

Family Leave Insurance ESD Claims Process

The following represents the steps a claims specialist must complete to process a claim for benefits under the Family Leave Act:

1. Review the application and enter key data elements into the claim system —Did the claimant work enough hours to qualify for benefits? In some cases staff need to look at different “base years.” Claim Specialist may also have to search for missing wages reported incorrectly, or review wages/hours affidavits. Additional dedicated staff are required to find wages/hours if self employed/or not reported by the employer.
2. Determine maximum benefit level—Was the claimant working full or part time in “high 2 quarters”? Specialist must review four quarters of historical data to determine benefits level.
3. Make sure applicant has provided proper documentation of a birth or adoption.
4. Make sure applicant attests that he/she has taken leave from their employer in accordance with RCW 49.78.250.
5. Determine if applicant wants to withhold federal income tax.
6. Call applicant to explain the program and how to request weekly benefits. Also send material by mail. Assist with incomplete applications.
7. Send notice to employer. Call employer when clarification of information is needed.
8. If an eligibility issue arises, make a formal decision of whether applicant qualifies. Issues could include:
 - Did the claimant work enough hours to be eligible?
 - Is the claimant a parent?
 - Did the claimant properly give notice of family leave?
 - Is the claimant currently “on leave” from employer?
 - Does the employer have concerns that could effect eligibility determination?
 - Are maximum benefit levels set correctly?
 - Are weekly benefit levels set correctly?
9. Where needed provide support to applicant on weekly claims process or resolve and process weekly claims.
10. Determine if the waiting week has been completed.
11. Review requests for appeals and issue corrected decisions if new information is submitted. Take appropriate action on appeal rulings, including payment of attorney fees. Issue back payments if needed.
12. Respond to phone calls—questions from applicants or potential applicants—assume a significantly higher number of phone calls than claims processed.