

News Release

Date: Dec. 8, 2021

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Oregon Department of Human Services taking steps to meet historic demand for supports and services

Need to know:

- Oregonians are applying for health and human services assistance at historic levels
- Approximately 1.4 million Oregonians are receiving these supports and services from ODHS and OHA
- 38% of applications for benefits are processed within two business days
- About 31,000 applications are experiencing delays past their processing deadline

(Salem) – As Oregonians continue to experience economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are applying for medical, food, cash, and child care assistance at historic levels.

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is taking a variety of steps to meet this demand. These steps include increasing hiring efforts to fill existing positions, hiring contract workers, and temporarily shifting existing ODHS and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) workers to process eligibility applications.

These short-term strategies will help ODHS process applications and reduce the backlog while it works with the Oregon Legislature to increase front-line staffing levels to meet this historic increase in need.

ODHS and the OHA collectively serve more than 1.4 million Oregonians through the ONE integrated eligibility system. The [ONE system](#) fully launched in early 2021 and allows Oregonians to, for the first time, apply for medical, food, cash, and child care assistance in one place.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Oregon Health Plan (OHP) enrollment has increased by approximately 270,000 Oregonians, or 26%.
- Enrollment in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has increased by approximately 60,000 Oregonians, or 10%.

- Enrollment in Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) has increased by approximately 1,900 households, or 25%.

This increase in need created by the COVID-19 pandemic has exceeded the State's ability to serve Oregonians with its current staff, making it difficult to process applications in the timely manner Oregonians may be accustomed to. As a result, many Oregonians are experiencing delays in getting their applications processed and extended call wait-times.

Approximately 38% of applications for benefits are processed within two business days, some Oregonians however are experiencing delays.

As of Dec. 8, of the approximately 72,000 pending applications in the ONE system, about 31,000 were open past their processing deadline. Note: Deadlines vary depending on the benefit, from 24 hours to 45 days. Call wait times average up to 62 minutes, depending on the type of call.

“Coming into the COVID-19 pandemic life was difficult for many of our clients, especially people of color, Oregon Tribal Nations, people with disabilities and older adults,” said ODHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht. “We know that delays in processing applications for supports and services can cause more hardship and trauma for the people we serve. That is why we are committed to doing everything we can to process applications and the backlog in cases as quickly as possible.”

ODHS is preparing a staffing request for the February 2022 legislative session, specifically to address the increase in OHP caseloads. The national standard for funding of eligibility work is a ratio of 1 eligibility worker to 800 cases. With the recent increase in OHP cases, Oregon is currently operating at 1 eligibility worker to more than 1,600 cases.

ODHS also is sharing guidance for Oregonians who may need to apply for benefits or who may be waiting to hear back from the state about the status of their benefits.

ODHS offers these tips to Oregonians to help them as they apply for benefits:

- Before you begin an application, compile all documents you think you might need ahead of time. This can prevent your application from being held up and taking additional time. These documents could include: Identification, proof of income, social security numbers or other documents to determine eligibility for anyone in the household who is applying for benefits.
- If you have already submitted an online, in person or over the phone application you do not need to reapply. ODHS has your application and will process it as quickly as possible.
- If you applied through the ONE online application, you can track your application's status using the same system you used to apply. Log in to

one.oregon.gov to start tracking. Note: This website is accessible on computers, tablets and phones, but it is not optimized for mobile viewing.

- If you prefer to apply over the phone, the ONE Customer Service Center is open Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Currently hold times are lowest in the morning from 7 until 8 a.m.
- If you are only applying for medical benefits, you can get free application help from an OHP-Certified Community Partner. Community Partners are trained and certified to help clients understand and use their health coverage options, including helping them complete eligibility and enrollment forms. Find a Community Partner at <https://healthcare.oregon.gov/Pages/find-help.aspx>

Resources to help meet basic needs

- Find a food pantry: foodfinder.oregonfoodbank.org
- Dial 2-1-1, or text your zip code to 898-211
- www.211info.org
- [Aging and Disability Resource Connection](#)
- [Oregon Department of Human Services Resources](#)

Oregonians in need can apply for benefits, including SNAP, child care, cash assistance and Medicaid. Learn more at <https://govstatus.egov.com/or-dhs-benefits>. For local resources in your area, such as food or shelter, please call 2-1-1 or reach out to the state's Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) at 1-855-ORE-ADRC or 1-855-673-2372.

Visit https://oregon.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/SOR_External_Career_Site to find job opportunities with the Oregon Department of Human Services.

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Tips for applying for benefits

Oregonian residents are applying for medical, food, cash, and childcare assistance at near historic levels. Here are some tips for Oregonians who may need to apply for benefits or who may be waiting to hear back from the state about the status of their benefits.



Collect documents ahead of time

Before you begin an application, compile all documents you think you might need ahead of time. This can prevent your application from being delayed and taking additional time. These documents could include: Identification, proof of income, social security numbers or other documents to determine eligibility for anyone in the household who is applying for benefits.



Track your online application status at ONE.OREGON.GOV

If you applied through the ONE online application, you can track your application's status using the same system you used to apply. Log in to <https://one.oregon.gov/> to start tracking. Note: This website is accessible on computers, tablets and phones, but it is not optimized for mobile viewing.



Submitted an application? No need to reapply

If you have already submitted an online, in person or over the phone application you do not need to reapply. ODHS has your application and will process it as quickly as possible.



Lowest wait times are in the morning

If you prefer to apply over the phone, the ONE Customer Service Center is open Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Currently hold times are lowest in the morning from 7 until 8 a.m.

Consejos para solicitar beneficios

Los habitantes de Oregon están solicitando asistencia con alimentos, efectivo, servicios médicos y con el cuidado de niños en niveles casi históricos. A continuación, ofrecemos algunos consejos para los habitantes de Oregon que pueden necesitar beneficios o que estén esperando recibir noticias sobre el estado de sus beneficios.



Recoger sus documentos con anticipación

Antes de comenzar una solicitud, junte todos los documentos que crea que puede necesitar. Hacer esto puede evitar que su solicitud se retrase y se lleve más tiempo. Estos documentos podrían incluir: Identificación, comprobante de ingresos, números de seguro social y otros documentos para determinar la elegibilidad de cualquier miembro de su hogar que solicite beneficios.



Revise el estatus de su solicitud en línea en ONE.OREGON.GOV

Si presentó su solicitud a través del sistema ONE, puede ver el estatus de su solicitud utilizando ese mismo sistema. Inicie sesión en <https://one.oregon.gov/> y seleccione español en la parte derecha superior de la pantalla. Nota: Puede entrar a este sitio web en computadoras, tabletas y teléfonos, pero no está optimizado para verse en teléfonos.



¿Ya envió una solicitud?

No es necesario que vuelva a aplicar.

Si ya ha enviado una solicitud en línea, en persona o por teléfono, no es necesario que vuelva a presentar la solicitud. El Departamento de Servicios Humanos de Oregon tiene su solicitud y la procesará lo más rápido posible.



Los tiempos de espera más bajos son en la mañana.

Si prefiere presentar su solicitud por teléfono, el Centro de Servicio al Cliente del Sistema ONE está abierto de lunes a viernes de 7 a.m. a 6 p.m. Actualmente, los tiempos de espera son más bajos por la mañana de las 7 hasta las 8 a.m.