



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Third Tier of Extended Unemployment Benefits to Expire Soon

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (May 7, 2012) – Oklahomans will soon be unable to file new claims for federal emergency unemployment compensation (EUC) Tier 3 benefits. The law establishing EUC Tier 3 benefits requires a state to have a running three-month average seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 6.0 percent or higher to offer these benefits to eligible claimants. With the release of the March 2012 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 5.4 percent on April 20, 2012, the running three-month average dropped below the 6.0 percent threshold, triggering the end of the program in the state. Only new EUC Tier 3 claims will be affected; anyone already receiving EUC Tier 3 benefits will receive all of these benefits for which they are eligible.

EUC Tier 3 benefits were first made available in December 2009, providing up to 13 weeks of additional federal unemployment compensation to claimants. Unemployment claimants are first eligible for up to 26 weeks of regular state unemployment benefits from the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC). When these regular benefits are exhausted, claimants can receive a first round of federal EUC benefits (EUC Tier 1) for up to 20 weeks. When EUC Tier 1 runs out, claimants can apply for EUC Tier 2 for a maximum of 14 weeks. EUC Tier 3 offered an additional lifeline to long-term unemployed Oklahomans who had collected all of their EUC Tier 2 benefits. This isn't the first time that EUC Tier 3 has triggered off. EUC Tier 3 was suspended last July, but was reinstated at the beginning of 2012 when Oklahoma's three-month average seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose above 6.0 percent once again.

Oklahomans who exhaust their EUC Tier 2 claims the week ending May 12, 2012, or earlier will still be able to apply for and receive any EUC Tier 3 benefits for which they're eligible. If a claimant exhausts an EUC Tier 2 claim after this date, that claimant will not be able to apply for EUC Tier 3 benefits. All EUC benefits will expire on January 2, 2013, when the EUC program is scheduled to end.

For further information about EUC Tier 3 claims, you are encouraged to visit the frequently asked questions (FAQ) page on the OESC website. Simply go to <http://oesc.ok.gov>, follow the "Unemployment Benefits" link, and click on the "EUC Deadline and Eligibility Changes FAQs" link at the top of the page. If additional assistance is required, claimants can contact the UI Service Center at (405) 525-1500 in the Oklahoma City metro area or (800) 555-1554 in other parts of the state.

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OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

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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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