



**REGIONAL SOLUTIONS OFFICE**  
**GOVERNOR KATE BROWN**

**Central Oregon Region**

Unemployment Insurance

- New rules don't cover self employed or sole proprietorships
- People still asking for unemployed to get paid for the first week of their unemployment; their first check should cover two weeks. There was perception that the Director could make this decision.

Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- Traded sector employers who are operating on a limited basis due to supply chain disruption or reduced demand
- Technology training to help employees work from home
- Manufacturers need more testing to ensure that workers who remain employed (food production) are not infected.

**South Central Region**

Unemployment Insurance

- Sole proprietors and self-employed need to be covered
- Employees should be paid during the waiting week

Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- Group preferred a small business focus and/or something that is specific to rural communities. Group felt that traded sector will have an easier time bouncing back.

**Mid-Valley Region**

Unemployment Insurance

- New rules don't cover self-employed or sole proprietorships
- People still asking for the unemployed to get paid for the first week of their unemployment.
- Specific recommendation from city HR:
  - Section (3) should read **able** to work where highlighted
  - person will not be deemed unable to work because:
  - Section (5) should read **available** where highlighted.
  - (5) Available for work – ORS 657.155(1)(c) and federal law require a person to be available for work in order to receive unemployment insurance benefits. A person will not be deemed unavailable for work because:
- Question: How will someone prove they were affected by COVID-19?

## Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- Support traded sector companies to retool or expand production of PPE/medical/needed supplies.
- Support transportation of supply chains – food/supplies
- Use to leverage other funds like Business Oregon’s Retention Program; offer technical assistance; buy down loans including with entities like the Mid-Willamette Valley COG
- City could receive funds to cover water/sewer bills for up to 3 months. This would remove debt from balance sheet. Target people on UI or businesses affected by COVID-19
- Create an “angel fund” which small businesses could access
- Develop a mailer piece in both English and Spanish to be sent to small businesses about how they are to handle layoffs, employee rights, unemployment benefits etc.
- Critical childcare needs is of the essence.
- Assisting businesses to retool and to help businesses who offer recovery food services
- PPE supplies critical
  - Retooling manufacturers and others to produce PPE
  - Retooling and outfitting the DOC prison workshops for prison workers, but if you applied that back to the private industry that would benefit all.
- Establish a platform to work/real time data sharing collaboratively rather than working in silos.
- Start advertising Oregon is back in business when the time come
- Assist with rental for residential/commercial
- Forgivable loans/focus on business owners who have not laid off their employees.
- To advocate for what is going to have the most to provide an economic impact.
- Support business classes and advising services
- Expand Layoff aversion funding which can support for technical assistance, wages, help pay for a workshare program, etc.

## South Valley / Mid Coast Region

### Unemployment Insurance

- Updated rules generally look good, but the system is still asking all of the standardized questions. This needs to get updated immediately.
- There needs to be clear language on when a person can apply (it doesn’t need to be on Sunday).
- Make sure the rules are translated in all needed languages and the translated versions are all in alignment.

## Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- They were all aligned and clear that it should go to leverage funding opportunities that already exist (example being the DevNW model in Lane County region that is moving to Linn and Benton counties and we are working to identify how we can get it to Lincoln as well).

## Metro Region

### Unemployment Insurance

- Make undocumented workers eligible for UI under temporary rules.
- Somewhere I heard that furloughed workers are eligible for unemployment benefits without having to seek other unemployment. But if after 4 weeks they haven't returned to their former employer, then they have to abide by the usual unemployment rules. I wonder if that 4 week period could be doubled?
- Can there be any flexibility for gig workers and artists/performers and other non-traditional "employees" who have been operating as sole proprietors? Your perspective on whether there might be any relief for them – and/or whether this is something that the Advisory Council can take up in the coming weeks – would be great to hear.
- Filing for UI will be confusing for some because these adjustments will not be able to be coded in the UI system. This means folks will have to compare their situation to these draft rules and then fill our UI in a way that doesn't feel accurate.
- The Disqualifications section seems unclear/vague
- I don't really see any language that would reflect those folks who are choosing to quarantine because they are a high-risk population (compromised immune system, etc.) – and there are many of those folks out there. Not sure where they fit into the rules, but should be reflected.
- One issue that keeps coming up is the wait time, I am not sure if the state can shorten the wait time, but if it were possible I think it would be helpful. Another key issue is expanding unemployment to contract workers and other people who are independently employed, I think that's a Federal issue, but hopefully, the state is tracking it. Finally, I think we should also think about simplifying the rule changes so that people can access the information more easily.
- Allow UI for quarantined workers and those caring for family members
- Waive UI tax increases for employers who are forced to lay off workers during this health emergency
- Waive the one-week waiting period before workers can receive UI benefits
- Waive the work search requirement while social distancing measures are in place
- Clarify "good cause" to quit a job to include outbreak-related circumstances
- Promote the use of Oregon's UI "Work Share" option that combines reducing hours and providing partial UI benefits instead of a full layoff - learn more about Work Share

### Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- Provide expense offsets for companies shut down by the Governor's order (i.e. nail salons, barbershops, tattoo parlors, bars, restaurants, etc.)
- Prepare for the "rebound" by creating a website for Oregon job postings once this is over.
- Support temporary workforce groups like Adecco, Manpower, etc. helping find jobs now for groups like Fred Meyer, Amazon, etc.
- Spend it on transforming some impacted manufacturing companies into COVID-19 critical supply manufacturers.
- Set up a "help center" for now and after the pandemic explaining to and helping impacted companies understand and take advantage of what programs are available to help them (and how to get the money – whether it be federal, state, or county)
- Divvy it up on a pro rata basis to the counties, specifically for assisting businesses affected by COVID 19.

- This crisis is highlighting the challenges of very siloed systems. If you could incent or leverage SRF with other infusions of funds from DOL, and cross that with existing funds from State (DHS, OED, HECC, etc.) through to County, alongside of private philanthropy, and braid funds - we could work as one to ensure we have a recruitment and training strategy for critical workers, increase the number of individuals working as Community Navigators who can guide people to successfully access/utilize support service dollars (housing, food, child care, training, coaching, MH, etc.) to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus on their and their families' lives.
- Directing funds to the WorkShare program would be very valuable to our traded sector companies
- Low-interest or no-interest loans to small businesses via CDFI's.
- In light of social distancing, wage subsidies to retain employees or support people who are not eligible for UI.
- Focus on the most immediate concern related to combating the spread of the virus, so funding for rapid COVID testing and production of personal protective equipment/medical gear.
- Grant assistance for commercial rent and operations/payroll costs, particularly for retail and commercial businesses
- Use it to match loans to or backstop equity investments in Oregon businesses (loan loss reserve approach).
- Deploy to mid-size companies that had to do short-term layoffs and retraining with community college.
- The funding has to come quick and be targeted for a specific purpose. There is so much need out there that it will be spent immediately.
- Operating Grants for businesses that are pivoting to pandemic response: We have one that is doing hand sanitizer and another doing face masks. Any money would help them go quicker.
- Offer to labor and small businesses, especially food, beverage, and entertainment industries (and/or those impacted most severely) that can readily demonstrate an economic injury.
- Funds need to go directly to either workers or Oregonian-owned small businesses (under X number of employees) effected most severely. Please do not spend any of the money on consultants, technical assistance, or some other staff-intensive program that will delay or diminish the impact of the \$5M.
- Near Term:
  - Allocating some of these funds to the local jurisdictions as matching funds to their small business grant and loan programs. Perhaps a 60/40 split, with 60 percent being allocated to match other local efforts and 40 percent being preserved for SRF needs.
- Mid Term:
  - Having additional matching funds for local programs from the SRF can also support some communities' efforts to have low to no interest loans for small and medium sized businesses to aide in whether the economic impacts, as well as public policy orders that affect business operations, as a result of COVID-19.
  - Some communities may also see medium and larger businesses seeking to expand and/or new recruitment leads emerge during a recessionary period during and post COVID-19. It will be important to still have access to state incentives and and other programs to ensure that the state and the local jurisdictions can be competitive on these fronts and not lose these investment opportunities.
- Long Term:
  - Seek to ensure that SRF will still be available to support business expansion, retention and recruitment efforts.

## **South Coast Region**

### Unemployment Insurance

- Is there a way to prioritize processing of minimum wage workers, who are likely to have low/minimal savings?
- Where can independent contractors go for assistance?

### Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- Assistance with IT infrastructure could allow more remote work.
- Funding for bridge loans to keep companies afloat if (when) EIDL processing times lengthen.
- Capacity for business assistance with EIDL or forthcoming federal programs.

## **Southern Oregon Region**

### Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- Finance capital for re-tooling to address PPE shortages
- Assistance to keep child care on line for essential workers
- Funding to keep chamber infrastructure in place for communications and assistance to small businesses
- Speed of access to financial resources is critical
- Assistance should be provided to sectors/industries rather than individual businesses
- Delay CAT collections

## **Greater Eastern and Northeast Regions**

### Unemployment Insurance

- Help for sole proprietors, freelancers and non-traditional employees/employers who normally don't qualify for UI.
- Stop the "looking for work" requirement and one-week waiting period.
- Promote (and increase funding) the use of Oregon's UI "Work Share" option that combines reducing hours and providing partial UI benefits instead of a full layoff

### Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- Put into helping create regional emergency loan funds similar to what other regions are setting up. One problem in Eastern Oregon is that we don't have any active CDFI's so it will be harder for us to get something set up quickly so if this statewide pot of money could help it would be nice.
- Recognizing that many of our small businesses won't make it through this so keep this money to help make sure that the businesses that do come out of this downturn are better prepared to succeed.
- Don't make them LOANS that these small businesses won't be able to pay back.

## **North Central Region**

### Unemployment Insurance

- Sole proprietors and self-employed need to be covered
- Waive 5-day waiting period (waiting week)

- Work Share employment requirements to be reduced to 10-20% rather than 60%. Allows businesses to keep employees working (small amounts) and allows them to ramp up faster without rehiring. May some other benefits in place, i.e. health insurance.
- Address work search requirements, recognizing the inability of participants to access employment due to COVID-19.
- Specific clarification for language: Section (3) should read **able** to work where highlighted person will not be deemed unable to work because:
  - Section (5) should read **available** where highlighted.
  - (5) Available for work – ORS 657.155(1)(c) and federal law require a person to be available for work in order to receive unemployment insurance benefits. A person will not be deemed unavailable for work because

#### Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- Help staff up regional networks (primarily SBCDs), especially those in rural areas, to respond to federal SBA Programs
- Get the capital to the ground as quickly as possible by focusing on distribution to regional CDFIs/Economic Development entities that have strong ties to local business community.
  - Buy down loans or use funds to allow for flexible lenders through CDFI –
  - RERTs can advise on closest to the ground distribution method (through cities, counties, EDDs, or CDFIs)
- Support transportation of supply chains – food/supplies
- Special Districts/local government; could receive funds to cover water/sewer bills for up to 3 months. This would remove debt from balance sheet. Target people on UI or businesses affected by COVID-19.
- Technology training and software/hardware to facilitate employees work from home
- Fund WorkShare program to support the above change.
- Provide resources specific to supporting dislocated low-wage workers or vulnerable workers receive re-employment assistance and job training to adapt their skills for new careers
- Keep tenants in their rental spaces:
  - Tax-free, no strings rent vouchers for commercial and residential UI tenants
  - Incentives to landlords -
    - Federal tax relief for up to 2 years to cover some income losses due to renegotiated rents. –
    - Work with commercial banks to lower and stagger rates for existing loans after forbearance period.
  - Direct payments to shuttered commercial tenants to pay portions of rental costs (25%-50%) requires landlords to take reduced payments.
- Offer zero-interest, forgive-able loans to shuttered micro-businesses (under 10 employees) to pay rent (see above) and other fixed expenses for 3 months.
  - Could be paid back in 2-3 years with payback clause if still in business.

## **North Coast Region**

### Unemployment Insurance

- Support needed for self-employed, sole proprietors, and gig workers

### Small Business Relief Fund Suggestions

- Bridge loans for businesses waiting for SBA loan assistance (4-6 weeks lag)
- Small business needs right now primarily revolve around meeting payroll, payroll tax, and paid leave obligations
- Discussed concerns that gap funding decisions will be difficult, given risk of default is high, businesses on shaky footing prior to this disruption; need system to assess the health of the business
- Invest in community-based relief funds to leverage other efforts
- Invest in Ports to help continue moving commerce
- Equipment for hospitals
- Ag/Farmers (not eligible for SBA lending)
- Some recommended waiting for investment until rebuilding phase