

Choosing Between Oregon and Federal Bankruptcy Exemptions (2025)

If you’ve lived in Oregon for at least two years, you can choose either the Oregon exemptions or the federal exemptions when you file for bankruptcy. These rules help protect some of your property — like your home, car, clothes, and tools — so you don’t lose everything when you file.

The exemption amounts go up every three years to keep up with inflation. The next update will happen on **April 1, 2028**.



If you’re married and filing with your spouse, you can usually double the amounts.




What’s the Big Difference?



The biggest difference is the wildcard exemption. This is money you can use to protect anything you want — like a second car, extra money in the bank, or something else that doesn’t fit into another category.



- **Federal wildcard:** Up to **\$17,475** (\$1,675 + up to \$15,800 of unused home exemption)
- **Oregon wildcard:** Only **\$400**, and can’t be used to increase another exemption

Quick Guide: What Can You Keep?

Category	What You Can Keep	Oregon Law	Federal Law
 Wildcard	Wildcard (any property)	Up to \$400 (can’t be used to increase another exemption)	Up to \$17,475 (\$1,675 + up to \$15,800 of unused home exemption)
 Home and Shelter	Home	Up to \$150,000	Up to \$31,575
	Prepaid rent & security deposits	Protected (if required for housing)	Not specifically protected

Category	What You Can Keep	Oregon Law	Federal Law
 Transportation	Car	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$5,025
 Personal and Household Items	Household items (furniture, TV, utensils, etc.)	Up to \$3,000 total	Up to \$16,850 total or \$800 per item.
	Jewelry and clothes	Up to \$1,800 total (includes clothing and jewelry)	Jewelry up to \$1,875 (clothing included in household goods)
	Firearms	One rifle or shotgun and one pistol, up to \$1,000 total	No specific protection
	Books, music, pictures	Up to \$600	Included in household goods
	Pets and livestock	Up to \$1,000, plus food for 60 days	Included in household goods
 Insurance & Future Support	Bodily injury payments	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$31,575
	Wrongful death payments	Protected up to \$10,000 if the person who died supported you	Protected if the person who died supported you
	Life insurance (policy hasn't paid out yet)	Protected (if policy names a person, not estate)	Protected (if the policy hasn't been paid out yet)

Category	What You Can Keep	Oregon Law	Federal Law
	Life insurance proceeds (money from a life insurance payout)	Protected (if the person who died supported you)	Protected (if the person who died supported you)
	Life insurance interest/dividends (extra money earned from the policy)	Protected (if the extra money is paid to a person, not your estate)	Up to \$16,850
 Work and Tools	Tools for work	Up to \$5,000	Up to \$3,175
 Money & Accounts	Bank accounts	Up to \$2,500 automatically protected, plus more in some cases	No specific protection
	Future earnings	Protected (if reasonably needed for support)	Protected (if it replaces lost future income)
	Retirement savings (IRAs, 401(k), etc.)	Protected (except for child/spousal support debts)	Protected including 401(k), 403(b), pension plans. IRAs up to \$1,711,975 (not inherited)
	College savings accounts	Protected	Not specifically protected

Category	What You Can Keep	Oregon Law	Federal Law
 Support & Benefits	Support payments (child or spouse)	Protected (if reasonably needed for support)	Protected (if reasonably needed for support)
	Government benefits	Protected	Protected
	Student loans	Protected	Protected
	Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	Protected	Not specifically protected
	Veterans' loans and benefits	Protected	Protected
 Health & Medical	Medical or health savings accounts	Protected	Not specifically protected
	Health aids (like a wheelchair or hearing aid)	Protected (if prescribed)	Protected (if prescribed)

What About My Paycheck?

Oregon has rules that protect part of your wages from being taken (this is called **garnishment**). As of 2025, the amount you get to keep depends on how often you're paid. Here's how much of your take-home pay (after taxes) is protected:

How You're Paid	You Keep At Least
Weekly	\$338
Every 2 weeks	\$675
Twice a month	\$737
Monthly	\$1,458

If you earn more than these amounts, the most that can be taken is either:

- 25% of your take-home pay, **or**
- The extra amount over the limits above — whichever is less

These rules don't apply if the debt is for taxes, child support, or court-ordered bankruptcy payments.

Starting in July 2026, these limits will go up again.

Important Notes

- **Federal exemption amounts** go up every three years. The latest update took effect on **April 1, 2025**.
- **Oregon exemption amounts** were also updated in **2025**, with big increases to the homestead and car exemptions.
- This chart covers the **most common protections** but doesn't list everything. What you can keep may depend on your situation.
- For help figuring out what applies to you, consider talking to a **legal aid office or bankruptcy attorney**.