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(503) 947-1268 [Video](#) available by 10:00 AM

## Record Initial Claims for Unemployment Benefits in Oregon

During the week of March 15, the Oregon Employment Department received more than 76,500 initial claims for Unemployment Insurance benefits. During the first three days of the week of March 22, initial claims have been tracking at record levels again. This comes as a sharp increase from 4,900 initial claims filed during the week of March 8. The Employment Department is taking several measures to meet the unprecedented need for unemployment benefits, which is largely due to reduced hours and layoffs related to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

### Helping Oregonians

The Employment Department has been proactive in its response to an abrupt disruption in the economy by enhancing the performance and stability of our online claims system. Over the past two weeks, the agency also hired new employees, shifted existing staff working in other program areas, and trained them, doubling the number of employees working on unemployment claims. We will continue adding and training employees to process unemployment claims in the coming weeks.

Still, record levels of unemployment claims cause longer wait times, as the department works to gather and process the details factoring into each individual claimant's eligibility and weekly benefit amount. We encourage Oregonians who have lost their jobs to file claims using our [online system](#) to lower wait times by phone. A new video from the Employment Department shows step-by-step details for [filing an online claim](#).

The department also continues to offer [job seeker and employer services](#), including more phone and virtual options for appropriate social distancing. We are present to help Oregonians who have experienced tremendous disruptions, while also doing our part to follow health and safety guidelines for our communities.

The Employment Department's [COVID-19 web page](#) serves as a resource guide. It includes an overview of the Unemployment Insurance program, along with questions and answers about specific COVID-19 coronavirus-related situations and unemployment benefits. We continue to update our site with the latest information related to COVID-19 as new federal and state guidelines change or expand benefits. The Employment Department has also enacted [temporary rules](#), adding more flexibility for unemployment benefits to help Oregonians affected by COVID-19 business closures.

### Initial Claims

Of the 76,500 initial claims filed, the Employment Department has detailed information for the 22,800 claims processed during the week. The leisure and hospitality sector, which includes hotels and restaurants, saw the greatest number of initial claims for unemployment benefits (10,700). This reflects

some of the early impact of public health and safety measures. Many initial claims also came from workers in health care (2,100) and retail trade (1,400).

Multnomah, Washington, and Lane counties had the largest number of processed claims during the week of March 15. The largest increases in initial claims occurred in Union and Clatsop counties. More initial claims data by industry and area can be found on the QualityInfo.org [COVID-19 page](#).

### Oregon Unemployment Insurance Weekly Initial Claims by Sector

Sector	Week Beginning		
	March 8	March 15	Change
<b>Natural Resources and Mining</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Construction</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>1,246</b>	<b>388</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>1,313</b>	<b>885</b>
<b>Trade, Transportation, and Utilities</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>2,312</b>	<b>1,698</b>
Retail Trade	299	1,359	1,060
Wholesale Trade	108	227	119
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	207	726	519
<b>Information</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>Financial Activities</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>1,296</b>	<b>757</b>
<b>Education and Health Services</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>2,695</b>	<b>2,299</b>
Educational Services	78	561	483
Health Care and Social Assistance	318	2,134	1,816
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>10,654</b>	<b>10,055</b>
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	78	654	576
Accommodation and Food Services	521	10,000	9,479
<b>Other Services</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>771</b>

Source: Oregon Employment Department

Industry details are not available for all processed claims.

To file an online claim for unemployment benefits, go to [Oregon.gov/employ](https://Oregon.gov/employ) or call 1-877-FILE-4-UI.

For help finding jobs and training resources, contact your local WorkSource Oregon center or go to [WorkSourceOregon.org](https://WorkSourceOregon.org).

Equal Opportunity program — auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Contact: (503) 947-1794. For people who are deaf or hard of hearing, call 711 Telecommunications Relay Services.