



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Dec. 8, 2021

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## **Dec. 8 Oregon Employment Department Media Statement**

Our next media availability is scheduled for 1 p.m., Wed., Dec. 15.

### **Economic update**

On Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported the [U.S. added 210,000 jobs](#) in November. The unemployment rate dropped to 4.2%. Employment in transportation and warehousing rose by 50,000 in November, increasing by 210,000 jobs more than its February 2020 level. This number reflects more deliveries to doors during the pandemic and a seasonal bump of package deliveries during the holidays.

At the same time, brick-and-mortar stores lost jobs in November. Retail trade declined by 20,000 over the month. Much of those losses occurred in general merchandise and clothing stores.

U.S. health care saw little in the way of job growth again in November. Overall, the sector added 2,000 jobs. Recent differences in job growth continued in different parts of the industry. Doctors' and specialists' offices added 17,000 jobs in November, while nursing and residential care facilities lost 11,000.

The nation's hotels, restaurants, and bars also had relatively small job gains in November (+23,000). The leisure and hospitality sector has seen large gains this year though, with more than 2.4 million jobs added so far in 2021.

Today the BLS also released new data on [job openings and worker movements](#) nationwide. On the last business day of October, there were 11.0 million job openings. That was up from 10.6 million in September, but just shy of the record 11.1 million in July.



Layoffs remained near record lows, meaning employers hung onto the workers they already had on the job. About 4.2 million workers, or 2.8% of the workforce, quit their jobs in October. Workers at hotels, restaurants, and bars quit at more than twice the overall rate (6.0%).

## **Pandemic rule for earnings cap ending**

Starting the week ending Jan. 8, if a person claims a week of benefits, they may see a lower amount if they are working part-time and receiving benefits.

During the height of the pandemic, the Legislature passed HB3178 that currently allows people to earn up to \$300 a week and still receive unemployment insurance benefits. This helped more people continue receiving unemployment while working part-time. However, this temporary legislation expires at the end of the year.

Starting in January, the income limit will be either:

- One-third of the claimant's weekly benefit amount; or
- Ten times the current minimum wage—which is now \$14 per hour, so this would be \$140.

This means a person's unemployment insurance benefit amount will be reduced if they report earnings over those income limits. If a person earns more than their weekly benefit amount for a claimed week, they would not be eligible for that week of benefits.

The Employment Department wants to remind people that they must report all work and earnings for the week claimed, whether they have been paid for the week yet or not.

## **Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance program invites public comment on new rules**

As a reminder, the first batch of PFMLI administrative rules is in the public hearing stage. These 35 proposed rules relate specifically to wages, contributions, employer size, assistance grants, self-employed people and the PFLMI program's outreach plan.

The second hearing is scheduled for 4 – 6 p.m., [Thurs., Dec. 9](#). The public can register to attend this public hearing or submit feedback to [OED\\_Rules@employ.oregon.gov](mailto:OED_Rules@employ.oregon.gov). The first batch of PFLMI's administrative rules can be reviewed at the [OED website](#).



The PFMLI Rulemaking Advisory Committee met twice this month to discuss the second batch of PFMLI's draft administrative rules, which relate specifically to equivalent plans. Businesses have the option to develop their own equivalent plan instead of participating in the Oregon state PFMLI program.

PFMLI Rulemaking Advisory Committee meetings are one of many opportunities the public has to provide comments on draft rules before they enter into the formal rulemaking process. The drafts of the second batch of PFMLI's administrative rules can be reviewed at the [OED website](#).

## **Federal shut down**

Turning to the federal government, it is projected that the federal debt limit will be reached by Wed., Dec. 15; however, federally the House and Senate are working on raising the debt limit.

The employment department continues to closely watch for any Congressional action before midnight on Dec. 15 that will help us continue operations with federal funds.

## **WorkSource Oregon**

As Oregon continues [experiencing record low unemployment](#), the Oregon Employment Department and its WorkSource Oregon partners remain committed to helping all workers find good jobs and employers find talented employees. Here are some of the upcoming job fairs and employer [meet and greets](#) through [WorkSource Oregon centers](#).

- An [Intel Virtual Hiring event](#) is scheduled for 9 a.m. - noon on Thurs., Dec. 9.
- Meet the Employer events are scheduled in Salem on Wed., [Dec. 8](#) and [Thurs., Dec. 9](#).
- A job fair with interviews conducted on-site is scheduled from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Sat., Dec. 11 at the Portland VA Medical Center.

## **Last Week's Statistics**

Last week, the Employment Department paid more than \$17.5 million in benefits to more than 27,400 Oregonians.



From Monday, Nov. 29, to Friday, Dec. 3, the Employment Department answered more than 98% of calls in 15 minutes or less. Of all calls, 94% were answered within five minutes.

More than 96% of Contact Us inquiries were resolved in seven days or less.

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