



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 1, 2025

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Oregon Employment Department ready to help employees and businesses impacted by the federal shutdown

Impacted Employees may file for Unemployment Insurance as early as today

Salem, Ore. — The Oregon Employment Department (OED) stands ready to help employees impacted by the federal shutdown apply for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits and make sure they have the necessary documents and information to file a claim.

With the federal government shutdown, many federal government employees have either been furloughed or deemed essential and required to work without pay. The federal government shutdown may also affect people or contractors who are not federal employees if they work in industries that receive federal funding from the affected agencies. These non-federal employees may have their hours reduced or could be laid off during the shutdown.

“Our mission is to support any workers, employers, and contractors affected by this shutdown,” said OED Director Andrew R. Stolfi.

“Unemployment Insurance is a complex program, and applying for benefits can create lots of questions. Different rules apply to some federal workers, so we have specific guidance available on our website and our customer service staff are specially trained for situations just like this.”

OED data shows there were roughly 30,000 jobs on federal government payrolls in Oregon around this time last year. OED estimates that there are about 10,000 federal government jobs that could be affected by a lapse in appropriations. While this is about a third of the federal employees who live

and work in Oregon, it is a small percentage of the state's overall workforce, so the increase in claims from federal employees will not cause a significant, long-term impact on the OED workload.

Guidance for Impacted Employees

Furloughed federal workers and federal contractors who are not working during the shutdown may be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. Specific guidance is available at unemployment.oregon.gov/federal-shutdown.

The fastest way to apply is to file a claim is through [Frances Online](#). Unemployed workers who don't already have an account, should start by [creating a Frances Online account](#).

People can also apply for benefits over the phone by calling 877-File-4-UI (877-345-3484). Both options are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

More information on how federal employees can apply for unemployment insurance benefits, including the documents needed, is available at unemployment.oregon.gov/federal-workers.

Additional information about the Unemployment Insurance program and employment services is available on our website at <https://unemployment.oregon.gov/>.

Backpay and Overpayments

Under the 2019 Government Employee Fair Treatment Act, federal employees may receive back pay once funding resumes after a shutdown. However, Congress would have to approve any back pay as part of the federal appropriation, and it is not guaranteed. If they receive back pay, federal employees may be required to repay the state for any UI benefits they receive during the furlough period. In that case, unemployment benefits would serve as a loan to help federal workers meet basic needs while out of work.

Support for Impacted Businesses

"We want to acknowledge that some Oregon businesses may also be

impacted by the federal shutdown,” Director Stolfi said. “We have a great program called WorkShare to help them retain their skilled employees during work slowdowns and shortages.”

The WorkShare program provides an alternative for employers and workers who may be facing a layoff situation through partial unemployment insurance benefits that supplement workers' reduced wages. Once enrolled, an employer can quickly use the program if needed, but there is no obligation. Weekly webinars are offered to help businesses apply for and navigate the program. To learn more, visit oregonworkshare.org or call 503-947-1800.

The Oregon Employment Department (OED) is an equal opportunity agency. OED provides free help so you can use our services. Some examples are sign language and spoken language interpreters, written 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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