



# *NEWS RELEASE*

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FOR RELEASE: January 13, 2006

## **12 OKLAHOMA COUNTIES ELIGIBLE FOR DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**

OKLAHOMA CITY – In the wake of the severe wildfires affecting the state December 1, 2005, and continuing, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission announced today that residents of 12 Oklahoma counties are now eligible for disaster unemployment assistance (DUA). Effective January 10, 2006, DUA has been declared for the following counties: Canadian, Cotton, Garvin, Hughes, Lincoln, Logan, Mayes, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Pottawatomie, Seminole and Stephens.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance provides financial support to individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of a major disaster. Individuals who qualify for normal unemployment benefits are not eligible for DUA. Those individuals, including the self-employed, who were living or working in those counties at the time of the major disaster and who are unemployed as a direct result of the major disaster may be eligible for DUA.

The first payable week for disaster unemployment assistance is the week beginning December 4, 2005. DUA applications will be taken only for a 30-day period ending at the close of business on February 13, 2006. To file for disaster unemployment assistance, an individual must first establish a regular state unemployment claim. Within the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, individuals can call 525-1500 to establish a claim and start the DUA process. Outside of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, people can call (800) 555-1554.

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