

Oregonians will get 17% of their 2020 state income taxes back

By BETSY HAMMOND
The Oregonian

SALEM — Oregonians will get 17% of their 2020 Oregon income taxes back as a kicker credit when they file their 2021 taxes next year, the Oregon Department of

Revenue announced Tuesday, Oct. 12.

Revenue officials determined more than a month ago that Oregon's unique kicker rebate law would generate a jaw-dropping \$1.9 billion. But they needed to finalize and certify exactly how

much each tax filer would be entitled to.

The official answer is 17.341% of 2020 state income taxes paid. Taxpayers can find their 2020 tax liability on line 22 of their 2020 Form OR.

Oregonians get a kicker rebate

when the state's revenue exceeds by 2% or more what state forecasters projected far ahead of time. No other state has a similar law.

People who paid 2020 Oregon income taxes can file for and receive the credit in 2022, even if

they don't owe Oregon taxes on their 2021 income.

If you owe the state money, whether for back taxes or for other items, such as court fines or child support, however, the state may use all or part of your kicker for that debt first.

State drops requirement for substitute teachers

By DILLON MULLAN
Pamplin Media Group

SALEM — Oregon is relaxing requirements to become a substitute school teacher in the face of a widespread shortage stretching educators thin.

Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission Executive Director Anthony Rosilez said the licensing agency filed a temporary rule to implement an emergency substitute teaching license.

In December 2019, he said, the state had at least 8,300 active substitute licenses, although that number does not include retirees and other part time school staff with active teaching licenses who can also substitute.

A year later, that number dropped to 5,500, and this month, Rosilez said, the state is down to around 4,738 substitute teachers.

The emergency rule relaxes the requirement for a bachelor's degree.

"It temporarily relaxes the specific higher education requirement of the traditional substitute license but mandates impactful administrative support for the emergency licensed sub,"



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Substitute teacher Sarah Lewins at Jason Lee Elementary, Portland, helps Mintwob Mintwab properly put on her mask at the start of the first day of in-person, hybrid learning in spring 2021.

Rosilez said. "This license will allow school districts to reach a wider pool of potential substitute teachers. In terms of the number of people who are applying for sub licenses, we can see that number is significantly down."

New licenses can take up to seven weeks to process.

Every person issued an emergency license can only work inside the district sponsoring them. The license is not renewable and expires after a year.

"It could be a parent who is only working part time, or maybe lost a job. It could be a person who has been a regular volunteer at a school

... It could maybe be a college student who's looking to work while they go to school at night," Rosilez said.

In the Banks School District, which has about 1,050 students in rural Washington County, middle school Principal Darla Waite-Larkin said she submits to a third-party contractor called Education Staffing Solutions, for around 10 positions each day, some of which are unfilled staff positions. She said before the pandemic, the district traditionally has been able to fill positions open for hire and therefore not rely on substitutes as the pandemic hinders in-person learning.

"It is a last-minute fix,

and there isn't much time to prepare for a quality lesson. We have also had to combine classes and change the lesson plan for the day to provide a lesson for students who might be in different content classes or at a different place in the curriculum," Waite-Larkin said. "We have heard from a few of the substitutes that we have used in the past, that they are not interested in coming into the schools this year due to concern about the virus. I think this is the same for bus drivers and other positions. Most schools in the state are in the same predicament that we are."

The minimum pay for licensed substitutes, according to state law, is about \$195 per day, but it can vary by district.

"The trend we are seeing is we are not filling our absences with certified substitutes on a consistent basis. We're only in week three. You see more absences in winter," Banks Superintendent Jeff Leo said. "We usually fill in-house or have an administrator sub. If a spot doesn't get filled, we ask teachers during prep time if they can cover that class. We do the best we can."

Workers rank what they value in a workplace in study

By SUZANNE ROIG
The Bulletin

SALEM — Workers value having a job they can be proud of, that's close to home with flexible hours and that has health insurance, according to a survey by the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center.

Rated the highest by all demographic groups by those surveyed, at 63%, was having a work-life balance, according to the survey. The second highest workplace feature was health insurance and working with people that the survey respondents respected.

"It's unsurprising that most people rank earning a good salary as the most important consideration

when choosing a place to work and that it is really important to people without a college degree because a good salary can be more difficult for those to come by," said Amaury Vogel, associate executive director of the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center, which conducted the survey Sept. 14-22. "The ranking tells us a little bit more because it makes people choose a few priorities.

Earning a good salary was a priority for 72% of those participating in the survey who were 30-54 years of age and 64% for all respondents. While it makes sense that earning a good salary ranks among the top priorities, Vogel said the

work-life balance probably was not something workers placed such a high value on 20 years ago.

"Oregonians in the 30-44 age range are more likely than other age groups to have young children and therefore prioritize a flexible schedule, but it's a bit surprising that those 18-29, who are often just establishing their careers would prioritize flexible hours."

When Annis Henson was a full-time worker, health insurance was a priority for her and her family. The Bend resident worked for Habitat for Humanity as a field staffer prior to retirement. As a worker she valued the collaborative nature of work, and having a supervisor who

valued her opinion.

"My work was very satisfying," Henson said. "I could see results in the work we did."

The center's online survey was sent to 1,124 Oregon residents. The survey's margin of error is between 1.7% to 2.9%. The Oregon Values and Beliefs Center is an independent, nonpartisan organization.

Looking at the demographics, people of color and white people aligned on what is important about where they choose to work, according to the survey. The top priorities in both groups were earning a good salary, developing skills, flexible hours and feeling appreciated.

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