

UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



USPTO Hour

March 25, 2026




UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE ®

Commissioner's Update

Dan Vavonese

Acting Commissioner for Trademarks

New social media post

 **United States Patent and Trademark Office**  March 20 at 5:33 PM  

It's game on for your personal brand. 🏆🏀🏈

Your name, image, and likeness (NIL) may have its own brand value, just like the team logo on the front of your jersey – it's your personal brand. Student-athletes can now earn income from endorsements, merch and partnerships. But if you don't protect it, others may be able to use it – without your permission.

If you're using, or planning to use, your NIL to promote goods or services, that's a trademark, and potential FEDERAL protection and you may be able to register your brand, with America's Branding Agency, the USPTO.

Because when it comes to NIL brand protection, the best offense is a good defense. Learn more about trademarks and how to get started: <https://bit.ly/4dbbB48>

Your NIL Playbook

Protect your brand.





What is NIL?

Your name, image, and likeness is your brand. It includes the things that make you recognizable, like your:

- ▶ Name or nickname
- ▶ Image in photo or video
- ▶ Voice
- ▶ Signature
- ▶ Catchphrase
- ▶ Signature movement

If people recognize it, it may have value.

Why does NIL matter?	What if someone uses your NIL without permission?	How can the USPTO help?
<p>Your NIL can make you money with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsements Merchandise Sponsorships  <p>But if someone uses your NIL without permission, you could lose income or face damage to your reputation.</p> <p>Protecting your brand protects your opportunities.</p>	<p>We are not offering legal advice, but you may want to consider speaking with an attorney to discuss things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Filing for new or additional trademark registrations▶ Potential licensing opportunities▶ Whether to send cease-and-desist letters▶ Whether to take more formal legal action <p>However you play it, protect your brand!</p>	<p>If you use your NIL to promote goods or services, that's a trademark and you may be able to federally register it. Trademark registration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Protects elements of NIL✓ Provides nationwide public notice✓ Provides national protection✓ Makes enforcement easier. <p>+2</p>

New NIL webpage

An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know.](#)

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Patents Trademarks IP Policy Learning and Resources [Find It Fast](#)

[Home](#) > [Trademarks](#) > Name, image, and likeness

Protect your brand

Your **name, image, and likeness (NIL)** are part of your brand. A **federal trademark registration** can help protect your NIL when you use it to endorse products or make personal appearances.

In an ever-changing world of AI, it's important to **understand your rights.**



What's NIL?



NIL includes things that can identify you, like your:

- Name and nickname
- Image in photos and videos
- Voice, catchphrase, or signature move

Companies might pay to use your NIL to promote their products and services. For example, a company could pay you to post a photo wearing their clothing or to appear at a promotional event.

Trademark Administration Update

Greg Dodson

Deputy Commissioner for Trademark Administration

Trademark Administration

- **Information technology**

- Artificial intelligence today

- Rapid progress, exciting results
 - Class ACT suite
 - ✓ Assign design search codes
 - ✓ Generate pseudo marks
 - ✓ Identify international class
 - ✓ "Five months to five seconds!"
 - Quarter of TM staff access to UGAP LLM chatbot

Trademark Administration

- **Information technology**

- Artificial intelligence tomorrow

- Trademark Word and Image Search Technology (TWIST)
 - ✓ Most extensive improvement to external search in a decade
 - ✓ Overview
 - Mark description and color claim (Class ACT #4)
 - ✓ Overview
 - Requests for Information (RFI)
 - ✓ Targeted on fraud mitigation
 - ✓ Focused on internal workflows
 - Planning and budgeting for more

Trademark Administration

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Trademark basics

- > [Do I need a U.S.-licensed attorney?](#)
- > [Trademark fee information](#)
- > [Timeline to process an application](#)
- > [Identify if you have a trademark](#)
- > [Free resources in your state](#)



Search trademarks

- > [Trademark search system](#)
- > [Why search for similar trademarks?](#)
- > [Comprehensive clearance search](#)
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Apply to register your trademark

- > [Trademark Center updates and training](#)
- > [Application requirements](#)
- > [Respond to an office action](#)
- > [Select goods & services in ID Manual](#)
- > [Verify your identity](#)
- > [Madrid Protocol international protection](#)

Trademark Administration

The screenshot shows the top portion of the USPTO website. On the left is the 'uspto' logo and the text 'UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE'. On the right are links for 'About Us', 'Jobs', 'Contact Us', and 'MyUSPTO'. Below these is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Search uspto.gov' and a magnifying glass icon. A navigation bar contains buttons for 'Patents', 'Trademarks', 'IP Policy', and 'Learning and Resources', along with a 'Find It Fast' button. A blue breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Trademarks > Search our trademark database'.

Search our trademark database

Trademark Search system

Try new AI assisted image searching

Want to learn about the search builder feature? It can help you formulate your searches. Read more on our [trademark search system updates page](#).

Want to watch a search webinar? See our [federal trademark searching webinar series](#) to register for upcoming sessions, or watch [recordings of previous webinars](#).

Log into your USPTO.gov account for a better search experience. Logging in using the **Sign in** link in the top right corner helps you avoid errors when the system is handling heavy traffic. It'll also give you access to even more features and enhancements in the future, including options to customize your search experience based on your preferences.

Trademark Administration

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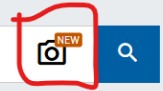
Trademark search

Home

[Help](#)

Image search (New!) ▾

Search by image



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Answers to frequently asked questions



[Announcements](#)

Important notifications, announcements and release notes

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Trademark search

Home


Image search (New!) Search by image

USPTO's image search function uses generative artificial intelligence (AI) in producing results. Image search can help you find and identify similar marks. It does not replace a [comprehensive trademark search](#) and does not provide legal advice

Upload an image Paste image URL

Drag and drop files here or Browse files

✓ dragon-images-free-4.jpg



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Trademark Administration

Trademark search

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Try [our new beta feature](#) to see more info when you open results On


 [Image search \(New\)](#) Search by image  

– Status filter 5,077 results for Export

Live 0
 Registered
 Pending
 Dead 5,077
 Cancelled
 Abandoned

– Class filter

Coordinated
 001 002
 003 004
 005 006
 007 008
 009 010



Wordmark


Status LIVE REGISTERED

Goods & services IC 009: Downloadable computer software and firmware, both for playing...

Class 009, 028, 041

Serial 88698820

Owners SAVVY DOG SYSTEMS, LLC



Wordmark [GAME ON](#)


Status DEAD ABANDONED

Goods & services IC 025: CLOTHING FOR WEAR IN JUDO PRACTICES; CLOTHING FOR WEAR IN...

Class 025

Serial 77429063

Owners THOMAS, LIONELL K



Wordmark [LURE ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTIONS LLC](#)


Status DEAD ABANDONED

Goods & services IC 041: Entertainment services, namely, providing on-line,...

Class 041

Serial 9893

Owners [REDACTED]

 Need help? Ask the USPTO [Virtual Assistant!](#)

[Feedback](#)

Trademark Administration

- **Information technology**

- Artificial intelligence tomorrow

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Trademark Administration

AI mark description assistance

Application selection

Contact information

Trademark details

Mark selection

Stylized wording and designs mark selection

Mark information

Color

Mark drawing

Mark details

Translation

Name and likeness consent

Goods and services

Review and sign

Pay and submit

Mark details (*) asterisk denotes a required field.

Your trademark drawing

250
1776-2026 ★★ ★
UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
Celebrating 250 years of life, liberty, and the pursuit of innovation

Literal element of the mark

The following drawing

250 17
years

- Trademark Center will offer optional AI-assisted mark description and color claim
- You can edit or delete the AI suggestion
- It will give customers without much filing experience an example of the kind of formatting we're looking for
- The Trademark Office issues many requirements to amend mark descriptions

NEW! AI assistance for your mark description

We can use AI to analyze your mark and suggest a description in the proper format. It can also generate a color claim for color marks. You can edit or delete this information.

Please review AI suggestions carefully. AI can miss things or make up details that aren't there.

[Try it!](#)

Trademark Administration

AI mark description assistance



NEW!



AI assistance for your mark description

We can use AI to analyze your mark and suggest a description in the proper format. It can also generate a color claim for color marks. You can edit or delete this information.

Please review AI suggestions carefully. AI can miss things or make up details that aren't there.

Try it!

Mark description

Describe your mark drawing. Include the generic names of all colors and where they appear, wording, and design elements. *

The mark consists of:

the stylized number "250" in red, with the "0" formed by a circle containing a faceted light bulb made up of red, blue, light blue, and gray geometric panels. The bulb has a dark blue base above three horizontal red and white stripes. To the left of the lower portion of the "2" appears the wording "1776-2026" in blue followed by three five-pointed stars in red, gray, and blue. A red horizontal rule extends beneath the date and stars. Centered below is the stacked wording "UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE" in blue uppercase letters. A thin red horizontal rule appears beneath that wording, above the tagline "Celebrating 250 years of life, liberty, and the pursuit of innovation" in blue. The white background represents transparent areas and is not claimed as a feature of the mark.

Color claim

Enter the generic names of colors in the mark drawing. You must claim all colors, except for white when it only represents background and isn't part of the mark.

The color(s)

red, dark blue, blue, light blue, gray, and white

is/are claimed as a feature of the mark.

Trademark Administration

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Trademark Administration

- **Information technology**
 - Tackle other problem sets with AI
 - TM Center, TM International, TM Exam
 - Realign Trademark Product Line
 - Complete our cloud journey
 - Remain flexible

Trademark Examination Policy Update

Amy Cotton

Deputy Commissioner for Trademark Examination Policy

RPO: clearing the inventory

Sanctions orders

- **7,349** applications and registrations affected (FY26)

Misassignments

- **7,388** applications denied a filing date (FY25 to date)

Expungement and Reexamination

- **86,277** goods and services cancelled (FY2022 to date)

Audit

- **902** registrations cancelled (FY24 to date)
- **3,527** registrations with goods/services deleted (37%)

Office actions to prompt abandonment

- **2,468** office actions issued (FY25 to date)

RPO: spread the word

Scam outreach

- FTC published: [Scammers are impersonating the United States Patent and Trademark Office | Consumer Advice](#)
- Better Business Bureau published: [Top five trademark scams targeting small businesses – BBB Institute For Marketplace Trust](#)
- Engagement with Google (on sponsored ads) & FTC (government impersonation rule enforcement)
- Social media Scam Alert for impersonation for USPTO, DOJ and DOC

Domain names

- **488** suspended out of 643 reported

RPO: increase efficiency

Account shut downs

- **1013** total

IT tools

- Filing behavior anomaly tool (in dev)
- Bulk transactions workflows (in dev)
- Case management system (in dev)
- Holding docket dashboard
- Risk predictor (RFI)

Hiring

- RPO: 3 attorney positions
- Trademark Assistance Center: 5 information specialists positions

Policy updates

TMEP updates

- November 2025; May 2026

Sound marks

- NTM webinar last December
- Sound and motion mark applications are indexed using design search codes as of February

Domicile address

- Eliminated requirement for secondary address/suite number

SORN 27

- Will allow USPTO to provide information about scammers in sanction orders

Marketing updates

Trademark webpages

- Improving navigation, content and design
- Producing videos and graphics
- Focusing on common tasks

A250

- Celebrating iconic registrations
- Designing inventor cards
- Issuing commemorative e-registration certificates

Trademark Operations Update

Christine Cooper

Acting Deputy Commissioner for Trademark Operations

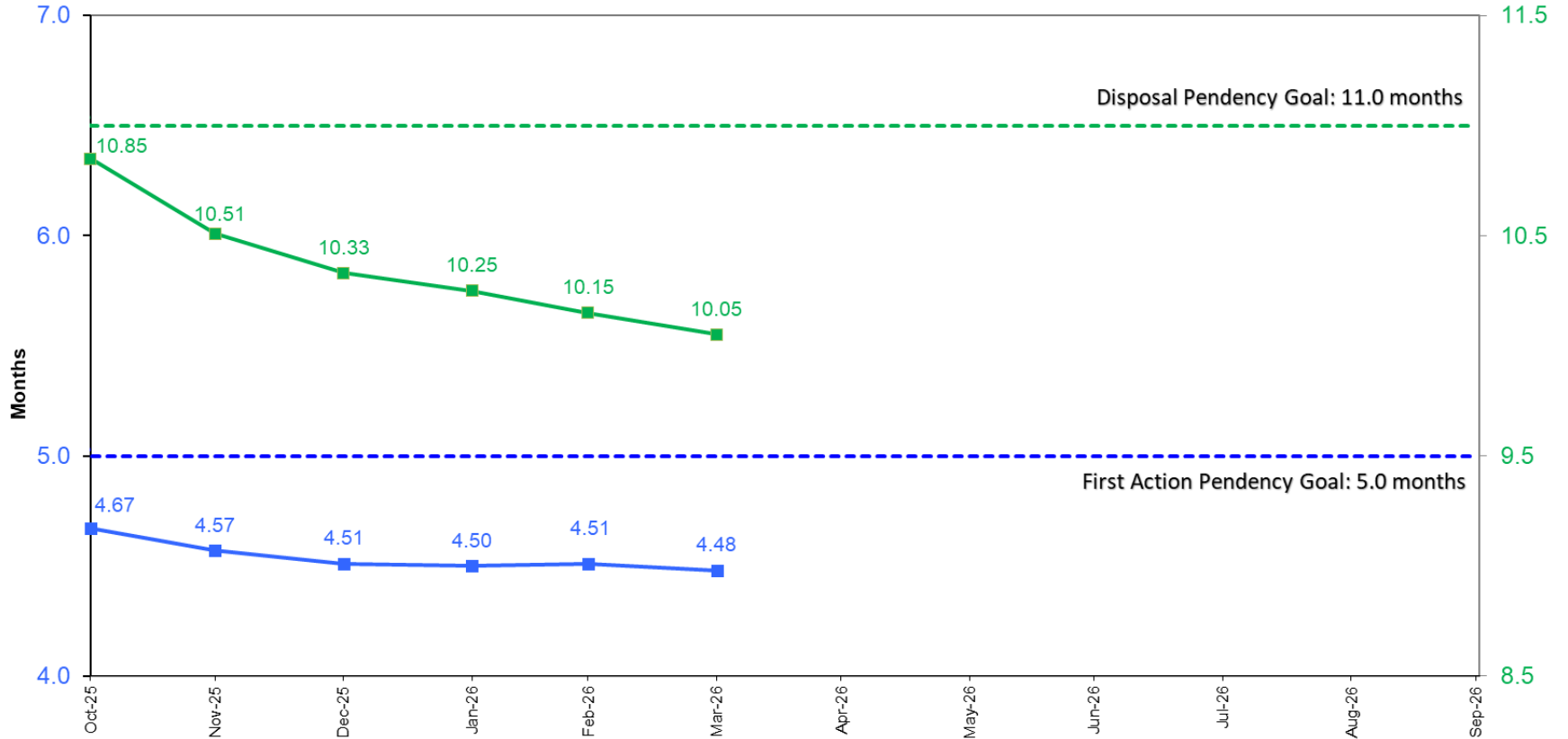
Statement of use processing

- Currently processing dates
 - September 22, 2025
- AutoProcessor tool
 - Launching April 1
- Customer service
 - 571-272-9550

Requests for certified copies

- Expedited service for certain requests
- Hire additional staff
- Customer service
 - Contact the certification branch at dsd@uspto.gov

FY26 pendency



Trademarks FY26 priorities



Pendency priorities

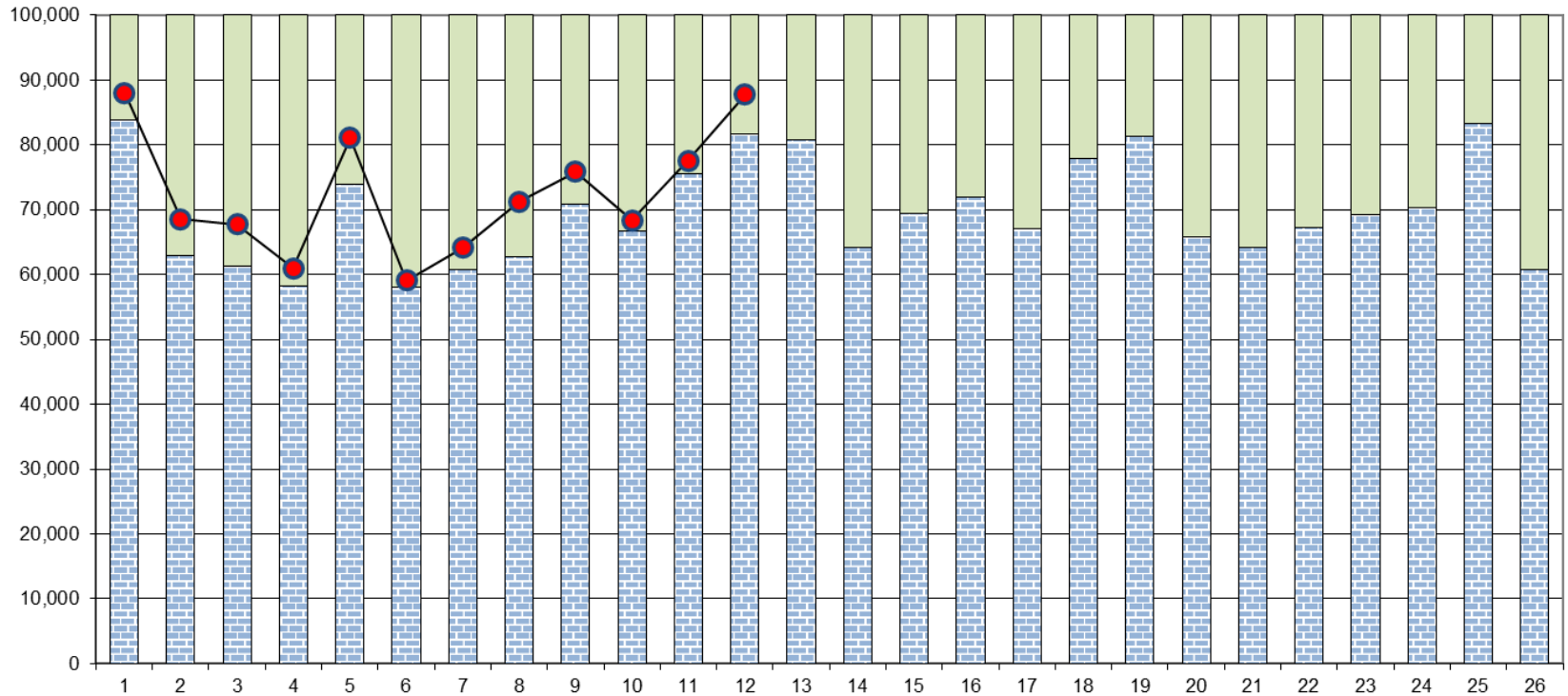
Forge the path to 4	Lower first action pendency	Targeting 4 months
		Continue first action award and prima facie case guidance
	Decrease disposal pendency	Targeting 9 months
	Boost total balanced disposals	Maintain hiring
		AI, automation and electronic tools to reduce exception processing

FY26 Balanced Disposals (BDs) produced

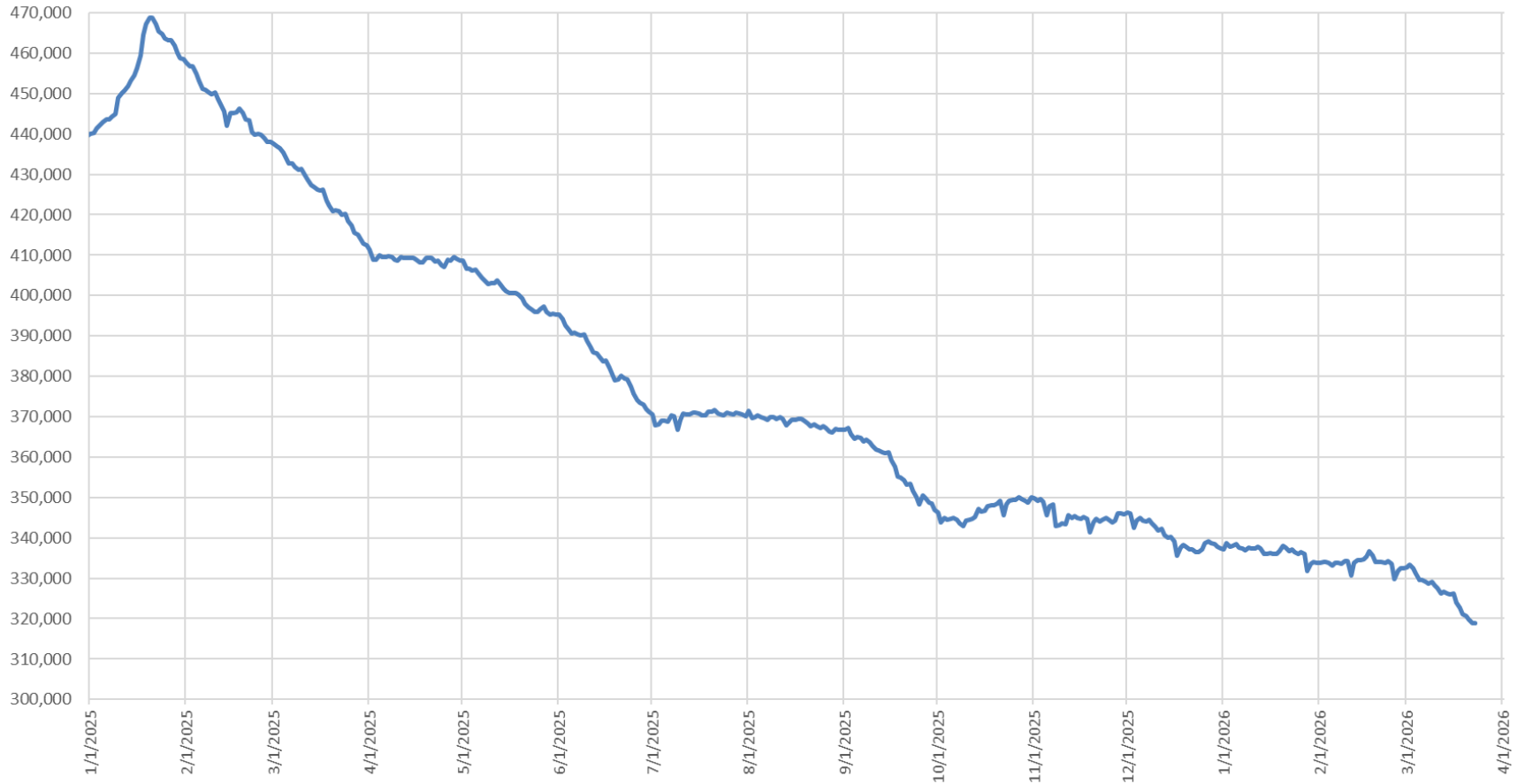
Biweekly BDs

Goal: 1,810,000 BDs

- Below Goal
- Above Goal
- Actual BDs

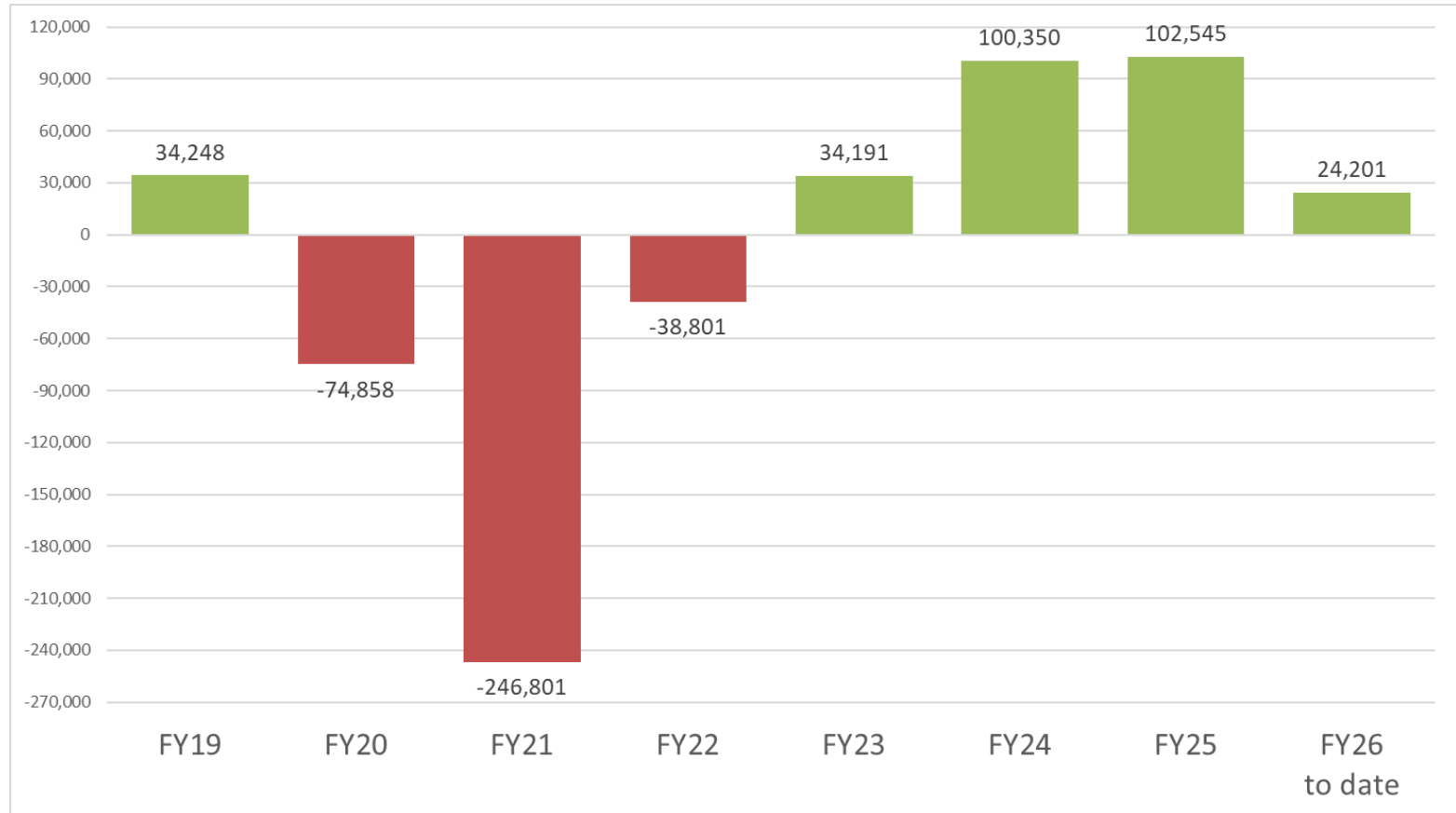


New case inventory 2025-2026



Inventory Management Index

First action production in excess of application filings



Examining attorney staffing levels and hiring

