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Oregon Employment Department Announces Focused Initiative to Process Claims in Adjudication

20 percent of claims in adjudication have been resolved since the agency began tracking progress

October 28, 2020 (SALEM, ORE.)—Today the Oregon Employment Department announced the launch of Focus Adjudication, an initiative to process 100 percent of claims waiting to be adjudicated. Although the Oregon Employment Department has provided \$5.3 billion in benefits to more than 443,000 Oregonians since March, many people have one or more weeks of claims that federal requirements say must be adjudicated.

“We know that too many families are still waiting for relief. We are doing everything we can to speed up the process so that Oregonians can receive the benefits they deserve. We know a targeted effort like Focus Adjudication works because it succeeded in eliminating backlogs in regular unemployment and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claims,” said David Gerstenfeld, acting director of the Oregon Employment Department.

Focus Adjudication allows the Employment Department to track progress against the Sept. 30 figure of 52,000 people with claims in adjudication. Of the 52,000, the number of people with claims in adjudication dropped to 48,000 on Oct. 14, and dropped further to 45,250 on Oct. 21. Today, of that 52,000, approximately 41,700 people have claims in adjudication, a nearly 20 percent decrease. Some Oregonians may have only one week’s claim in adjudication and still receive benefits for all other weeks claimed. Others may have several weeks in adjudication and still receive benefits for other weeks claimed.

Before Focus Adjudication was launched more than 18,000 people received benefits through the Benefits While You Wait program.

The Employment Department is legally required to move a claim into adjudication when a person’s eligibility for unemployment benefits is unclear. A claim may be placed in adjudication if it appears a person has quit their job, has been fired, didn’t accept work, is on a school recess, or in other situations.



Adjudication is a complex, time-intensive process. The timeframe for resolving these claims depends on how complex any given case is: Some cases can be resolved quickly, while others require more experienced adjudicators to ensure an accurate decision is made.

The Focus Adjudication goal is to process all claims before the end of the year. The Employment Department will provide weekly progress updates on the initiative's progress.

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