

My Name is Adalia McDonald and I as an Investigator 3 for the Oregon Employment Department and work out of the Bend Contact Center. I have been with the State of Oregon for 20 years.

At the beginning of this Covid 19 pandemic, we worked in shared cubicles that were less than 3 feet apart. We brought this issue to management for several weeks and finally on March 29th the decision was made to go to split shifts in an effort to provide the 6 feet social distancing. By this time, several employees had already gone out on Leave and they were requesting telework agreements that were denied. The two shifts were 5:30am to 2pm and 2pm to 10:30pm. They also learned immediately after starting the split shifts that the main frame shuts down at 7pm and claims cannot be processed. Online claims and phone claims cannot be processed. So basically, work cannot be performed from 7pm to 10:30pm. They have done absolutely nothing to try to change this and get everyone back to work during normal hours. Requests to work out of different offices have been denied. Having our office reconfigured to create more cubicles and still maintain social distancing has not happened. Several other employees again left work due to the shifts and not being allowed to telework or telecommute. Our office has a total of 12 seasoned employees out that could either be working from home or on a normal schedule. We had a couple more that were out and just returned to work in the middle of May.

The phone lines have been a constant issue with Claimants not being able to get through to a representative. Before they started Focus Project 100, there was only maybe 20 employees at the most on the phones between both Centers. One day only had two employees with over 500 calls. Employees working lists to call claimants back regarding issues on their claim are not allowed to provide their direct number so if they do not reach a claimant the claimant has to call back and may never get a hold of anyone. If a claimant answers a question, incorrectly on their weekly certification, it can stop their claim and they will not be able to correct it unless they speak to a representative. We are not up to date on Mail, faxes or emails. This also creates a huge delay for claimants. Claimants are required to send Alien authorization by mail. Since mail is not processed daily, some claimants have been waiting over 10 weeks for benefits. There are so many other issues. I understand that they have more work than can be completed by the employees we have but if they had allowed telework, telecommute or found another office we could have more work being completed by trained employees.

One of the biggest issues is the lack of communication and change in procedures.

Thank you,

Adalia McDonald

541-390-7130