



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Oregon Employment Department Begins Issuing Lost Wages Assistance Benefits**

**September 30, 2020 (SALEM, ORE.)**— Today the Oregon Employment Department began issuing Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) funds to qualifying Oregonians who were receiving PUA benefits or who self-certified that they received unemployment benefits for COVID-19-related reasons. LWA is a temporary emergency measure funded by FEMA that gives an additional \$300 per week to people out of work due to COVID-19 and who receive unemployment benefits. So far, \$225 million in LWA payments has been issued to 147,900 people.

“I am pleased to announce that Oregonians will soon receive their LWA payments. We appreciate their patience, especially as these past few weeks have been incredibly stressful,” said David Gerstenfeld, acting director of the Oregon Employment Department. “Our employees know how critical these benefits are to Oregonians, and the impact these funds will have on local communities. I commend our staff for their dedication to making this happen on-time while keeping other priority projects on track.”

LWA payments for all currently eligible Oregonians will be issued immediately. Claimants will receive individual \$300 payments for each week they are eligible, via their current method of payment. Claimants with electronic deposit (direct deposit or ReliaCard) should see funds in their account within three business days.

Following this initial release of payments, benefits will be issued to newly-eligible claimants on a daily basis until LWA funds run out. Eligible claimants who have not yet certified can still do so. There is no cut-off date for self-certification; however, since funds are limited, the Employment Department encourages claimants who have not certified to do so immediately.

Oregonians automatically qualified for LWA if they:

- Received unemployment benefits from July 26, 2020, through September 5, 2020; and
- Were either receiving PUA benefits during that time or they self-certified they were unemployed or partially unemployed due to disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Claimants receiving regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), and Extended Benefits (EB) can self-certify for LWA using the [Online Claim System](#). Individuals receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) do not need to certify because they certified when first applying for PUA benefits.



LWA was retroactive to eligible claimants for weeks ending:

- August 1, 2020
- August 8, 2020
- August 15, 2020
- August 22, 2020
- August 29, 2020
- September 5, 2020

LWA payments are taxable under federal law, just like regular unemployment insurance (UI) or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits. If taxes are withheld from other benefits, they will also be withheld from the LWA benefits.

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