

2024

The State of Small Business

The Office of Small Business Assistance (OSBA) Annual Report



Our Mission: IMPROVE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN SMALL BUSINESSES AND STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The State of Small Business

Oregon small businesses need agencies to work together and share more information, especially about new programs and changes to rules and regulations.

Over 99% of businesses in Oregon are considered "small" by OSBA's definition, meaning they have 100 or fewer employees, and their numbers are growing. As more small businesses open in Oregon, it's important for state and local government agencies to support them effectively.

This support must include sharing timely updates about new programs, rules, and resources. Right now, a big challenge is that government agencies are not talking enough to each other and small businesses about the rules and regulations that impact business operations in Oregon. This makes it harder for businesses to follow the rules and get the help they need.

An example of this issue is the recent Styrofoam container ban. Managed by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), this change impacts many businesses across the state, like restaurants, food trucks, and cafes, that are not directly licensed by DEQ. Better communication and teamwork between DEQ, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon Health Authority—all of whom oversee businesses affected by this ban—is crucial to helping prepare for such changes.

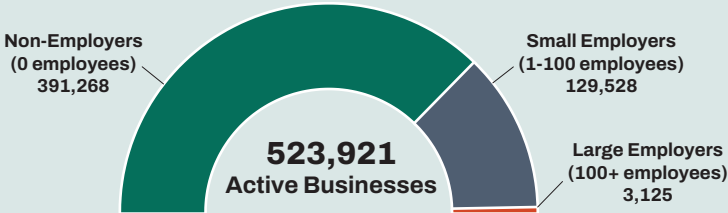
OSBA is calling for stronger collaboration between agencies and better ways to share information with Oregon's small businesses.

Oregon Small Businesses by the Numbers

Small businesses make up the vast majority of businesses in Oregon, and their numbers are growing across the state.

NUMBER OF SMALL BUSINESSES

(Q2/2024)



Data shared from the Oregon Employment Department helps OSBA better understand how many small businesses there are in Oregon.

NEW BUSINESSES / CLOSURES BY COUNTY

+2,801	Marion	1	Josephine	-75
+972	Deschutes	2	Grant	-20
+965	Washington	3	Jefferson	-15
+879	Clackamas	4	Sherman	-6
+425	Jackson	5	Union	-6

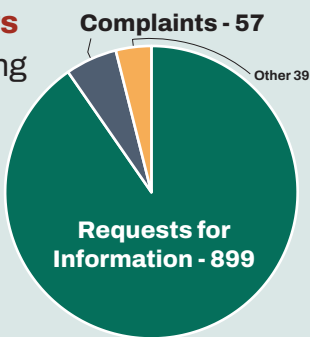
81% of Oregon counties ended 2024 with more businesses (of any size) than they started with. OSBA will work with all counties to identify barriers to small business growth.

OSBA Casework Data

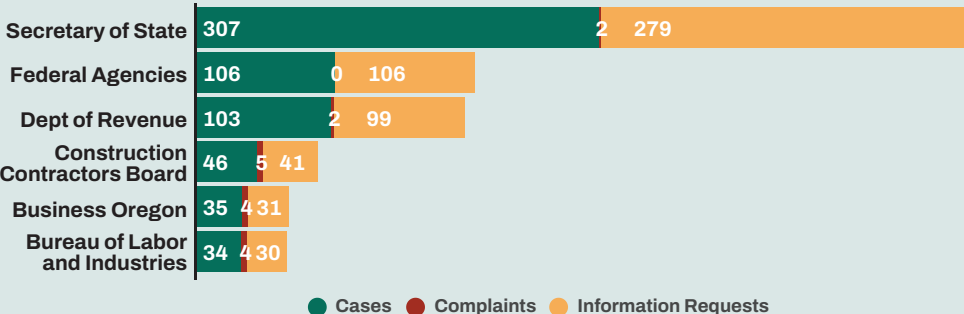
In 2024, OSBA helped 995 entrepreneurs in Oregon resolve issues related to navigating government, like licensing and following regulations.

>> 899 Requests for Information

>> 57 Complaints



AGENCIES INVOLVED



For the first time, questions about federal regulations outnumbered questions about state agencies other than the Secretary of State. This is largely due to new federal requirements involving beneficial ownership reporting to the US Department of Treasury. Complaints about federal agencies and programs cannot be investigated by OSBA, but referrals to appropriate offices and websites became routine.

NATURE OF PROBLEMS



Questions about licensing, taxes and registrations remained the most common topics for OSBA customers in 2024.

NATURE OF SOLUTIONS

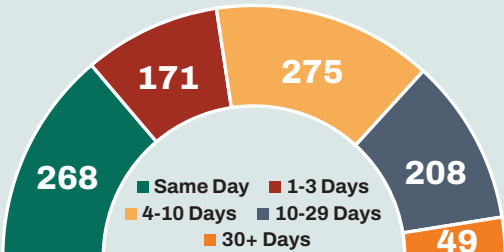


601 cases were redirected to other subject matter experts depending on customer need.
223 cases couldn't be investigated due to jurisdiction limits.
62 cases were resolved by OSBA staff.

CASE ORIGINS



CASE DURATION

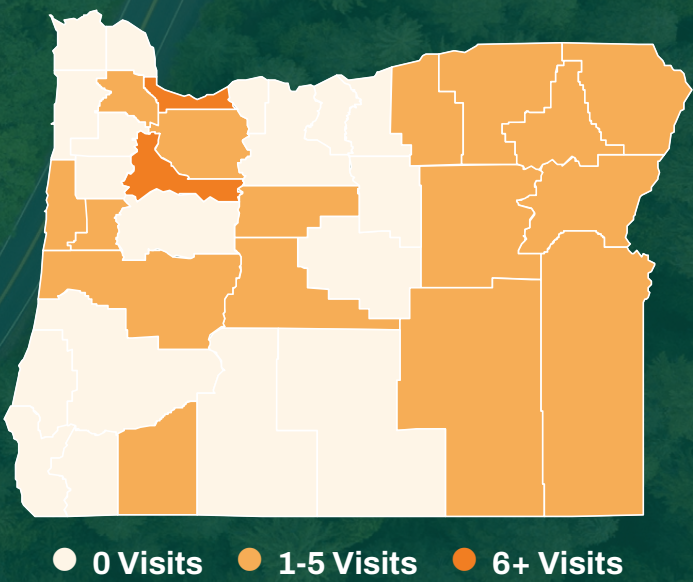


Outreach Events

OSBA Staff attended **102 events** last year and are committed to reaching even more Oregon businesses in 2025.

OSBA Staff attended 102 events in Oregon last year. Collaborative outreach events involving government contracting and employer resources remain well-received by the public and will continue into 2025. Learn about upcoming events at sos.oregon.gov/training.

While OSBA has a strong presence in many parts of the state, we recognize that there is still more work to do to connect with every community in Oregon. We are committed to broadening our understanding of the diverse business landscape across Oregon, including the unique needs and challenges faced by businesses within tribal communities.



Minding Your Business is reaching more people than ever – in English and Spanish!

Minding Your Business, OSBA’s quarterly newsletter, continues to reach more Oregon entrepreneurs. Now, we share updates, resources, and news that help Oregon businesses succeed with over 13,000 subscribers on a regular basis. We’re committed to growing our audience, which is why in January 2025, OSBA launched our first-ever Spanish newsletter: *Al Ciudadano de su Negocio*. Our three most recent issues are available online in Spanish and we are in the process of translating all back issues of *Minding Your Business*. Back issues of our English and Spanish newsletters are on the OSBA website. **Nuestro boletín de noticias de publicación trimestral también está disponible en español.**



Small businesses staying on top of legislation impacting them via OSBA’s newest resource



To help small businesses stay on top of proposed changes in the State Legislature, OSBA launched our new Small Business Legislation webpage. This user-friendly resource simplifies the process of tracking legislation that could potentially impact Oregon’s small businesses. The page is regularly updated with bills from the current 2025 legislative session and also has prior legislation from the 2023 and 2024 legislative sessions. We believe this platform will also show the significant volume of regulations that small businesses are navigating.

The Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) is a legitimate program, reporting is free, and more information is available at fincen.gov/boi

The federal CTA and reporting of Beneficial Ownership Information continued to be a topic of interest for small businesses in 2024. The CTA requires many small businesses to provide ownership details to the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) via their website: fincen.gov/boi. OSBA continued to spread awareness of the federal program and presented to multiple audiences in both English and Spanish in 2024.

Many businesses learn of the CTA by way of solicitations from third parties offering to complete the report for a cost. With current legal challenges to the CTA that unfold on a daily basis, we encourage businesses to subscribe to FinCEN’s alerts for updates.

About OSBA

Launched in January 2014, the Office of Small Business Assistance serves as the statewide ombudsman for Oregon’s small businesses. Businesses and nonprofits with 100 or fewer employees turn to us when they need help interacting with state or local government agencies. We work collaboratively with small businesses, government agencies, and technical assistance providers to make navigating state and local government easier for Oregon entrepreneurs. Together with our partners, we update and distribute both the *Oregon Start a Business Guide* and the *Oregon Employer’s Guide*.

The Office of Small Business Assistance receives and investigates complaints from small businesses concerning interactions with state agencies. As an ombudsman office, we are objective, confidential, and independent from other

state agencies. Our role is to help resolve problems in a non-adversarial manner. We advocate for fair, transparent, and responsive government that serves all Oregonians.

What’s Next for OSBA?

In addition to helping businesses stay aware of new legislation and publishing bilingual newsletters, OSBA will expand its catalog of brochures, handouts, and videos available in multiple languages. We will visit many of the communities and counties we weren’t able to reach in 2024, including Linn, Curry, and Josephine counties in the first quarter of 2025.

