



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: John Carpenter, Public Information Officer ♦ Office: (405) 557-5469 ♦ Fax: (405) 525-0139
E-mail: john.carpenter@oesc.state.ok.us ♦ Web: www.oesc.state.ok.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STIMULUS BILL TO IMPACT STATE UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMANTS

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (February 23, 2009) – The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) announced today that Oklahomans receiving unemployment benefits will be affected by the federal economic stimulus bill that went into effect on Sunday, February 22, 2009. There will be two main changes for unemployment compensation recipients.

The first is an additional \$25 per week for everyone receiving unemployment compensation. This includes claims for regular unemployment compensation, emergency unemployment compensation (EUC), disaster unemployment assistance (DUA) and trade readjustment assistance (TRA). Any claimant who files an initial claim before January 1, 2010 will receive the temporary benefit increase. The last week that this increase will be paid is the week of June 30, 2010. If a claimant is already receiving unemployment benefits, no action is required on the claimant's part. The extra payments will start the first week in March and automatically be added to the claimant's debit card or direct deposit.

The other change is a deadline extension to file for emergency unemployment compensation (EUC). The last day a claimant can file a new EUC claim (first claim to receive EUC) has been moved to December 31, 2009. This was amended from a pre-stimulus deadline of March 31, 2009. The last week that EUC will be paid is now the week of May 31, 2010. EUC was first approved in July to provide additional unemployment benefits for jobless workers who exhausted their regular benefits. An EUC extension in November amended filing deadlines and increased the maximum number of weeks a claimant can draw EUC to 20 weeks. The federal economic stimulus bill did amend the deadlines, but **did not** change the number of weeks that a person can claim EUC.

Unemployment compensation claims can be filed through the Unemployment Insurance Service Centers by calling 525-1500 in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area or (800) 555-1554 outside the OKC calling area. Claims can also be filed online at www.unemployment.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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