



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE: February 23, 2006

DEADLINE FOR DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE LOOMS FOR 14 OKLAHOMA COUNTIES

OKLAHOMA CITY – The deadline to file for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) in 14 Oklahoma counties is fast approaching. In the wake of the severe wildfires affecting the state December 1, 2005, and continuing, those living or working in the following 14 counties were declared eligible to apply for DUA: **Bryan, Carter County, Choctaw, Creek, McIntosh, Murray, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Osage, Payne, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Tulsa, and Wagoner** counties. These counties joined a group of 12 others previously declared DUA eligible due to this disaster.

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 the affected 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.

Individuals living or working in any of the 14 eligible counties at the time of the disaster, including the self-employed, who are unemployed as a direct result of the disaster may be eligible for DUA. The first payable week for DUA related to this disaster is December 4, 2005. For the 14 additional counties, DUA applications will only be taken for a 30-day period ending March 6, 2006. To file for disaster unemployment assistance, an individual must first file 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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