

Oregon Employment Department Advisory Council Quarterly Meeting (3rd Quarter)							
Date/time:		June 30, 2024					
Location:		Zoom platform					
Attendees:		A – Absent P – Present					
P	Catie Theisen	P	Lindsi Leahy	P	Perla Brambila Arechiga		
P	Kurtis Baker	P	Gail Krumenauer	P	Karen Humelbaugh		
P	Kathy Nishimoto	P	David Gerstenfeld				
P	Robert Camarillo	P	David Genz				
P	Robert Westernman	P	Rebecca Nance				

MINUTES - DRAFT

	Topic	Minutes	Presenter
1.	Welcome, self-introductions of Advisory Council members & OED staff	All members of the council introduced themselves.	
2.	Meeting Minutes Approval for April	Catie Thiesen and Robert Camarillo motioned to approve minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.	
3.	Director's Update	<p>Moving through the budget development process. Next big step is when the recommended budget is released. Not seeking general funds. Trying to project our revenue. Asking for POP approvals. The number and types of staff will be different. Biggest variables, tried to get SEDAF rate increased. June 6 of this year was when it became effective. Continue to monitor program performance and customer service. If we see we are not able to maintain customer service we have a hold on legislature to revisit SEDAF.</p> <p>Are focused when we make continuous improvement to our systems. Will hear from Lindis and Karen, making changes to tech. For all rollout we were trying to prioritize what we were hearing from the public. Continuing to staff with that SEDAF increase. Ongoing discussion about stabilized state to make sustainable improvements.</p> <p>Workforce Operations areas. We get a lot of recognition on Trade Act. Federal legislation sunsetted. There has been promising activities although federal legislation is in sunset any approved are supportive. Because of outreach we were able to work with USDOL to remove Trade Act funds. Although its focus on Trade Act. ODHS has expressed interest. How best we can use our vans.</p> <p>Other federal legislation, changes to UI program, we've been kept in the loop and consult, the bill sets national minimum standards as far as combating fraud. No changes to what we are already doing.</p> <p>We had a great opportunity last week, the Taiwanese government's Deputy Minister visited and asked to meet. Had discussion about Trade Act, Gail presented about the labor market. The US is the only</p>	David Gerstenfeld

	<p>one that does not have a national paid leave system. Seeing desire in the younger employees to want more flexibility and having issues filing vacant job postings.</p> <p>Questions: With changes and additional staffing levels to OED ,will it be adequately staffed? Not sure, looking at what effecincies we are able to get out of tech. The customer service has improved, and watching levels real close. If not we will be transparent and have a conversation. We will share what we learn.</p> <p>Comparison to precovid and what work load is now are staffing level different? I don't know that we will operate with lower staffing. Some areas we are seeing a lot of efficiencies. We have a live chat for people to use. Have expanded the language access, we have learned commuicaions channel was only the phones but now we have different ways to connect. Expands more accessibility for claimants but takes more from staff. We woud like to have more staff now than what we had prepandemic.</p>	
<p>4. UI Program Update</p>	<p>Thank you for your partnership in supporting the Unemployment Insurance Program and having me here today to share some updated. We recently completed our 20th week of Unemployment Insurance benefits in Frances Online. In that time, through Saturday, July 20, we have distributed over 282 million dollars to our customers. One of the most consistent trends we've seen in that time is a steady increase in the percentage of people who are filing their weekly claims using Frances Online.</p> <p>After jumping from roughly 82-88% from the first to the second week after launch, that rate has continued to rise slightly just about every week since. By May, over 94% claims were being filed online, and by June the rate passed 95%. For the past three weeks, our average has been at or slightly above 97%.</p> <p>We are very encouraged by these numbers because they show Frances Online is working for the vast majority of our customers and the improvements, we've been making along the way are helping, too. One of those changes that I would like to highlight is how we updated language in Frances Online last week to make it easier for customers to understand the status of their claim.</p> <p>This included making the titles or names of many statuses more descriptive and improving the descriptions to make it clear if the customer needs to take action to move their claim forward. We made these changes in response to feedback from customers and OED employees after the launch of Frances Online, which gave customers access to more information about their claim than they had with our legacy systems.</p>	<p>Lindsi Leahy</p>

For instance, we heard the “In Suspense” status was causing confusion. It has been updated to “In Review” and there is description telling people where they can find more detailed information. Some updates to claim status language were made earlier in the spring, but last week’s update included a thorough review of every weekly claim status and description. The goal was to make it easier for customers to understand what is happening with their claim and make it clear if they need to take any action. Customers can also review each status at the public resource page we created. They include things like More Information Required, Processing, Ready to Claim, Submitted, Not Filed, Payment in Progress, Maximum Benefit Amount Reached, and more.

Stepping back a little bit, I’d like to talk about our hiring and customer service efforts over the past several months. Due to chronic federal underfunding, we have not had enough employees to provide the level of customer service that we would like to, and that Oregonians need and expect. Remembering back, the situation was exacerbated by the expiration of pandemic-era federal funding, which caused us to reduce our staff by two-thirds over a two-year period.

Thankfully, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 4035 which provided an increase to our administrative funding, without raising employer taxes. The bill went into effect on June 6th, but we didn’t wait and started the needed hiring push in April of this year. Since then, we have been continually recruiting, hiring, and training the additional employees this legislation has helped to fund, and we currently have around 460 employees in the Unemployment Insurance program.

We are progressing towards the expected staffing level of 476, but ongoing attrition may delay reaching that exact level in the short term. We do expect to see the new team members begin to impact our performance beginning in mid-to-late August. In the meantime, we have taken additional measures to make significant progress on our customer services goals, especially to resolve claim issues for our customers who have been waiting the longest. In June UI, Paid Leave Oregon, and Contributions & Recovery changed our regular phone hours and temporarily closed our inbound support phone lines on Mondays. This move might seem counterintuitive to good customer service, but we looked at the data and decided a bold step was needed. We took these measures to give our teams more time to focus on resolving claim issues and get caught up on other critical workloads, like responding to electronic messages. In other words, we have been able to focus on resolving the issues that Oregonians need us to address most and that they call us about.

In Unemployment Insurance, our top priority has been resolving claim issues that are holding up one or more weeks of payment for people, also known as hold-pay issues. Since we refined our data tools in mid-

	<p>June, we have made good progress. Originally, we focused on reducing the percentage of hold-pay issues that were six weeks or older. At that point, we had roughly 8,200 total hold-pay issues and just under 20% of them, about 1,600, were six weeks or older.</p> <p>A month later, we have reduced that workload to roughly 11% of the overall total. I do want to note that this is a rolling total. Each week the numbers change as issues are resolved or get older, and new issues are also identified. Our second goal was to increase the percentage of hold-pay issues that are resolved in three weeks or less. This timeline is more aligned with our long-term customer service goals, and this will be a primary metric to gauge our progress moving forward.</p> <p>If this percentage increases week to week, it means we are resolving more of the claim issues as they come in. Another way to think about this is that we want to resolve hold-pay issues within three weeks more often. When we started in mid-June, 60% of issues were three-weeks old or less and we set out to reach 80% or more on a weekly basis. As of mid-July, we've improved to 75% of the rolling total.</p> <p>It is important to note that we have been experiencing a higher workload since the start of the new fiscal year, which is an expected seasonal trend, and the total number of hold-pay issues has risen to roughly 11,400.</p> <p>So, despite having higher workload, we continue to make progress. Before I wrap up, I do want to share some other gains that we have been able to make since we changed our phone hours. On Mondays in particular, resolution of benefit issues has increased from roughly 140% to nearly 300%, depending on the type of issue. We have also responded to nearly triple the number of electronic messages on Mondays, which is helping us make progress in a key area of customer service.</p> <p>All told, I am extremely proud of the work our team has done the past two months. We have made significant progress and I look forward to making even more as our new staff join the effort in the coming weeks and months.</p>	
<p>5. Economic Outlook &amp; Recent Workforce Report</p>	<p>Oregon added 600 jobs in June. Private health care and social assistance has increase the most.</p> <p>In the early 1990s, one out of 10 jobs was held by a worker age 55 or older. Now one fourth of all jobs in Oregon and the us were held by worker 55 and older years old.</p> <p>Rural counties tend to have higher shares of workers who may be nearing retirement in the coming years. Yet, Multnomah County had</p>	<p>Gail Krumenauer</p>

		<p>more jobs held by workers 55 or older than all rural counties combined.</p> <p>In 2023, Oregon added 2,200 people to the labor force. That was a gain of 0.1%</p> <p>Not in Oregon’s labor force due to retirement, up 5% since 2019.</p> <p>Population growth is projected to be slower in the coming years than historical norms.</p> <p>May be able to grow the labor force amid slower population and labor force growth by instead increasing participation rates within existing population.</p> <p>Participation rate rebounding slightly for teens, but well below historic highs. The rate doubled for those 65 years and older over the past decade.</p> <p>Employers still have a relatively large number of job openings.</p> <p>Slow labor force growth, many job openings, and low unemployment give workers the upper hand in the labor market. Wrokers have quit jobs 2-3 times the rate of employer.</p> <p>It has taken more than eight years for the average hourly earnings of incumbent employees to see a similar sized gain (13%) of that of average starting wages for job openings in just the past two years.</p>	
6.	Legislative Update & Introduction of New Legislative Staff	<p>New colleague Sravya Tadepalli, new Senior Legislative advisor. Graduated from Harvard in Public Policy.</p> <p>Two paid leave policy bills.</p> <p>Another bill that did not pass HB 3389.</p> <p>Bill 4038 didn’t move forward we were able to see what the fiscal impact was. We will rovide that infrmatuoin.</p> <p>Sept leg days both chairs for both committees want us ti update them, Metrics covering customer service.</p>	David Genz
7.	Paid Leave Oregon Program Update	<p>One year anniversary sitting at 123 id verifications about 105 thousand have been processed.</p> <p>Have provided half a billion dollars to Oregonians.</p> <p>Have focused Mondays with no inbound calls. Average wait time is 39 minutes. Longest folks are waiting during peak times is 1.5 hrs.</p> <p>Still hiring and shifting staff when needed.</p> <p>SB 1515 went into effect in July. Helped have better concurrence with OFLA, allowed to be much clearer.</p>	Karen Humelbaugh

		Went to DC, and spoke and shared with other states about Paid leave. There are 16 state now that have implemented some sort of Paid Leave program <a href="https://d1o0i0v5q5lp8h.cloudfront.net/paidleave/live/assets/resources/Paid-Leave-Legislative-Report-July-2024.pdf">https://d1o0i0v5q5lp8h.cloudfront.net/paidleave/live/assets/resources/Paid-Leave-Legislative-Report-July-2024.pdf</a>	
8	Public Comment	No public comment.	
	Adjourn	9:53 A.M	

### ACTION ITEMS

Action	Assigned	Date Due	Completed

### FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

Action	Assigned	Date Due	Completed
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Minutes submitted by Perla Brambila Arechiga.