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Oregon Launches New Online System for Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Frances Online will provide better online customer service for people filing unemployment insurance claims

MARCH 6, 2024 (SALEM, ORE.) – The Oregon Employment Department (OED) launched a brand new, easy-to-use online system for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits this week. UI benefits went live through Frances Online on Mon., March 4.

“Frances Online is modernizing customer service for Oregonians filing for Unemployment Insurance benefits,” Governor Kotek said. “This is a step in the right direction for the State of Oregon. While there may be bumps in the road as we adjust to the new system, the Employment Department is ready to respond to issues quickly and make necessary adjustments.”

Preliminary data for Monday and Tuesday shows that:

- More than 23,000 weekly claims have been received from existing customers
- More than \$8.1 million dollars in claims have been paid through Frances Online
- The average time for customers filing weekly claims was just under 11 minutes on desktop computers and under 9 minutes on mobile devices.

“The new system is mobile-friendly and will help streamline our work on UI claims so customers can get their benefits paid more efficiently,” said **David Gerstenfeld**, director of OED. “We are proud to be delivering on our promise to modernize our technology systems. We believe it will address a lot of the pain points customers and OED employees have previously experienced.”

What Current Claimants Need to Know

Current claimants need to take two important actions to use the new system:

1. **Create a Frances Online account at frances.oregon.gov.** If they have an active claim or applied for benefits in our old legacy systems but their claim is still being reviewed, information about their claim will appear in their new Frances Online account. If they have an account in Frances Online because they claimed benefits from Paid Leave Oregon, they do not need to set up a new account.
2. **File their weekly claim at frances.oregon.gov/claimant.** Claimants can now file for the week of February 25-March 2. If they did not file a weekly claim for the week of February 18-24 and they are seeking benefits for that week, they can still claim that week using Frances Online. They will be able to file all future weekly claims using Frances Online going forward.

Customer Service Tips

The agency anticipates high call volumes at the UI Contact Center. Current claimants are encouraged to use self-serve features available through Frances Online. Other tips:

- **Check U.S. mail and email daily and respond quickly to requests for information.** Also check email spam filters. Some information will still have to come by U.S. mail, even if claimants select to get email alerts. Letters and emails may have due dates for responding. If claimants miss due dates, their benefits could be delayed or denied. Uploading documents is easier in the new system.
- **Check online before calling the UI Contact Center.** Many questions can now be resolved quickly through the new self-serve features in Frances Online.
- **Review and continue to follow UI eligibility rules.** This will help avoid a disruption in receiving benefits.
- **Check out tutorials and how-to guides** on navigating Frances Online at unemployment.oregon.gov/frances.
- **Know where you can get help.** Customer service is available at Frances Online () via secure messaging, live chat, chatbot and the Contact Us form.

The agency says there will be a learning curve for employees and claimants for the next few months. OED has hired 40 additional staff with one-time funding to support the transition.

“Frances Online is more agile and efficient,” said **Lindsy Leahy**, director of the UI Division at OED. “We expect that the system will work well for most and that a small number of claimants will experience issues. We will continue providing a more staff-intensive level of customer service for those who need it.”

Like other states that have launched new UI systems, the state may see an uptick in fraudulent claims. Leahy stressed that the new system is more resilient and has enhanced fraud protection features that will better protect UI benefits. Leahy also reminded consumers that Frances Online is free to use, and OED will never call a customer to ask for customers to pay to use any of OED’s services. If customers get a suspicious piece of mail, call or text, or see a questionable website or link, they should visit OED’s [webpage on fraud](#) for more information and a link to reporting fraud.

The addition of UI benefits to Frances Online is the final stage of the state’s approximately \$106 million effort to modernize its online customer service systems. Paid Leave Oregon launched in Frances Online in 2023 and employer contributions for UI and Paid Leave launched in 2022.

The name Frances was chosen in honor of Frances Perkins, who was born in 1880 and was a lifetime advocate for working Americans. She was the first female presidential Cabinet member and the longest-serving Secretary of Labor in U.S. history. Perkins was instrumental in forming the Social Security Act and the Unemployment Insurance program.

Go to unemployment.oregon.gov/frances for more information and resources about Frances Online for UI benefits.

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materials in other languages, large print, audio, and other formats. To get help, please call 503-947-1444. TTY users call 711. You can also send an email to communications@employ.oregon.gov.

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