

OREGON EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT

SEPTEMBER 2024 LEGISLATIVE DAYS

Interim House Labor and Workplace Standards Committee
Wednesday, September 25, 2024, 8:30 am

David Gerstenfeld, Director
Karen Madden Humelbaugh, Paid Leave Oregon Director
Lindi Leahy, Unemployment Insurance Director

DAVID GERSTENFELD

Oregon Employment Department Director

Benefit Programs

Unemployment Insurance

- Started in 1935
- For people who **need** jobs
- **Federal** program
- **Employer-funded** trust fund
- Eligibility
 - ❖ Earned enough money in the previous year (base year)
 - ❖ Not at fault for job loss
 - ❖ Able to, available for, and actively seeking work
- **26** weeks of benefits

Paid Leave Oregon

- Started in 2023
- For people who **have** jobs
- **State** program
- **Employee- and employer-funded** trust fund
- Eligibility
 - ❖ Earned enough money in the previous year (base year)
 - ❖ Family, medical, and safe leave
- **12** weeks (14 for pregnancy)

Where we were in May

Launch of unemployment insurance benefits in Frances

- Successfully launched third phase of the new computer system

House Bill 4035

- Funding available June 6 to create more permanent positions
- Hiring push began in April, began to see the impact in August

Phone Hour Changes effective June 3

- Short-term – Closed Mondays
- Long-term – Open 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Employees using time to process claims

Where we are in September

Frances Online is working

- More than 159,000 total customers have received benefits
More than \$1 billion in combined benefits paid
- More than \$3 billion in combined taxes and contributions
- We continue to make improvements

Hiring

- UI hired and trained 88 people
- Hired and trained 54 new positions in Paid Leave

Phone Hour Changes

- Reopened phones on Mondays starting Sept. 9
- Issues holding up UI benefit payments down 62% since July
- Reduced open Paid Leave claims older than six weeks by 92%

Continuous improvement for Frances Online

- Using feedback from customers and employees on how to make it faster and easier
- Examples:
 - ❖ New "claim status" labels and descriptions
 - Initial claims updated in May
 - Weekly claims updated in July
 - ❖ Updated numerous e-screens and letters
 - ❖ Changed order of notifications to streamline Paid Leave claims

KAREN MADDEN HUMELBAUGH

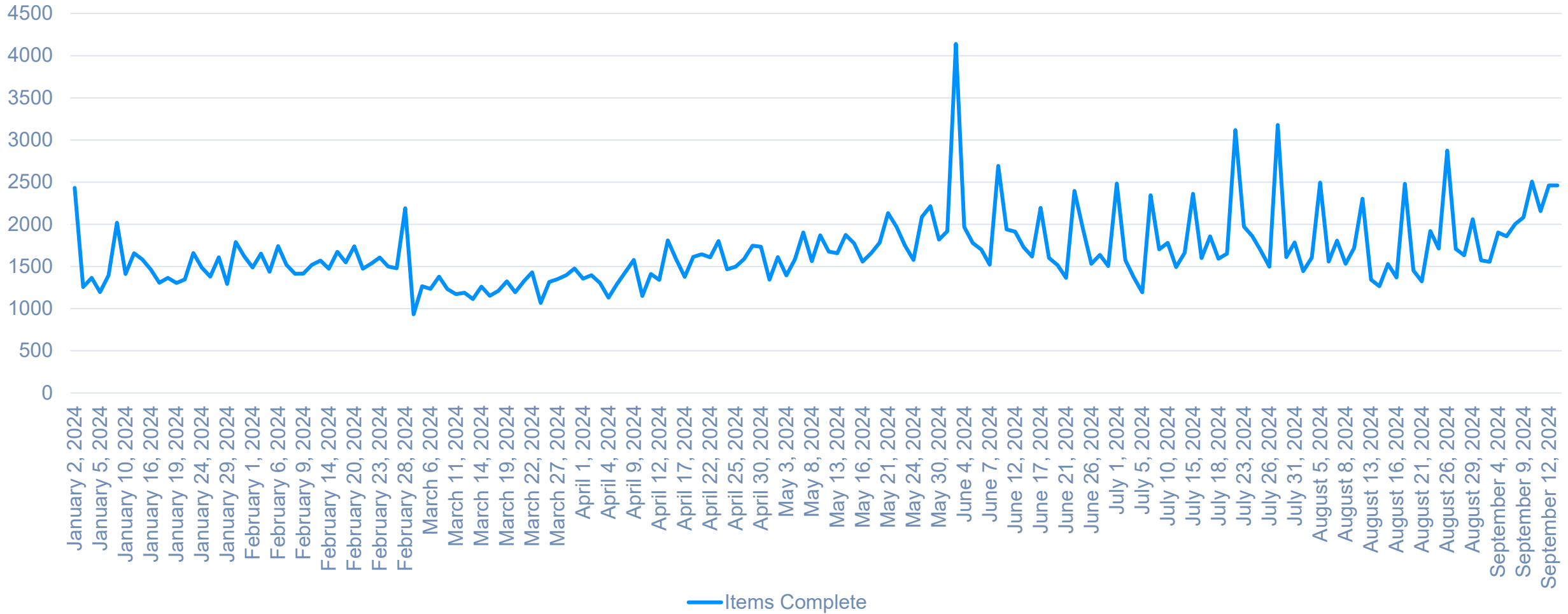
Paid Leave Oregon Director

Applications and Benefits

	May 1, 2024	Sept. 3, 2024
Total ID Verified Applications	79,650	118,000
Total Claims Resolved	64,000	106,000
Total Claimants Paid	56,000	81,300
Total Benefits Paid	\$410.6 million	\$613 million

Customer Service Touch Points

Customer Service Touch Points



Customer Care

Recent Customer Service Data (9/8/24 - 9/13/24)	
Total Incoming Calls	5,318
Average Phone Wait Time	50 mins, 18 sec.
Average Phone Talk Time	9 mins and 52 sec.
Electronic Messages Received (Daily Average)	787
Electronic Messages Answered (Daily Average)	794

	May 31st	September 6th	Percent Reduction
Total Number of Open Claims	20,187	10,192	49.5%
Open Claims Older than Six Weeks	18,055	1,521	91.5%

Legislative Reports / Conclusion

Report	Date	Contents
Legislative Report	July 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of Paid Leave Oregon benefit payments and demographics.• Contributions, revenue, and the health of the trust fund.
Seasonal Employees and Hiring Halls	September 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of Paid Leave's interactions with Seasonal and Hiring Hall employees.• Analysis of potential approaches to Paid Leave for temporary workers.
Programmatic Changes	September 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comparison to other state Paid Leave programs.• Analysis of daily vs hourly Paid Leave increments.• Analysis of methods for employment verification.
Apportionment of Duties between BOLI and Paid Leave Oregon for Protected Leave Laws.	September 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describes the current roles and responsibilities for BOLI and OED for Paid Leave Oregon and Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA).• Makes statutory recommendations.

<https://paidleave.oregon.gov/creating-paid-leave-oregon/>

LINDSI LEAHY

Unemployment Insurance Director

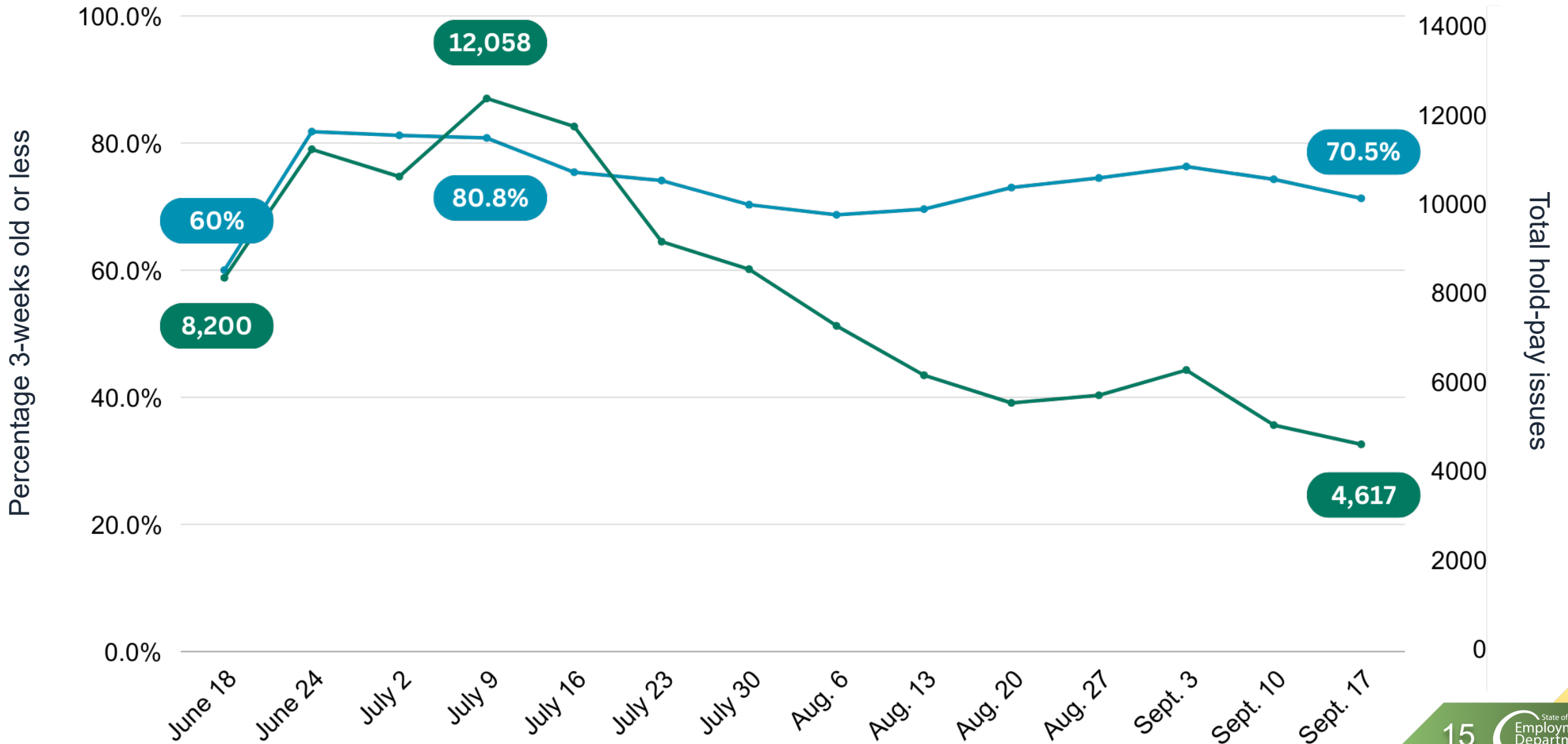
- **Launched March 4, 2024**
 - ❖ Total payments issued: **Over \$399 million**
 - ❖ Over 858,000 total weeks claimed
 - ❖ Over 77,000 claimants
 - ❖ Weekly average:
 - Roughly 30,600 weekly claims
 - Over \$14.2 million in benefit payments
 - ❖ Over 97% of weekly claims now filed online



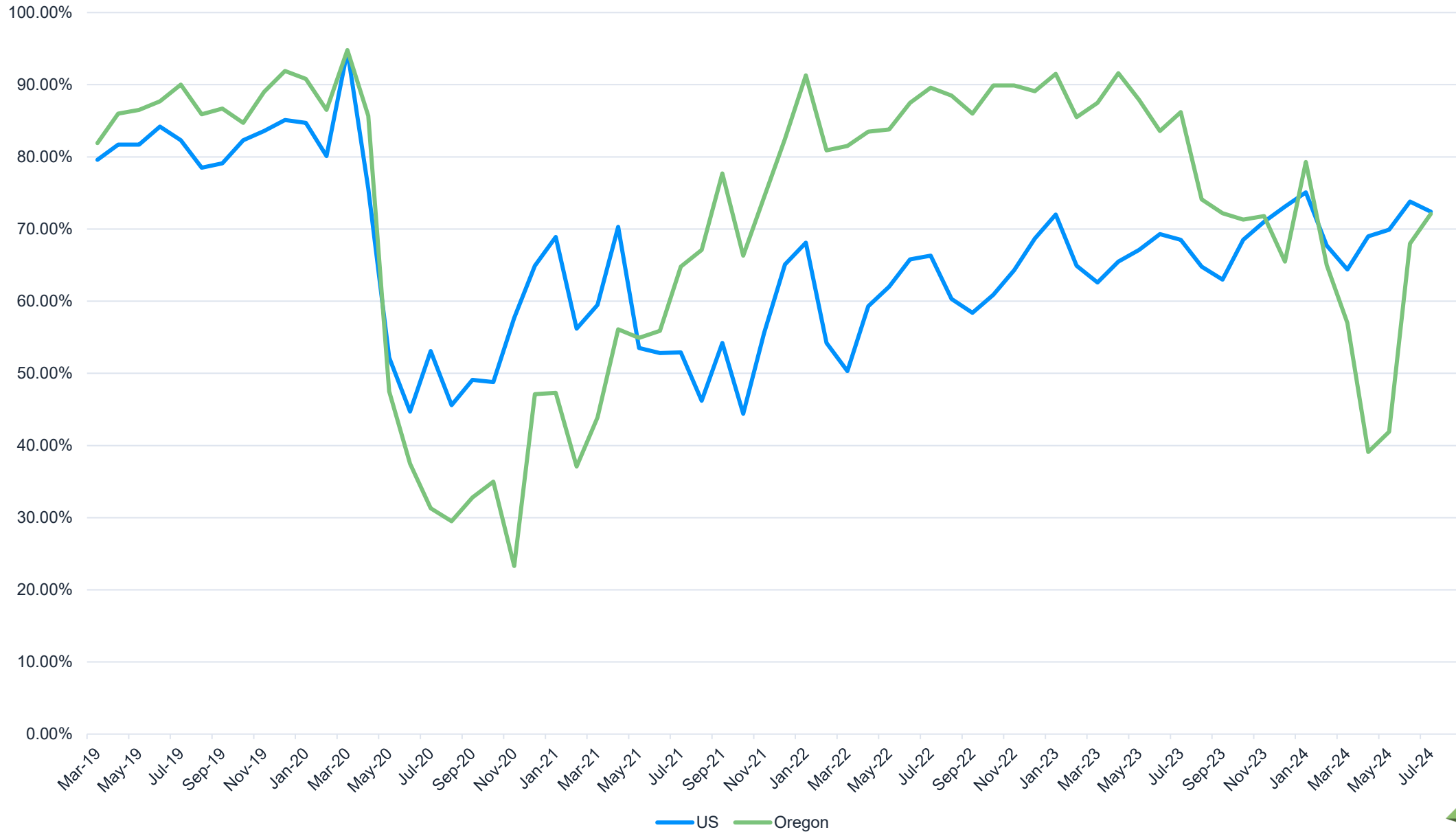
Customer Service Initiative – Focus Mondays

- **Launched June 3, 2024**
- **Priority:** Claim issues holding up UI benefit payments (hold-pays)
 - ❖ **Target:** Resolve within 3 weeks 80% of the time
 - Aligned with long-term customer service goals
 - ❖ **Progress:**
 - **Reduced total hold-pay issues by 62%** from peak in July
 - 3-week rate rose from **60% to over 70% consistently**
 - ❖ **Other priorities:**
 - Responding to electronic messages
 - Processing appeal requests
 - Resolving issues that require adjudication

Resolving hold-pay issues



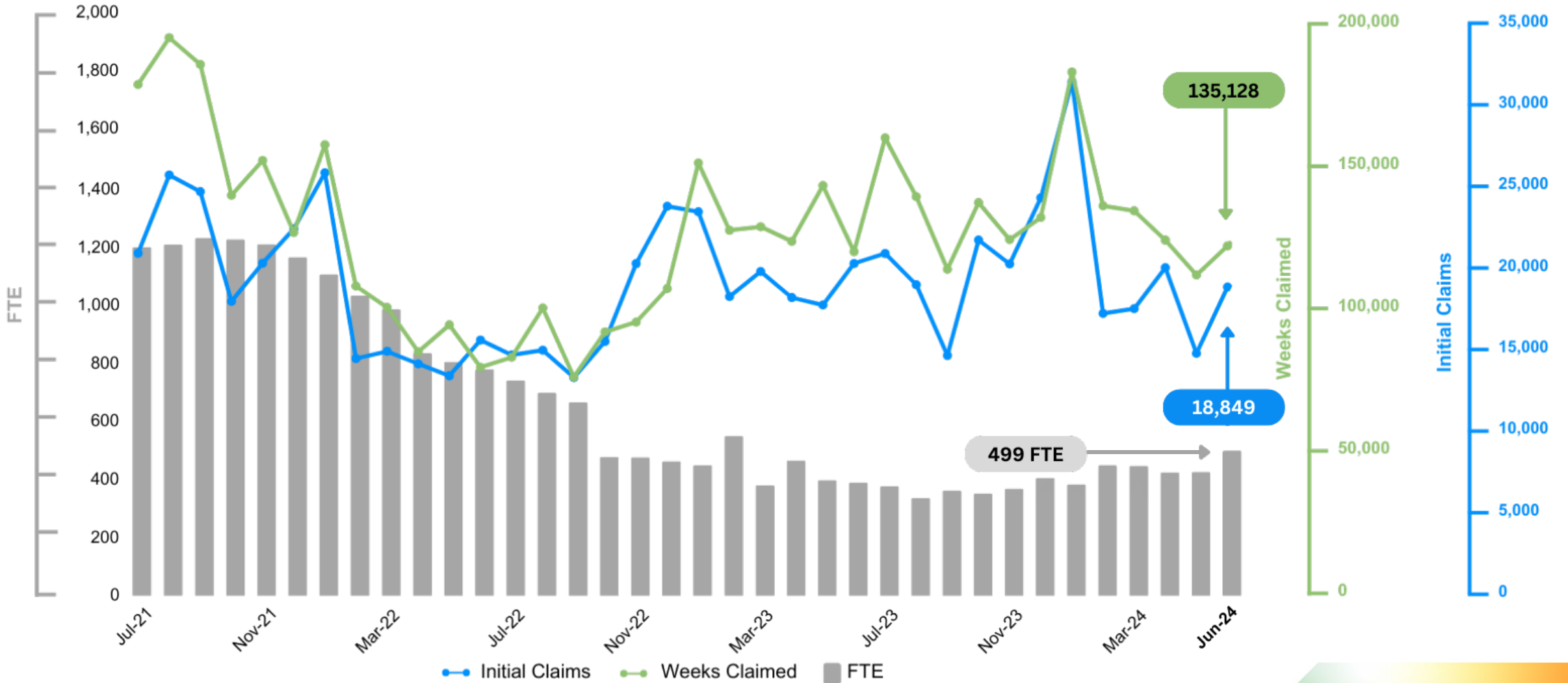
First payment timeliness



UI Customer Care Data

Phone data	May 13-17	August avg.	9/9-9/13
Total calls	6,180	5,098	6,321
Answered – w/in 15 minutes	49.1%	56.0%	55.7%
Answered – 15 to 30 mins	10.8%	9.8%	7.8%
Answered – 30 to 60 mins	11.5%	9.2%	9.3%
Answered – Over 1 hour	28.6%	25.0%	27.2%
Avg. wait time	1:29:11	1:12:47	1:15:40

UI Workload Compared to Staffing June 2021 – June 2024



- **House Bill 4035 (2024)**
 - ❖ Supplemental administrative funding through SEDAF
 - ❖ Funding for 72 permanent positions
 - Some temporary positions were made permanent
- **Hiring push**
 - ❖ Started on April 26
 - ❖ All permanent positions from HB4035 have been filled
 - ❖ Experienced some attrition through the hiring cycle
 - ❖ Continuing to hire for positions created by internal promotions
 - ❖ **Impact:** One of the main drivers of our recent progress

Steady, sustainable improvement

- Continue focus on **customer service**
 - ❖ Sustained improvement
 - ❖ Responsiveness
 - ❖ Timeliness
- **Maintenance phase** for Frances Online
 - ❖ Refine and operationalize processes
 - ❖ Roll out more letters in Spanish
- **Workforce Modernization Project**
 - ❖ Build requirements based on customer, employee, and partner feedback
 - ❖ Release Request for Proposal (RFP)

THANK YOU!