Licensing continues to be a challenging trend, with 75 percent more cases in 2015 than in 2014.

Case: Background Check Backlog
Pam owned an assisted living facility and had trouble getting required background checks for new and existing employees finished. Without the completed check, an employee couldn’t be hired or retained. The Background Check Unit (BCU) responsible had exponentially more background checks to complete with less staff, and was in the midst of implementing a newly created central registry for such workers. The Small Business Advocate worked with BCU to get Pam’s checks completed in record time. The BCU requested and received additional funding for staff to reduce the amount of time needed for background checks.

Case: Licensing Confusion
Pauline is just one of hundreds of business owners who called the Office of Small Business Assistance to ask if a license was necessary for her business. The Small Business Advocate worked with the Oregon Department of Transportation to clarify what licensure was necessary for Pauline’s limousine service and how Pauline could get the process started.

Policy
Three percent of cases involve policy implementation issues that have a negative effect on businesses.

Case: DEQ Dilemma
Linda got a call from Oregon’s Department of Environmental Quality out of the blue. Turns out, her business was located at the former site of a dry cleaner. DEQ needed to make sure the property and building were free of contaminants. The Small Business Advocate worked with DEQ to get necessary testing funded by a federal program, minimize interruptions to Linda’s business, and to help improve the agency’s communication with Linda and other customers during and after testing. Test results came back normal.

Jurisdiction
The Jurisdiction for the Office of Small Business Assistance is limited to Executive branch state agencies, so working with partners at the local and federal level is critical to helping businesses find solutions. OSBA referred 11 percent of cases to these partners in 2015, an increase of 8 percent over 2014.

Looking Ahead
Data on these cases doesn’t just illustrate challenges to Oregon small business. It points the way toward opportunities to improve state government – ways to make focused investment and reality-based policy changes.

Entrepreneurs tell us every day what their real challenges are, and the data is clear. There were more licensing, procurement and tax-related cases in 2015. Problems with investments and reality-based policy changes.

Every business has tax obligations. So it’s not surprising that many cases are tax related. The challenge? There was an 81 percent increase in the number of tax cases in 2015.

Case: Employment Tax Glitch
Joan is the treasurer for a nonprofit that shed the last of their employees in late 2014. She sent a form to the Oregon Employment Department to correct their records and reduce the amount “owed” to what they should have been: zero.

Procurement
In 2014, procurement related cases were barely a blip on the radar, but the state has made strategic investments in improving the procurement landscape for small business. There were 143 percent more procurement cases in 2015, demonstrating increased awareness of the Office of Small Business Assistance.

Case: Procurement Predicament
Rachel helps intellectually and developmentally disabled people by offering arts, recreational and vocational programs, paid for with federal dollars managed by Oregon’s Department of Human Services (DHS) in their newly expanded eXPRS online payment system. Rachel was first underpaid, then overpaid for services, which affected her cash flow. The Small Business Advocate worked with DHS to identify problems in their online system, gaps in their provider training, and ways for Rachel to get help while technical improvements were started and functionality added. DHS also formed a quality assurance team and started making changes in client contracts. Agency leadership committed to continue crafting a system that works for all stakeholders.

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### Cases Opened/Closed

![Cases Opened/Closed chart]

### Case Locations

![Case Locations map]

### Caseload

- 2015 Cases: 219 (56% more cases)
- 2014 Cases: 140

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**2015: Small Business by the Numbers**

Oregon Secretary of State’s Office of Small Business Assistance Annual Report