



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Extended Unemployment Benefits in Danger of Expiring If Congress Doesn't Act

Claimants Who Exhaust Benefits Will Be Unable to File for Additional Assistance

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (March 17, 2010) – Oklahomans looking to file for extended federal unemployment benefits may not have that option if the United States Congress fails to extend a key deadline set to expire soon. 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. The deadline originally expired on February 28, 2010, but a few days later Congress approved a temporary 30-day extension with an eye on crafting legislation that would set a new deadline. So far there has been little progress made in passing new legislation.

Unless a deadline extension is passed and signed by the president, any Oklahomans who exhaust their regular state unemployment benefits or their current tier of federal EUC benefits after March 27, 2010, will be unable to file for additional weeks of benefits. Unemployment claimants are first eligible for up to 26 weeks of regular state unemployment benefits from the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (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.

Current U.S. Senate legislation addressing the situation moves the deadline to December 31, 2010, but doesn't provide any additional weeks of benefits.

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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