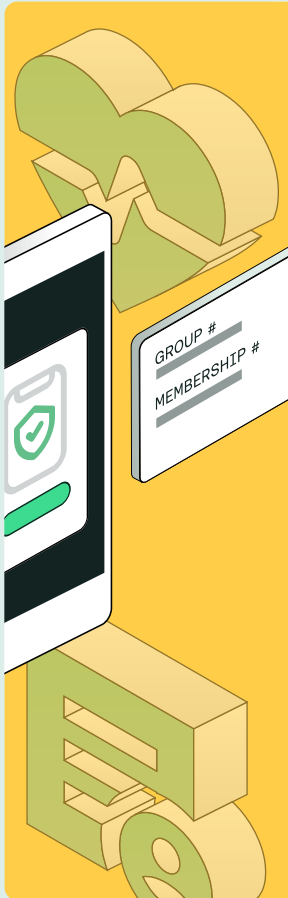


Open Enrollment Readiness:

3-Month Software Testing Workback Plan





With open enrollment typically beginning November 1, the window for ensuring your systems can handle the inevitable traffic surge is today.

This workback plan outlines a 3-month schedule of critical testing activities designed to move your team from planning to a confident, production-ready state ahead of open enrollment.

Why is preparing for open enrollment so crucial?

Take the cautionary tale of the 2013 Affordable Care Act rollout snafu: 4 million people visited healthcare.gov to sign up for a plan, but only 4 (no, that is not a typo) were able to complete the steps on day 1. Yikes.

By planning for peak traffic surges during this open enrollment period, you can avoid chaotic rollouts and lost revenue from failed enrollments, protect your brand reputation from negative user experiences, and ultimately build trust with your customers.

This initial phase is about establishing a solid foundation.
The decisions made here will guide the entire testing effort for the next three months.

1 Define scope and objectives:

Collaborate with business analysts and product owners to identify the most critical user journeys.

EXAMPLES

user registration plan comparison application submission payment processing

Establish clear, quantifiable performance goals (KPIs).

EXAMPLE

The plan comparison page must load in under 3 seconds with 5,000 concurrent users.

2 Finalize test environment and data:

Ensure a fully configured and operational test environment that is a near-perfect replica of production.

INCLUDING

hardware software versions network configurations third-party integrations

Generate or procure a realistic, anonymized dataset. The data volume should be sufficient to simulate production-level database load.

3 Select and validate tools:

Confirm the tools for load testing (e.g., JMeter, Gatling, k6), application performance monitoring (APM), and security scanning are in place and properly configured.

Run initial, small-scale 'smoke tests' to ensure tools can communicate with the application and gather metrics correctly.

Functional & Integration Testing

SEPTEMBER

10-7 WEEKS OUT

Aug.

Sep.

Oct.

Nov.

With the foundation set, the focus shifts to ensuring the application functions correctly from end to end before applying a significant load.

1 Comprehensive functional testing:

Execute a full suite of manual and automated tests against the critical user journeys defined in Phase 1. The goal is to verify that all features work as expected under normal conditions.

2 End-to-end integration testing:

Validate the full workflow, including integrations with third-party services. Ensure data flows correctly between all systems.

INCLUDING

payment gateways

government hubs

identity verification providers

3 Full regression cycle:

Run a complete regression test suite to ensure that recent code changes haven't introduced new bugs or broken existing functionality. This builds a stable baseline for the intensive performance testing to come.



Peak Performance & Security Testing

EARLY TO MID-OCTOBER

6-3 WEEKS OUT

Aug.

Sep.

Oct.

Nov.

This is the most critical phase for preparing for peak traffic.
The goal is to push the system to its limits to find and fix breaking points.

1 Load testing:

Simulate a multiple of the expected user load (ideally 2 or 3x expected traffic). Gradually ramp up the number of virtual users to your target KPI to measure response times, throughput, and resource utilization.

2 Stress testing:

Push the system beyond its expected capacity to find its breaking point.

ASK "How many users can we handle before performance degrades unacceptably or the system fails?"

3 Spike testing:

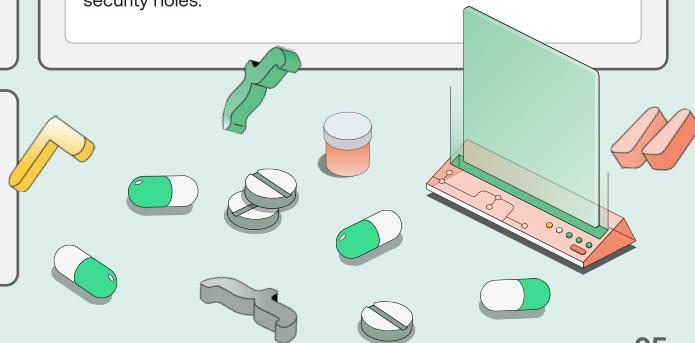
Simulate the sudden, dramatic traffic surges that occur around enrollment deadlines. This tests the system's ability to scale and recover from abrupt changes in load rapidly.

4 Endurance (Soak) testing:

Run a sustained, significant load over an extended period (e.g., 8-12 hours). This is crucial for identifying memory leaks, database connection issues, or performance degradation that only appears over time.

5 Vulnerability and security scans:

With a high volume of sensitive user data being handled, conduct thorough security testing, including penetration testing and vulnerability scans, to identify and patch any potential security holes.



Final Hardening and Go/No-Go

LATE-OCTOBER

2-1 WEEKS OUT

Aug.

Sep.

Oct.

Nov.

The final weeks are for remaining validation, bug fixing, and making the critical launch decision.

1 User acceptance testing (UAT):

Allow business stakeholders and a select group of test users to interact with the system. This ensures that the application meets business requirements and is user-friendly.

2 Targeted bug fixes and final regression:

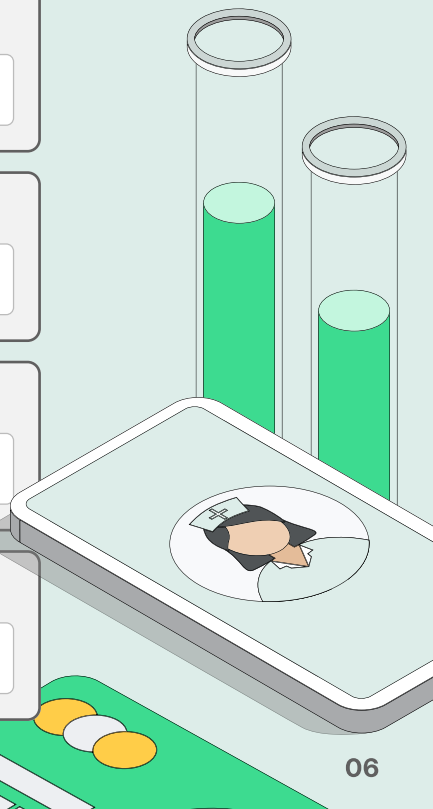
Focus exclusively on fixing "showstopper" bugs identified during performance testing and UAT. Run a final, targeted regression test on the patched areas.

3 Documentation and production readiness review:

Ensure all monitoring dashboards, alert configurations, and support playbooks are finalized and ready for the live environment.

4 Go/No-Go decision:

Hold a final meeting with all stakeholders to review the results of all testing phases and make a collective, data-driven decision to proceed with the November 1st launch.



Launch & Monitor

NOVEMBER 1 & BEYOND

0 WEEKS OUT

Aug.

Sep.

Oct.

Nov.

The work doesn't stop at launch. Real-time monitoring is key to a successful open enrollment period.

1 Activate "war room" monitoring:

Have a dedicated team closely monitoring APM dashboards, infrastructure health, and key business metrics in real-time.

2 Analyze Live Traffic:

Compare actual user traffic and behavior against the models used in testing. This provides invaluable data for refining future performance testing strategies.

3 Execute support playbooks:

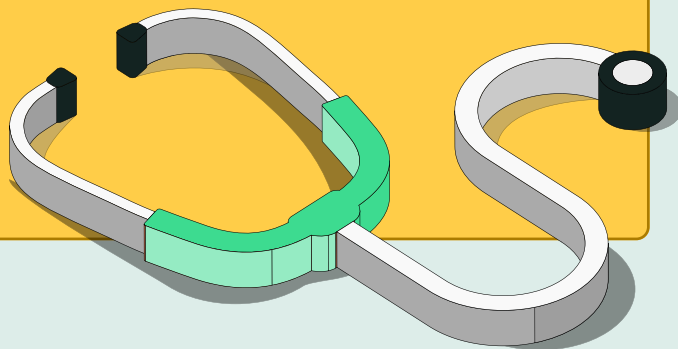
Be prepared to quickly respond to any incidents, using the pre-defined playbooks to diagnose and resolve issues with minimal impact on users.

Successfully navigating open enrollment requires meticulous planning and robust testing.

By following this 3-month workback plan, your organization can move from reactive scrambling to proactive readiness, ensuring a smooth, high-performance experience for every user.

For more insights on how Sauce Labs can help you achieve your open enrollment readiness goals, visit our healthcare solutions page or book a demo

[See Sauce Labs in action](#) →



About Sauce Labs

Sauce Labs is the leading cloud-hosted platform for automated testing of web and mobile applications, enabling fast delivery of high-quality software across the development lifecycle. Founded by the creators of Selenium, Sauce Labs has been the testing leader for over 15 years and now runs over 1 billion tests annually. Trusted by Fortune 500 companies like Toyota, Walmart, Verizon, and Fidelity Investments, its scalable, secure platform supports testing across thousands of operating systems, browsers, and devices while meeting the highest compliance standards.