



To: Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
From: Bridget Budbill, Legislative Advocate at the Oregon Law Center
Re: Oregon Employment Department / Office of Administrative Hearings budget ([House Bill 5007](#))
Date: February 12, 2025

Dear Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development:

The Oregon Law Center (OLC) is a legal aid organization providing free, civil legal services to low-income Oregonians all across our state. We help clients in many situations, including navigating programs administered by the Oregon Employment Department (OED) and contested cases before the Oregon Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). We write in support of adequate funding of their budgets.

Oregon Employment Department

It is imperative for OED to have the budgetary resources it needs to effectively administer programs, though we know some aspects of OED's complex budget are dependent on federal resources outside of the committee's control. Here are a few highlights of OED programs that serve our clients.

- Many of our clients have relied on Unemployment Insurance (UI) when they are out of work and hustling to get the next job.
- Our clients have also taken part in the state's Paid Leave program, giving them the chance to stay in the workforce and afloat when major life events happen, be it a new baby, the death of a family member, or other qualifying circumstances.
- Our clients go to WorkSource centers to get help with all kinds of employment-related questions and issues, including help finding jobs.

Oregon Office of Administrative Hearings

OAH provides all Oregonians an impartial, knowledgeable panel of administrative law judges (ALJs) to hear disputes between state agencies and the people they serve. Contested case hearings before ALJs give Oregonians a place to challenge agency decisions that they do not think are fair or correct. For OLC clients, examples of instances when they may need a hearing before an ALJ include challenging an eligibility determination for UI or denial of health care coverage in the Oregon Health Plan, among other things.

Thank you for the opportunity to share how OED and OAH's work impacts our client communities.

Sincerely,

Bridget Budbill

The Oregon Law Center's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.