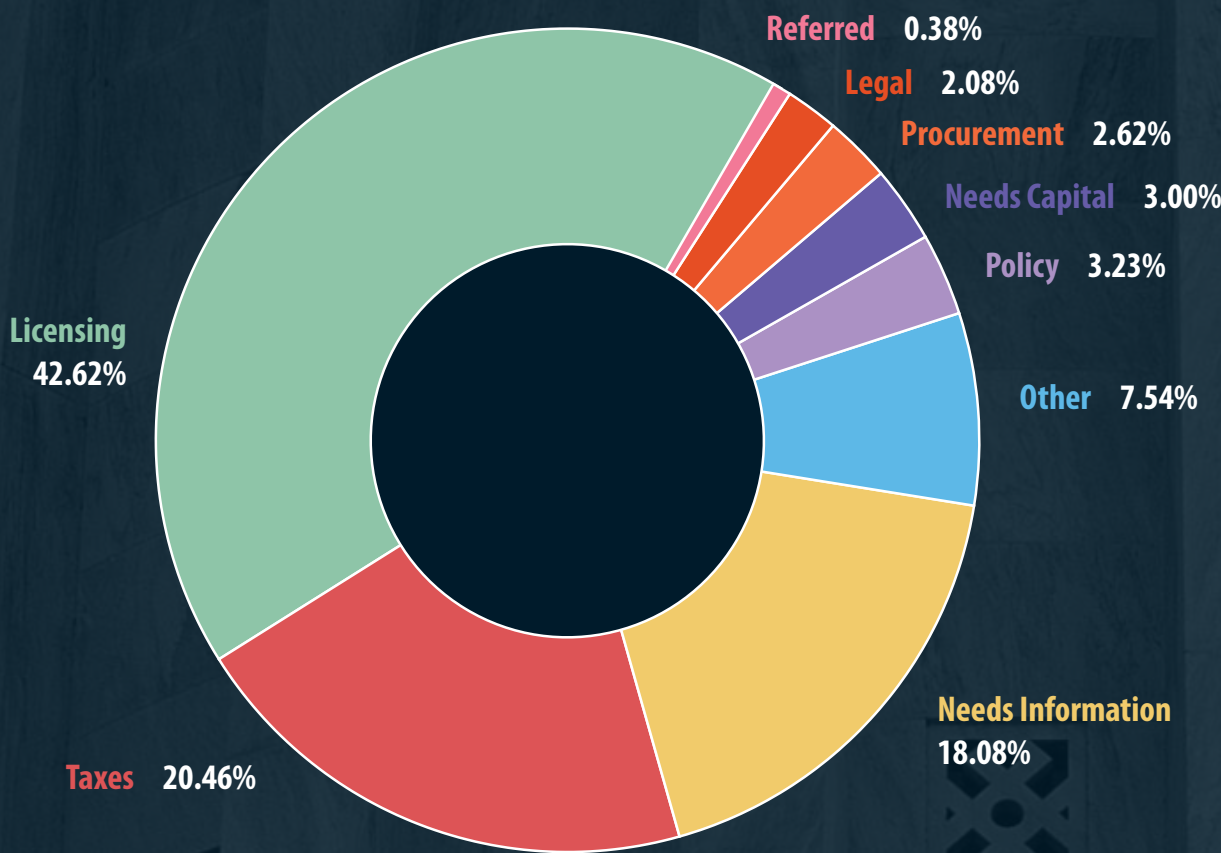
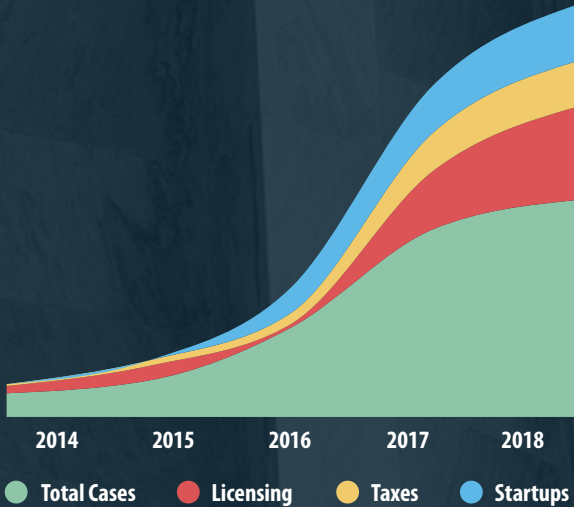


1,300

Businesses Busted Through Barriers
In 2018 With Our Assistance



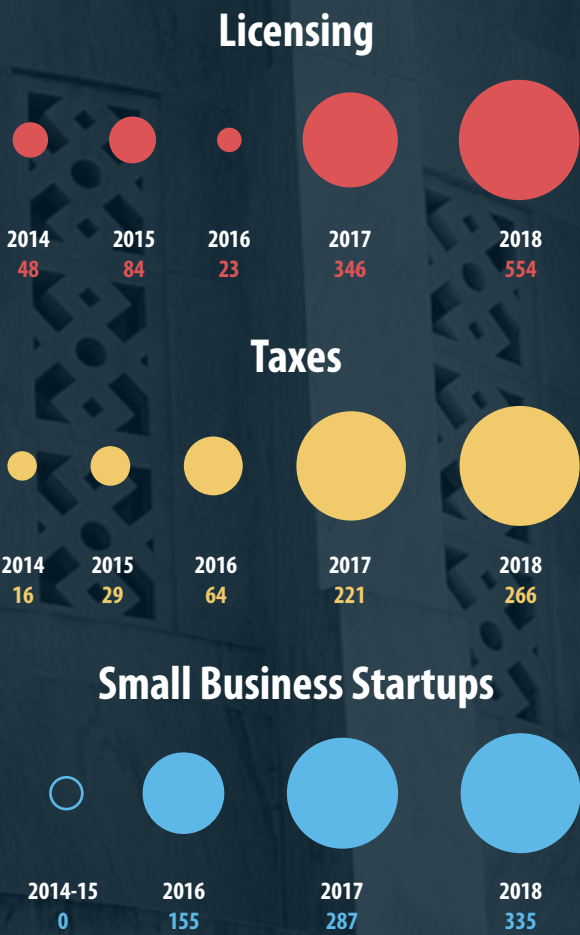
FIVE YEAR TRENDS – KEY AREAS



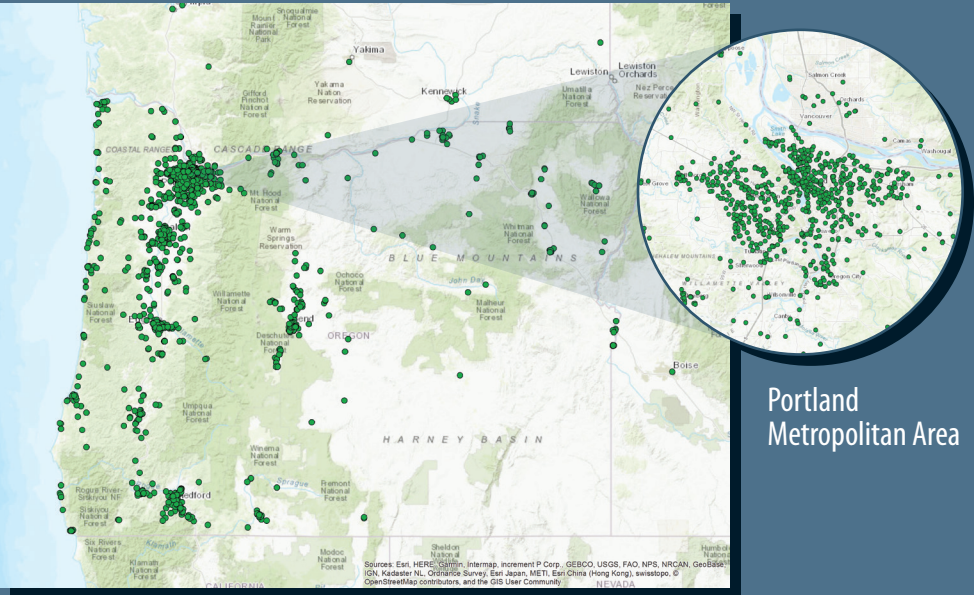
Oregon is small business.

About 98% of for profit and nonprofit entities in Oregon have zero to 100 employees. Small business employs over half of our state’s workforce. For these small businesses, problems with state or local government can seem daunting and large bureaucracies impenetrable and unresponsive. That’s where the Small Business Advocacy team comes in.

Since its inception in 2014, the team has helped over 3,300 small businesses navigate complex government issues, gathering and sharing data from our work along the way. As we celebrate successes, we remain mindful that data helps inform business and regulatory decisions and highlights areas for improvement.



2018 SMALL BUSINESS CASES BY LOCATION



LICENSING

42% of Total Cases

For the five years the Advocacy Team has been in operation, we have been tracking the questions and complaints businesses have regarding licensing/certification/registration requirements, primarily at the state level. This category alone was 42% of the work of the Advocacy Team in 2018. **TREND ANALYSIS:** The trajectory of licensing issues is growing in proportion to total caseload.

Case: *System Error*

Jade has a marijuana extraction business. In 2018, the Liquor Control Commission ordered her to shut down, saying the State Fire Marshal must inspect and sign off on Jade's equipment. The Fire Marshal wouldn't do so based on their own lack of knowledge about Jade's equipment. Stuck between two agencies, Jade called on the Advocacy Team. The Advocate worked with the Liquor Control Commission and State Fire Marshal to get Jade up and running again. With more communication between agencies, Jade was able to resume operations, and she's now working with both agencies to help others avoid this same situation.

TAXES

20% of Total Cases

Only two things in life are certain: death and taxes. Every business has tax obligations, some more complex than others. Most tax cases in 2018 came from two distinct categories 1) non-employers assessed for withholding taxes; and 2) errors and misallocations related to specific tax accounts. **TREND ANALYSIS:** Tax-related cases spiked in 2017, but this statistic looks to be an isolated set of circumstances.

Case: *Lodging Tax*

Ellen purchased an inn, but needed to know what sort of customer fees or charges to consider when calculating her state lodging tax. The Advocate worked with the Department of Revenue to provide details and examples of what the state considers taxable for her type of business. Ellen is now more confident when dealing with an obscure tax on her business.

PROCUREMENT

3% of Total Cases

Over the past few years, several state agencies have worked together to increase their community-level outreach and education for small businesses and nonprofits interested in contracting with government. Along with this effort, more firms certified by the Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) are engaging in the procurement process, which comes with a few hiccups. **TREND ANALYSIS:** Procurement-related cases are far below growth in total caseload. While these cases are often highly complex, our data indicates this isn't a statewide problem area.

SMALL BUSINESS STARTUPS

In 2016, new legislation directed the Advocacy Team to take on a navigator role for entrepreneurs starting their first small businesses, expanding an existing one, or winding-up their affairs. New small business startups comprise the lion's share of this work. In 2018, the office worked with 335 new startups to clarify their regulatory path and refer them to free assistance throughout the state to form a strong foundation for their business. **TREND ANALYSIS:** Requests for help from new entrepreneurs have roughly mirrored the team's growth in overall caseload. We anticipate that this growth trend will continue, but that it will be dependent upon economic factors.

Looking Ahead

Every day, entrepreneurs and nonprofits tell us about the realities they face. One of their most frustrating challenges is the lack of clear, authoritative, and responsive information from state agencies for small business. Additionally, small businesses tell us that they need to be able to talk to a person at an agency who can help them when online tools and information aren't adequate.

Many businesses share the same need for education, help, and support to navigate the process of starting a business. In August 2018, the Advocacy Team posted a video series on how to start a business, followed by the same series in Spanish, and an overview video in American Sign Language. Within just five months, the videos have garnered over 5,000 views. The team plans to introduce other videos addressing frequently asked questions to provide more tools to entrepreneurs.

We recommend that state and local governments work with small business and nonprofit stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of their communication strategies – from websites to forms to community outreach. Once stakeholder groups are well-established, we recommend that state agencies embrace the opportunity to involve small business in policy conversations on an ongoing basis.

About the Office

The Small Business Advocacy Team is part of the Oregon Secretary of State and serves as the statewide ombudsman office for small businesses. The office was established in 2013, opened in 2014, and expanded in 2016. The Advocates help entrepreneurs get their questions and concerns addressed and facilitate communication between business and government.



About the Advocates

Small Business Advocate and Secretary of State Tribal Liaison Ruth Miles oversees business advocacy efforts on behalf of the agency. With over 27 years of collective experience running and/or owning small businesses and over 29 years of state service, the Advocacy Team understands firsthand the challenges entrepreneurs face. They continuously reach out across Oregon to business leaders and associations, tribes, chambers of commerce, and community partners to hear their concerns about getting caught in red tape. And everywhere they go, they run with scissors.

Need Help?

Trouble with state or local government?
Contact the Small Business Advocate

Get Help

About the Help Button

When you need help, you need it right away. That's why you'll see this button on many state agency websites. Click and tell us who you are, your question or concern, and how to get in touch with you. That's our cue to get to work.