Authority's outside auditors, Marcum Associates, issued its annual financial statement audit in November 2022. There were no material unrecorded audit adjustments, and the auditors did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that they consider to be material weaknesses for the limited purpose of planning and performing their audit of the financial statements.

A more detailed financial report will be issued by the Authority in September 2023.



The legislature has authorized the CT Paid Leave Authority to receive up to \$50 million in bond funds.

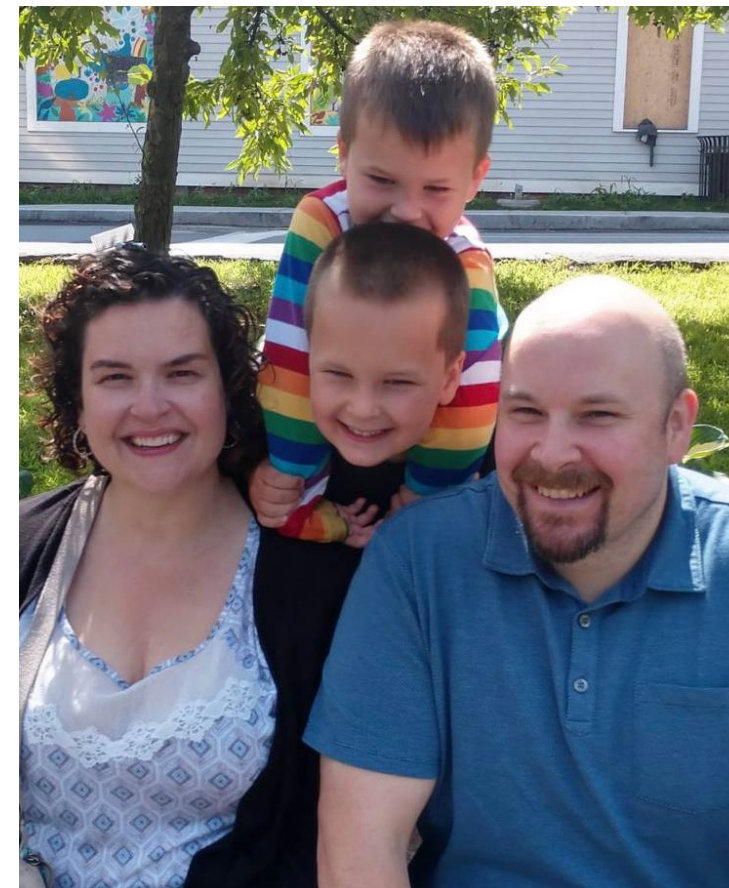
We are proud of all that the Authority has accomplished since its inception, from building a state program from scratch during a global pandemic, to making necessary adjustments in response to claimants' needs.



CONCLUSION

The number of claims CT Paid Leave has received and processed since benefits began being paid in January 2022—over 134,000 in just 17 months—illustrates how critical this program is to workers, employers, and other key stakeholders in our state.

CT Paid Leave provides financial peace of mind to families during major life events, allows parents to have more time to bond with a new child, and caregivers to be there for a family member in need. We are proud of all that the Authority has accomplished since its inception, from building a state program from scratch during a global pandemic, to making necessary adjustments in response to claimants' needs. We will continue to improve our processes and ensure that this vital program is accessible to all of Connecticut's diverse workforce, regardless of geography, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and technological access. We look forward to continuing to serve the people of Connecticut during all of life's most important moments.



“My husband herniated his disc and couldn't walk. When he first injured himself, he couldn't work. When it was apparent that he couldn't work for a long period of time, it was concerning, and we were worried.

As soon as we found out that Connecticut Paid Leave was going to be taking over and that Dave would be compensated for his lost earnings, it was just a really big relief. Connecticut Paid Leave helped us in the time that we needed it.”



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Organization chart, establishment of Authority, and link to consolidated policies on our website

Establishment of the Authority and Paid Leave Program

The CT Paid Leave Authority was established to administer a Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program that provides employees access to income replacement benefits when out of work for life events covered under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), the Connecticut Family and Medical Leave Act (CT FMLA) and the Connecticut Family Violence Leave Act.

Covered employees and enrolled self-employed individuals and sole proprietors contribute one-half of one percent (0.5%) of their earnings, capped at the Social Security contribution and benefit base, to the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Trust Fund through payroll deductions. Per C.G.S. § 31-49g, the contribution rate cannot exceed 0.5%. Employers are responsible for withholding employee contributions and submitting them to the Authority on a quarterly basis. The obligation to withhold the employee contributions began on January 1, 2021. The Family and Medical Leave Insurance Trust Fund was established by C.G.S. § 31-49i and is a non-lapsing fund held by the State Treasurer that is not considered property of the state. The assets of the trust are used to pay the income replacement benefits to covered employees as well as the operational, administrative, outreach and educational expenses of the Authority.

The qualifying reasons to receive income replacement benefits are:

Medical Leave

Medical leave is leave taken by an employee to receive treatment for or recover from one's own serious health condition, including serving as an organ or bone marrow donor and pregnancy.

Bonding Leave

Bonding leave is taken by an employee to enable the parent to develop a mutual emotional and psychological closeness with a newborn or newly placed child. It also includes the time needed to process adoption or foster care placement if applicable. Bonding leave may be taken anytime during the 12 months after the birth/place-ment and applies to birth, adoption or foster care.

Caregiver Leave

Caregiver leave is taken by an employee to provide physical or psychological care or psychological comfort and reassurance for a family member experiencing a serious health condition.

Military Caregiver Leave

Military caregiver leave is for an employee to care for a covered family member who is a member of the military and has experienced a serious injury or illness that occurred in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces.

Qualifying Exigency Leave

Qualifying exigency leave is taken by an employee for any "qualifying exigency" (as defined by the United States Secretary of Labor) arising out of the fact the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered servicemember on covered active duty in the Armed Forces.

Family Violence Leave

Family violence leave can be taken pursuant to C.G.S. §31-51ss by an employee who is a victim of family violence to seek medical/psychological care, to obtain services from a victim services organization, to relocate due to such family violence, or to participate in any civil or criminal proceeding related to or resulting from such family violence. Per the Family Violence Leave Act, this leave is restricted to 12 days in a calendar year. The CT Paid Leave program provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of income replacement benefits during a rolling 12-month period, as well as two additional weeks of income replacement to a covered employee for a serious health condition resulting in incapacitation that occurs during a pregnancy.

APPENDIX A, Continued.

Covered Employers And Employees

The Connecticut Paid Leave (CTPL) program covers most Connecticut employers with one or more employees working in the state, with a few statutorily-mandated exceptions that are outlined in the CT Paid Leave Authority's Consolidated Policies.

Eligibility

Employees are eligible for benefits from the CT Paid Leave program if they:

1. Have earned wages of at least \$2,325 in the highest quarter of the first four of the five most recently completed quarters; and
2. **Are one of the following:**
 - A. currently employed by a covered Connecticut employer;
 - B. have been employed by a covered Connecticut employer within the 12 weeks immediately preceding the claim or;
 - C. a sole proprietor or self employed individual and Connecticut resident who has enrolled in the program). (Sole proprietors or self-employed individuals who enrolled in the program after January 1, 2022 have a waiting period of 91 days before they can be eligible to receive benefits.)

Part-time, seasonal and per diem employees are also eligible if they meet the eligibility requirements. Wages may include salary or hourly pay, vacation pay, holiday pay, tips, commissions, severance pay and the cash value of any "in-kind" payments.

Benefits

The benefit rate is set forth in C.G.S. § 31-49g, which is calculated in the following ways:

- If wages are less than or equal to the Connecticut minimum wage multiplied by 40, the weekly benefit rate under the Connecticut Paid Leave Act is 95% of the recipient's base weekly earnings. Note: As of June 1, 2023, 40 times the minimum wage is equal to \$600.
- If wages exceed the Connecticut minimum wage multiplied by 40, the weekly benefit rate will be 95% of the Connecticut minimum wage multiplied by 40 plus 60% of the amount that the base weekly earnings exceeds the Connecticut minimum wage multiplied by 40.
- In all circumstances, the benefit rate is capped at 60 times the Connecticut minimum wage. Note: As of June 1, 2023, 60 times the minimum wage is equal to \$900. The Connecticut Paid Leave Act stipulates benefit rates may be reduced if revenue is insufficient.

APPENDIX A, Continued.

Board Of Directors

The CT Paid Leave Authority Board of Directors is a diverse group of individuals who guide, support and oversee the work of the Authority. Members have expertise in areas including disability insurance plans, modern software practices, economically distressed communities, paid leave programs, and the interests of employees at both small and large businesses. The board members come from throughout the state of Connecticut and reflect the cultural and racial diversity of our state. The board meets monthly, and three committees (Outreach and Engagement, Policy and Personnel, and Finance and Audit) also meet monthly, with the Executive Committee meeting as needed.

- Eva Bermudez Zimmerman
- Easha Canada
- Adrienne Cochrane
- Britt-Marie Cole-Johnson
- Andrea Comer
- Michelle Gilman (Board Vice Chairperson)
- Shiela Hummel
- Sal Luciano
- Ellen McKitterick
- Fran Pastore (Board Chairperson)
- John Scott (Board Secretary)
- Michael Soltis
- Molly Weston-Williamson
- Holly Williams
- Justin Zartman

Authority Policies

The Board has adopted by-laws, a plan of operations, an employee handbook and various policies governing its operations, claims procedures, and the process whereby employers may comply with the CT Paid Leave Act through a private plan. The process for adopting policies includes a review of draft policy document(s) by the relevant committee(s), a vote by the Board to post a notice of the proposed policy document(s) in the CT Law Journal, a public notice and comment period of at least 30 calendar days following the posting in the CT Law Journal, a review of any comments received, and a vote by the Board to adopt the final policy document. Most of the Authority's policies, as well as Glossary of Terms, are posted on www.ctpaidleave.org. All policies are available on request.

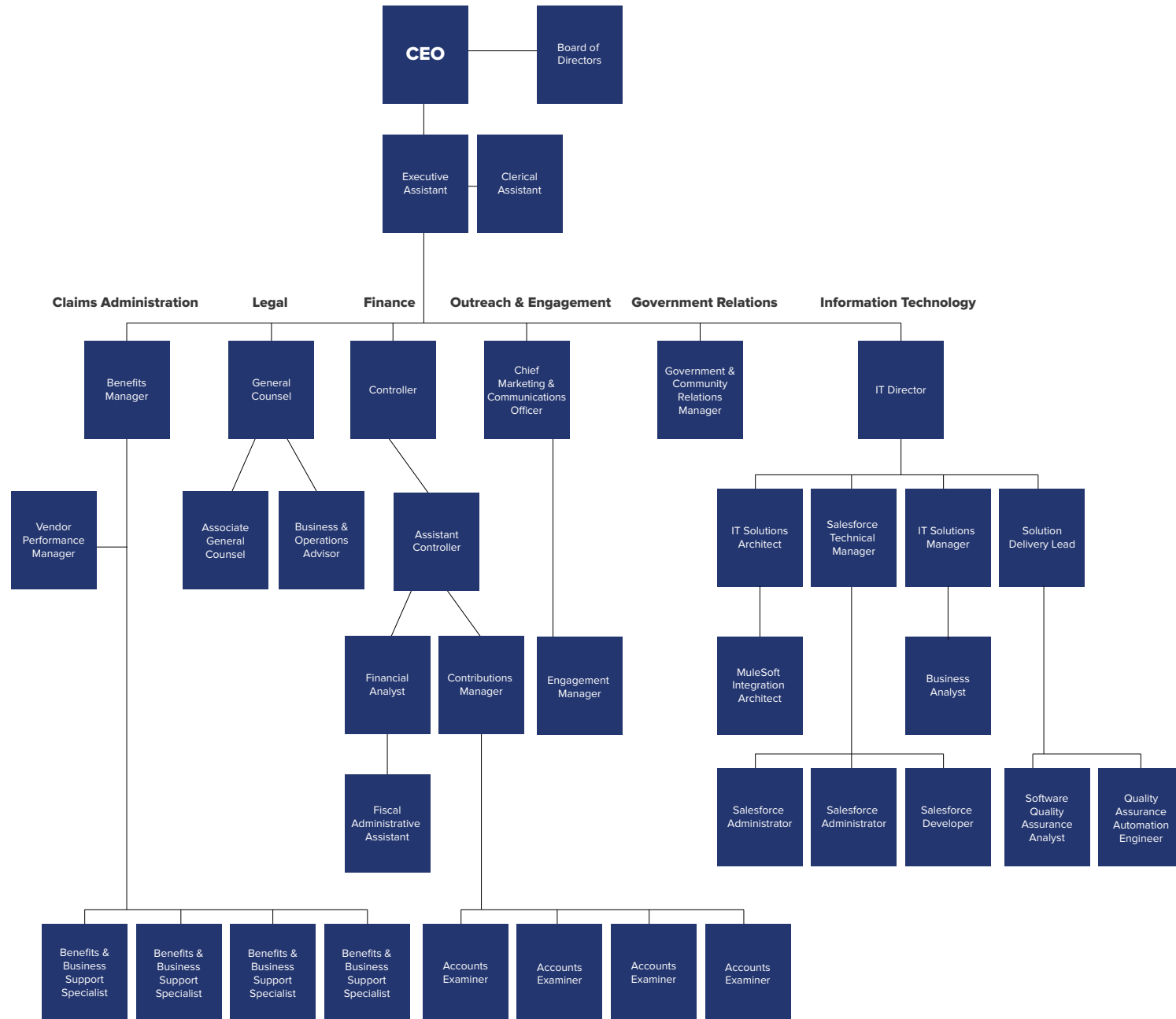
Consolidated Policies

For further information on the governance of the CT Paid Leave Authority, please see the [Authority's Consolidated Policies](#).



Connecticut Paid Leave

Organization Chart



United Way Customer Service Inquiry Reasons	
Benefit Questions	3,313
FMLA Questions	3,149
Help with Registration	2,514
Help with Payments	1,893
Other	1,539
Contribution Questions	1,099
Small Business Support	877
File Specification Questions	476
Private Plan Questions	271
Employer Refund Request	222
File a Complaint	179
Employee Overpayment Reimbursement	131
SFTP Access	126
Pay a Compliment	26
Webinar or Media Request	18
Report Suspected Fraud	15
Request Penny Test	5
Notice of CT Paid Leave Authority Contributions Due	1

APPENDIX C: Press Releases

Press Releases
CT Paid Leave program provides broader definition of family including lgbtq+ individuals
CT Paid Leave Authority provides benefits for organ transplant and bone marrow transplant recipients and their living donors
CT Paid Leave Authority issues data update
CT Paid Leave Authority provides benefits for pregnancy, miscarriage, and stillbirth
CT Paid Leave Authority provides tips on how to submit a complete application for paid leave benefits
CT Paid Leave Authority leave benefits that assist those with mental health conditions
CT Paid Leave Authority provides income replacement for caregivers
CT Paid Leave Authority provides income replacement for employees of small business
CT Paid Leave Authority provides process for reconsideration of denied claims
Erin Choquette named new CEO of CT Paid Leave Authority
CT Paid Leave Authority and CT Family And Medical Leave Acts provide differing but complimentary protection for Connecticut workers and their families
CT Paid Leave Authority issues 1099s to paid leave recipients
CT Paid Leave Authority issues data update
CT Paid Leave Authority uses “look back” method for calculating
CT Paid Leave Authority announces enhanced claims portal
CT Paid Leave Authority reminds employers of contribution requirements
CT Paid Leave Authority simplifies process for workers seeking pregnancy and bonding leave
CT Paid Leave Authority requires applicants to report changes that may affect duration or amount of benefits
CT Paid Leave Authority reminds Connecticut residents that they can take intermittent paid leave
April is sexual assault awareness month
CT Paid Leave benefits help seasonal, temporary, or part-time workers

APPENDIX D: In-person Events

In-person events
Newington Health and Wellness Resource Fair (Newington)
Celebrate West Hartford (West Hartford)
Norwich Sea Unicorns (Norwich)
Hartford Yard Goats (Hartford)
New Britain Bees (New Britain)
AARP CAREversations (Newington)
Disability Management and Absence Management Conference (Denver, CO)
Sam Tillery Back to School Rally and Backpack Giveaway (New Haven)
New London Pride (New London)
Stamford Health and Wellness Expo (Stamford)
Greater Norwich Healthy Living Expo (Norwich)
Stand Down for Veterans (Bristol, Rocky Hill, Norwich, Danbury, Bridgeport)
Women’s Better Living Expo (Bridgeport)
Safe Futures Annual 4K Safe Walk (Waterford)
WEZN Halloween Event (Bridgeport)
CBIA Employment Law Conference (Farmington)
CT Association for Healthcare at Home Conference (Hartford)
Washington State University Paid Leave Convening (Seattle, WA)
YWCA In the Company of Women (Hartford)
WBDC Women-Owned Business Day (Hartford)
National Small Business Week SBA Awards and Resource Expo (East Hartford)
Massachusetts Paid Leave Convening (Boston, MA)
Statewide Hospice and Palliative Care Summit (Southington)
Women’s Wellness Day (Hartford)
Making Strides Against Breast Cancer (Hartford)

APPENDIX E: Podcasts

All podcast episodes can be listened from the CT Paid Leave website

Podcast Topics (June 2022 – May 2023)
The Passion for Paid Leave: A Conversation with CTPL Board Chair Fran Pastore
Living with Alzheimer's
The Fight to Pass Paid Leave: CWEALF Executive Director Janee Woods Weber
Surviving Domestic Violence and Learning to FLYY
Veteran's Affairs Finds Paid Leave Important
Learning to Live with Breast Cancer
Married to the Military and the Hardships
ALS Takes a Life Every 90 Minutes
How One Man Found His Purpose After Adopting Six Children
Breath By Breath with Lung Cancer
AARP On Why Paid Leave Matters to Caregivers
How to Face the End of Life with Grace and Dignity
One Senator's Passion for Paid Leave: Julie Kushner
Minorities and Organ Donation
The Fight Continues for National Paid Leave
Family Planning, Reproductive Rights, and Primary Care with Planned Parenthood
Is Your Child Suffering from Mental Health Issues?
Women and Heart Health
Long COVID is Real and Debilitating, and It Can Last for Years
We've Heard about Birth Doulas, but What about a Death Doula?
An Athlete with Multiple Sclerosis Keeps on Moving
Minority Men and Mental Health
Parents, Kids, and the Mental Health Crisis
Making Strides Against Breast Cancer (Hartford)

APPENDIX F: Applications Received by Leave Reason, Gender, and Age

Own Illness or Injury	Total 44,907
(none)	244
Ages 59–77	34
Ages 43–58	94
Ages 27–42	93
Ages 18–26	23
Female	26,125
Ages 59–77	6,094
Ages 43–58	9,915
Ages 27–42	8,361
Ages 18–26	1,660
Ages 78–95	87
Unknown	8
Male	17,262
Ages 59–77	5,400
Ages 43–58	5,653
Ages 27–42	4,909
Ages 18–26	1,201
Ages 78–95	97
Unknown	2
Non-binary	161
Ages 59–77	51
Ages 43–58	53
Ages 27–42	40
Ages 18–26	13
Ages 78–95	4
Unknown	1,115
Ages 59–77	448
Ages 43–58	435
Ages 27–42	117
Ages 18–26	38
Ages 78–95	17

APPENDIX F, Continued.

Bonding	Total 19,807
(none)	59
Ages 43–58	7
Ages 27–42	48
Ages 18–26	4
Female	9,941
Ages 59–77	2
Ages 43–58	208
Ages 27–42	8,740
Ages 18–26	991
Male	9,693
Ages 59–77	12
Ages 43–58	712
Ages 27–42	8,212
Ages 18–26	755
Unknown	2
Non–binary	11
Ages 27–42	8
Ages 18–26	3
Unknown	103
Ages 43–58	16
Ages 27–42	78
Ages 18–26	9

APPENDIX F, Continued.

Pregnancy/Childbirth	Total 14,410
(none)	20
Ages 27–42	18
Ages 18–26	2
Female	14,301
Ages 59–77	4
Ages 43–58	249
Ages 27–42	12,006
Ages 18–26	2,041
Unknown	1
Non–binary	17
Ages 27–42	13
Ages 18–26	4
Unknown	72
Ages 43–58	3
Ages 27–42	58
Ages 18–26	10
Unknown	84

APPENDIX F, Continued.

Care of Family Member	Total 10,768
(none)	46
Ages 59–77	9
Ages 43–58	18
Ages 27–42	18
Ages 18–26	1
Female	6751
Ages 59–77	1505
Ages 43–58	2761
Ages 27–42	2213
Ages 18–26	257
Ages 78–95	12
Unknown	3
Male	3704
Ages 59–77	800
Ages 43–58	1290
Ages 27–42	1465
Ages 18–26	135
Ages 78–95	14
Non-binary	34
Ages 59–77	13
Ages 43–58	12
Ages 27–42	7
Ages 18–26	2
Unknown	233
Ages 59–77	78
Ages 43–58	89
Ages 27–42	56
Ages 18–26	10

APPENDIX F, Continued.

Family Violence	Total 132
Female	116
Ages 59–77	5
Ages 43–58	30
Ages 27–42	68
Ages 18–26	13
Male	16
Ages 43–58	4
Ages 27–42	9
Ages 18–26	3

Adoption/Foster Care	Total 212
(none)	1
Ages 43–58	1
Female	146
Ages 59–77	12
Ages 43–58	59
Ages 27–42	74
Ages 18–26	1
Male	63
Ages 59–77	3
Ages 43–58	9
Ages 27–42	50
Ages 18–26	1
Non-binary	1
Ages 27–42	1
Unknown	1
Ages 27–42	1

APPENDIX F, Continued.

Organ Donation	Total 36
Female	21
Ages 59–77	3
Ages 43–58	10
Ages 27–42	7
Ages 18–26	1
Male	15
Ages 59–77	2
Ages 43–58	7
Ages 27–42	6

Bone Marrow Donation	Total 7
Female	1
Ages 59–77	1
Male	5
Ages 59–77	1
Ages 43–58	1
Ages 27–42	3

Military Family Leave	Total 31
Female	28
Ages 59–77	1
Ages 43–58	6
Ages 27–42	21
Male	3
Ages 43–58	2
Ages 27–42	1

APPENDIX G: Average Annual Wages by Leave Type, by Age Range, and by Gender

Leave Reason	2023 Average Annual Wages	2022 Report
Adoption/Foster Care	\$62,570	\$68,716
Bonding	\$69,163	\$63,482
Bone Marrow Donation	\$59,054	\$29,237
Care of a Family Member	\$60,403	\$56,700
Employees Own Illness or Injury	\$57,887	\$54,124
Military Leave	\$58,791	\$41,780
Organ Donation	\$71,918	\$60,349
Personal Protected Leave	\$38,787	\$36,663
Pregnancy/Childbirth	\$57,809	\$55,558

Age Category	2023 Average Annual Wage	2022 Report
Age 18–25	\$28,730	\$25,702
Age 26–41	\$61,770	\$55,777
Age 42–57	\$64,870	\$63,230
Age 58–76	\$67,377	\$61,169
Age 77–94	\$39,010	\$38,030

Gender	2023 Average Annual Wage	2022 Report
(none)	\$82,072	\$108,815
Female	\$55,267	\$53,270
Male	\$71,106	\$63,255
Non-binary	\$46,825	\$38,597
Unknown	\$49,876	\$49,696



Connecticut Paid Leave

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