



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: John Carpenter, Public Information Officer ♦ Office: (405) 557-5469 ♦ Fax: (405) 525-0139
E-mail: john.carpenter@oesc.state.ok.us ♦ Website: <http://oesc.ok.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Filing Deadline for Extended Unemployment Benefits Not Expanded by Congress

Claimants Who Exhaust Benefits Encouraged to Continue Filing in Anticipation of Coming Extension

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (February 26, 2010) – The United States Senate on Friday failed to extend the filing deadline for federal extended unemployment benefits, leaving those who exhaust their regular state or federal extended unemployment claims this week unable to file for more benefits. The deadline extension affects the federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program that provides additional unemployment benefits for those who use up all of their regular state unemployment compensation. As of midnight on Saturday, February 27, 2010, no new EUC claims will be paid until a new deadline is approved. The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) expects this stoppage to be short-lived since Congress is anticipated to extend the deadline, at least temporarily, when they return to work next week.

Despite the expiration deadline, OESC is encouraging the estimated 2,700 Oklahomans who exhaust their regular Oklahoma unemployment benefits or EUC Tier 1 or Tier 2 benefits this week to go ahead and apply for the next available tier of assistance. This proactive step will allow unemployment claimants to receive these benefits as quickly as possible once a new deadline is established. It is important to note that only those who exhaust their unemployment benefits on or after February 27, 2010, will be affected.

“While we’re very disappointed that our claimants have to deal with this situation, we hope that allowing people to continue filing in anticipation of a deadline extension will lessen the blow to their lives and get their money into their hands as quickly as possible once it’s available,” said Jerry Pectol, OESC Director of Unemployment Insurance.

Unemployment claimants are first eligible for up to 26 weeks of regular state unemployment benefits from OESC. Once these regular benefits are exhausted, claimants can receive federal extended unemployment benefits known as EUC Tier 1 for up to 20 additional weeks. When a claimant has collected all eligible EUC Tier 1 payments, they can apply for EUC Tier 2, now for a maximum of 14 weeks. After EUC Tier 2 is exhausted, Oklahoma claimants can apply for EUC Tier 3 and collect extended unemployment benefits for up to 13 weeks.

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OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

P.O. Box 52003 • Oklahoma City, OK 73152-2003 • <http://oesc.ok.gov>

About OESC – The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission is Oklahoma's state workforce agency. OESC provides unemployment compensation to support unemployed workers and their communities; matches jobs and workers to benefit local labor markets; prepares a skilled workforce to meet employers' needs; and gathers, analyzes and disseminates information about the labor force to improve local economic decisions.

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