



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 24, 2021

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Nov. 24 Oregon Employment Department Media Statement

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

Helping Oregonians Get Back to Work

The Oregon Employment Department and its WorkSource Oregon partners continue to help workers find good jobs and employers find talented employees. WorkSource Oregon centers are offering job fairs and employer meet-and-greets across the state.

Here are a few highlights of upcoming WorkSource Oregon [events](#):

- A [virtual job fair](#) hosted by the Oregon Dept. of Health Services is scheduled for Noon – 1 p.m. Tues., Nov. 30
- A [Veterans job fair](#) is scheduled for Sat., Dec. 4, in White City, Oregon.
- 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

More information on these events and more are at WorkSourceOregon.org.

Economic Update

Oregon's unemployment rate was [4.4% in October](#). The state has regained 74% of its pandemic recession job losses, compared with 81% for the U.S. The Employment Department also recently released unemployment rates and jobs numbers for [all Oregon counties](#) in October.

Eleven of Oregon's counties had unemployment rates at or below the statewide rate of 4.4%. Wheeler County had the lowest unemployment rate in the state (2.8%), while Grant County had the highest rate (6.4%) in October.



Oregon's rural areas are still further ahead in their collective recovery than the state's metropolitan areas. As of October, rural counties had regained 81% of the jobs lost in spring 2020.

Oregon's metropolitan areas have seen more improvement in job gains in recent months. As of October, Oregon's metropolitan areas have regained seven out of 10 jobs lost in the spring of 2020. At least nine out of 10 jobs have been regained in the Albany and Bend areas.

Within the Portland area, Multnomah still lags behind all other metropolitan counties. Half of the county's spring 2020 job losses were regained by October 2021.

Last week the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics released their [latest job openings and labor turnover](#) survey results for all states. Oregon made the list of states with significant changes in several aspects of job openings and worker movements in September.

- Oregon was one of 10 states with a significant decline in job openings (-11,000) between August and September.
- Oregon was one of 12 states with significantly fewer layoffs in September (-10,000).
- Oregon also was one of 20 states with a significant increase in job separations over the month. Job separations may occur due to layoffs, being fired, retiring, or quitting.
- It was also notable that Oregon's quits rate rose significantly, from 2.9% in August to 3.9% in September.

Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Update

The Oregon Employment Department will meet a significant milestone in the development of the PFMLI program next week. We appreciate the immense employee effort it took to get us to this point.

Two public hearings are scheduled on the first batch of PFMLI's administrative rules. These relate specifically to wages, contributions, employer size, assistance grants, self-employed people and the PFLMI program's outreach plan.

The virtual hearings are set for 9 – 11 a.m. [Tues., Nov. 30, 2021](#) and 4 – 6 p.m. [Thurs., Dec. 9, 2021](#). The public can register to attend either or both public hearings or submit their feedback to 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 (RAC) will meet 9 – 11 a.m. [Thurs., Dec. 2](#) and 9 – 11:30 a.m. [Tues., Dec. 7](#). They will discuss the second batch of PFMLI's



proposed administrative rules, which relate specifically to equivalent plans. Businesses have the option to develop their equivalent PFMLI benefit plan instead of participating in the Oregon state PFMLI program.

RAC meetings are one of many opportunities the public will have to provide comments on proposed rules before they enter into the formal rulemaking process.

The drafts of the second batch of PFLMI's administrative rules can be reviewed at the OED [website](#).

We are on track to meet our timelines and are confident in our ability to successfully launch this critically needed safety net program.

Employer Payroll Tax Update

As a reminder, the Employment Department has good news for employers next year. Oregon is lowering the [payroll tax rate](#) to an average rate of 1.97 percent (tax schedule three) for the 2022 calendar year. This is down from an average rate of 2.26 percent (tax schedule four) in 2021. House Bill 3389 allows Oregon to lower tax rates while other states are increasing UI tax rates and continuing to borrow funds.

The department [updated](#) the legislature about implementing HB 3389 last week in the 2021 Senate Interim Committee on Labor and Business [hearing](#).

The department has mailed individual 2022 tax rate notices to employers. Any employer who has not received their notice should contact the Employment Department Tax Section at OED_Taxinfo_User@oregon.gov or call 503-947-1488. Due to the projected high call volume, employers may receive a quicker response by emailing the department or using the Oregon Payroll Reporting System [website](#). More information is on our [employer taxes webpage](#).

Last week's statistics

- Last week, the Employment Department paid about \$18.7 million in benefits to nearly 26,700 Oregonians.
- From Monday, Nov. 15 – Friday, Nov. 19, 2021, the Employment Department answered more than 98% of calls in 15 minutes or less. Of all the calls, more than 94% were answered in under five minutes.
- Approximately 96% of Contact Us inquiries were resolved in seven days or less.



Upcoming Holiday Hours

All Oregon Employment Department offices will be closed Thursday, Nov. 25, and Friday, Nov. 26, for the Thanksgiving holiday and the UI and PUA contact centers will not be accepting inbound calls.

Because of the holiday, some benefit payments may be delayed, and people may not see their claims online until Tuesday, Nov. 30.

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Equal Opportunity program — auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Contact: 971-673-6400. For people who are deaf or hard of hearing, call 711 Telecommunications Relay Services.