FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 14, 2020

CONTACT INFORMATION
Gail Kiles Krumenauer, Communications Director
Phone: (503) 947-1268

Initial Claims and Unemployment Benefits in Oregon

During the week of May 3 to May 9, 2020, the Oregon Employment Department received 14,100 initial claims for unemployment benefits. The agency has received 396,000 initial claims since COVID-19 business closures began in mid-March.

Helping Oregonians
Almost nine out of 10 (86%) initial claims for regular unemployment benefits received between March 15 and May 9 have been processed. For each of the past five weeks, more claims for regular benefits have been processed than received in Oregon.

The record-level claims processing by the Employment Department continues to help communities across Oregon as the economy transitions to re-opening. If measured by dollars paid, Unemployment Insurance would now be the largest paying subsector of Oregon’s economy. By comparison, unemployment benefits would have ranked 37th by payroll prior to the COVID-19 closures.

Still, tens of thousands of unemployment claims remain unprocessed, and some have been waiting for benefits for six or seven weeks. The Employment Department recognizes the importance to getting benefits to everyone who needs them. The agency continues expanding its capacity, with a new contact center now open, and a total of 690 employees processing claims. Claims processing continues seven days per week. The Employment Department also continues to make thousands of call-backs every day to Oregonians who need to have their claims processed.

Next week the Employment Department plans to issue two news releases. Oregon’s unemployment rate for April is scheduled to be published at 10:00 a.m. on May 19. The Employment Department also expects launch of the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program next week. PEUC provides 13 weeks of additional benefits for those who have run out of regular benefits, and remain out of work due to COVID-19 closures.

Initial unemployment claims data will continue to be updated each Thursday on the QualityInfo.org COVID-19 page. Information about new unemployment benefit programs, questions about resuming business operations, and other resources continue to be updated regularly on the Employment Department’s COVID-19 page.
Initial Claims
The Employment Department has detailed information for about 25,000 of the 32,000 initial claims processed during the week of May 3 to May 9. The greatest number of initial claims continued to come from the accommodation and food services sector, with 68,400 initial claims filed in the industry since March 15. Other sectors with the largest number of initial claims totals since March 15 include health care and social assistance (43,100) and retail trade (36,400). However, every sector of the economy has seen increased claims activity.

Multnomah (5,500), Washington (3,200), and Clackamas (2,400) counties had the largest number of claims during the week of May 3 to May 9. More initial claims data by industry and area can be found on the QualityInfo.org COVID-19 page.

To file an online claim for unemployment benefits, go to Oregon.gov/employ or call 1-877-FILE-4-UI. For help finding jobs and training resources, contact your local WorkSource Oregon center or go to WorkSourceOregon.org. Equal Opportunity program — auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Contact: (503) 947-1794. For people who are deaf or hard of hearing, call 711 Telecommunications Relay Services.