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## **Oregon Employment Department Launches New Informational Website to Help Oregonians Navigate Unemployment Benefits during COVID-19 Pandemic**

**July 10, 2020 (Salem, Ore.)**—The Oregon Employment Department launched a new informational website today aimed at improving customer service for the record number of Oregonians applying for and receiving unemployment benefits.

The new site, [unemployment.oregon.gov](http://unemployment.oregon.gov), is designed to help Oregonians more easily find information on: the new programs created by the CARES Act, whether they might qualify for unemployment benefits, how to apply, and what's different during the pandemic.

“We’ve heard the many Oregonians who’ve said we need to do a better job communicating about their benefits and the unemployment claims process,” said David Gerstenfeld, acting director of the Oregon Employment Department. “Our goal with this new website is to provide clear information so people can file their claims, avoid unnecessary delays, and get their questions answered without having to call us,” he said. “We know that ultimately Oregonians need their claims processed, but we also want to ease some of the communication frustrations people have experienced.”

Over the next few days and weeks, the Department will add more content and features to the informational website. Highlights of the current site include:

- A Contact Us form to assist Oregonians who have been waiting the longest to have their claims resolved
- Information about new federal CARES Act benefit programs
- An Eligibility Quiz to help people figure out which program to apply for
- Step-by-step videos and guides for how to apply for regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits

-More-

- Resources for employers about the Work Share program, reopening business, and more
- Other resources available to Oregonians while they wait for unemployment benefits, such as benefits to help with rent, utilities, health coverage, or groceries
- A robust section of Frequently Asked Questions, which will be updated weekly as new questions arise

In March, high traffic to the Department's [oregon.gov/employ](http://oregon.gov/employ) site risked crashing all [oregon.gov](http://oregon.gov) sites, so the Department's COVID-19 content was moved to a temporary website commonly used by agencies during crises. The limitations of the content management system of the temporary website made information difficult to find. As one of his first steps as Acting Director, Gerstenfeld initiated the development of a cleaner, simpler, more user-friendly site. Some of the content on [unemployment.oregon.gov](http://unemployment.oregon.gov) existed on the old COVID-19 site, but much of it is brand new.

"I've made doing a better job of communicating with Oregonians a top priority," said Gerstenfeld. "We believe this website is a much-needed step in the right direction, and we appreciate your patience as we continue to make this a better experience for you."

The website underwent usability testing by the Department's Equity Council, partners, and claimants who have had challenges applying for unemployment benefits from both the regular UI and PUA programs. Improvements are ongoing.

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