

Oregon Employment Department Overview

The Oregon State Employment Service was established after the passage of the federal Social Security Act of 1935. This act authorized the U.S. government to levy a payroll tax on employers to fund state-run unemployment insurance programs. The Legislative Assembly created the Oregon Employment Department (OED), as it exists today, in 1993.

OED strives to promote employment in Oregon by developing a diversified, multi-skilled workforce and by providing support during periods of unemployment. OED's mission is to help create an Oregon where meaningful work enables the state's diverse people and businesses to realize their full potential, creating prosperity in every community. The department serves job seekers and employers through 39 offices across the state – helping workers find suitable employment, providing qualified applicants for employers, supplying statewide and local labor market information, and providing unemployment insurance benefits to workers.

The department operates five core programs through the following divisions:

- Unemployment Insurance
- Workforce Operations
- Workforce and Economic Research
- Paid Leave Oregon
- Modernization

Core programs are supported by the following sections: Administrative Business Services, Communications, Equity and Inclusion, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Legislative Affairs. Overall agency leadership is provided by the OED Director's Office.

Unemployment Insurance Division

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) division is OED's largest division. Unemployment Insurance supports economic stability for Oregonians and communities during times of unemployment by providing unemployment insurance benefits to workers. Unemployment insurance benefits are partial income replacement when workers become unemployed through no fault of their own. The purpose of unemployment insurance is to support workers who have lost their jobs and to soften the impact of job losses on communities.

OED administers all state and federal unemployment insurance programs in Oregon. The UI division is responsible for determining the eligibility of filed claims, discouraging fraud, and paying benefits to eligible customers in an accurate and timely manner. The Contributions and

Recovery unit is responsible for collecting employer taxes to fund the program. Oregon's unemployment insurance program:

- Helps maintain purchasing power in communities where workers have been laid off and helps prevent secondary unemployment of workers who provide goods and services.
- Helps keep the skilled labor force in the locality. For workers, it means they may receive partial wage replacement income until they become re-employed. For employers, it means they maintain access to a more qualified workforce.
- Softens economic slowdowns. Since the program was created, the U.S. has experienced several major economic recessions. Unemployment insurance is important in recession recovery because it helps prevent sharp drops in consumer spending. It is an important tool in preventing possible full-scale economic depressions.

You can learn more about the Unemployment Insurance division and unemployment benefits at unemployment.oregon.gov.

Workforce Operations Division

OED's Workforce Operations division is the public partner in WorkSource Oregon that manages the connection of job seekers to employers, coordinates with other state agency partners that serve common customers, and operates most WorkSource Oregon facilities across the state.

WorkSource Oregon is a network of public and private partners who work together to respond to workforce challenges by providing high-quality services to individuals and businesses to achieve job attainment, retention, and advancement. Partners include: the Oregon Department of Corrections, Local Workforce Development Boards, the Oregon Youth Authority, Vocational Rehabilitation, State Nutrition Assistance Program, Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, the Oregon Department of Human Services, and the Oregon Commission for the Blind.

OED's Workforce Operations division also implements key federal programs: the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program, foreign labor certification, connection to apprenticeships, veterans programs, Oregon's Trade Act program, the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Training and Employment Program, and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

The Workforce Operations division is essential to Oregon's economy and to ensuring Oregonians are able to access the full range of programs at their disposal.

You can learn more about WorkSource Oregon at oregon.gov/employ/jobseekers/Pages/WorkSource-Oregon.aspx and worksourceoregon.org.

Workforce and Economic Research Division

OED's Workforce and Economic Research division collects, analyzes, publishes and distributes employment-related data for a variety of audiences, including elected officials, state agencies,

job seekers, media outlets, businesses and educational institutions.

The division is spread across Oregon: Its employees live and work throughout the state, which allows researchers to compile and analyze workforce and economic data as it affects specific communities—particularly communities of color, workers with disabilities, and veterans.

The Workforce and Economic Research division’s impact is far-reaching. In 2021 alone:

- The division distributed 797,000 reports, publications and newsletters.
- There were more than 10,000 interactions on the division’s blog and more than 710,000 visits (and 1.6 million page views) to qualityinfo.org.
- There were approximately 8,829 attendees at 711 presentations.
- The division fulfilled over 3,900 information and data requests.
- More than 773,000 publications from the division were accessed on our website.

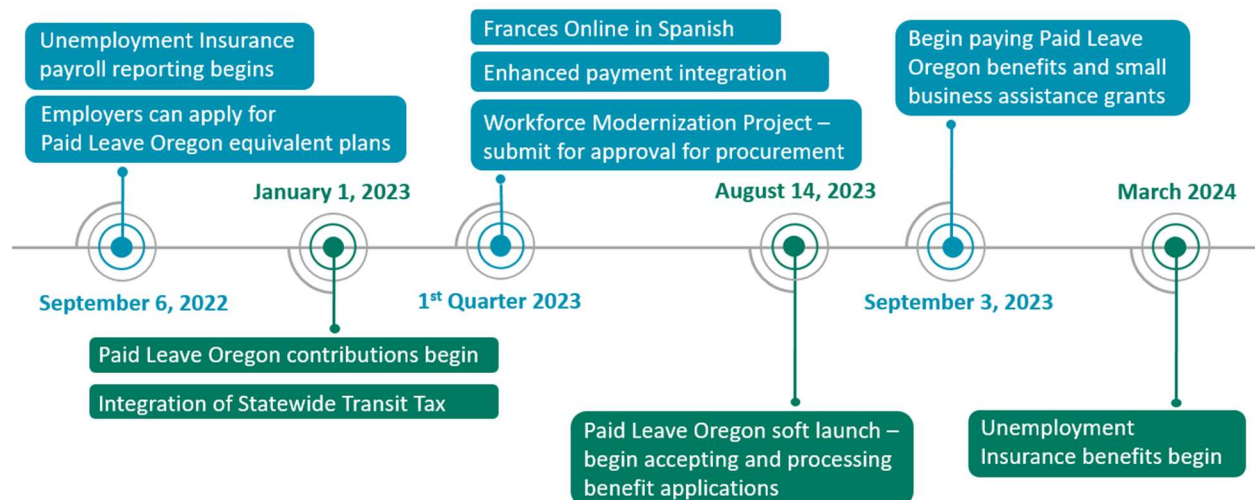
The Workforce and Economic Research division’s work helps to ensure that quality workforce and economic information can inform policy decisions, media stories and community investments, which benefits all Oregonians.

You can dive further into the data with us at qualityinfo.org.

Modernization Program

OED’s Modernization Program is a multi-year, multi-project initiative to transform OED’s business processes and core technology systems.

Modernization Program Projected Timeline



The Modernization Program will:

- **Enhance customer experiences** by delivering improved services, such as online self-service, automation, access to data, and integration with partner organizations.
- **Transform business processes** by leveraging modern system capabilities to provide improvements and efficiencies, delivering new tools for our employees, and supporting more effective services delivery to our customers.
- **Improve security** by improving our ability to anticipate and respond to data security threats and to manage access.
- **Modernize technology** by replacing the OED's aging computer systems that support unemployment insurance taxes, payment of unemployment insurance benefits, and delivery of employment services. It will also support both Paid Leave Oregon contributions and benefits.

We are approaching program activities iteratively and with care, and we are considering business needs and technology solutions from an agency-wide perspective. We are learning and adapting as we go, to help the agency better serve our customers in the future.

You can learn more about the program at oregon.gov/employ/modernization.

Paid Leave Oregon

On August 9, 2019, Gov. Kate Brown signed House Bill (HB) 2005 into law, creating a paid family and medical leave insurance program in Oregon, to be administered by OED. This was the culmination of several years of a dedicated effort, including a bipartisan, bicameral, legislative workgroup that considered many aspects of this complex issue.

At its core, the paid family and medical leave insurance program, now known as Paid Leave Oregon, addresses the inevitable: that workers need time away from work to attend to health and family concerns. In the short term, the program will provide an important safety net for working Oregonians who need to take leave for a qualifying event. In the long term, Paid Leave Oregon also will increase economic security; improve equitable access to health care; promote child development; reduce employee turnover; and promote long-term employee retention, productivity, and morale.

The program is funded by employer and employee payroll contributions beginning on Jan. 1, 2023. It covers all employers with at least one employee working in Oregon (excluding tribal governments and the federal government and their employees), and it includes the opportunity for self-employed individuals/independent contractors and tribal governments to elect coverage if they choose to participate. The program also allows employers the opportunity to apply for approval of an equivalent plan if they want to provide paid leave benefits through their own plan rather than through the state plan. Equivalent plans must be approved by OED and provide benefits that are equal to or greater than what is provided through Paid Leave Oregon. Employers offering equivalent plans will be required to report wages and plan details but will not be required to pay contributions to Paid Leave Oregon.

Once Oregonians can access benefits, in September 2023, Paid Leave Oregon will provide partial wage replacement for most workers and full wage replacement for Oregon's lowest waged workers, who are experiencing a qualifying life event. In most cases, this will be up to 12 weeks of leave to care for and bond with a child during the first year after the child's birth, or arrival through adoption or foster care; to provide care for a family member who has a serious health condition; to recover from an employee's own serious health condition; to take leave related to domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, or harassment (safe leave).

Staff in OED's Paid Leave Oregon division have worked tirelessly to get this program up and running on schedule. Implementation work is being completed in three main work streams—policy, operations and outreach—and OED has worked extensively in collaboration with an advisory committee, stakeholders and partner agencies during the program's formal rulemaking process. You can find the most up-to-date information about Paid Leave Oregon at paidleave.oregon.gov.

This document will be updated, as necessary. To get the most up-to-date information, learn more about these programs, or access our FAQs on a variety of topics, visit: unemployment.oregon.gov and oregon.gov/employ.