



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Third Tier of Federal Extended Unemployment Benefits Set to Expire Soon for Oklahomans

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (June 22, 2011) – The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) announced today that federal emergency unemployment compensation (EUC) Tier 3 benefits will soon no longer be available to Oklahomans. The law establishing EUC Tier 3 benefits required 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 May 2011 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 5.3 percent on June 17, 2011, 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. When the program began, the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was at 7.3 percent, its highest level in more than 20 years. Unemployment claimants are first eligible for up to 26 weeks of regular state unemployment benefits from OESC. When these regular benefits are exhausted, claimants can receive a first round of federal extended unemployment benefits (EUC Tier 1) for up to 20 weeks. Once 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.

Oklahomans who exhaust their EUC Tier 2 claims the week ending July 9, 2011, 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 their EUC Tier 2 claim after this date, they will not be able to apply for EUC Tier 3 benefits. OESC estimates that this change will affect around 21,000 total claimants between the expiration date and December 31, 2011, when all EUC benefits are set to expire.

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,

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OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

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and click on the "Tier 3 FAQs" link at the top of the page. If additional assistance is required, claimants can contact the UI Service Center.

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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