



NEWS RELEASE

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DEADLINE FOR DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT IN 26 OKLAHOMA COUNTIES CHANGED

The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission is asking all media outlets to help get the word out about this change.

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) is amending language concerning filing deadlines for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) that were released on January 13, 2006, and February 2, 2006. This change is in response to a request for clarification from state and federal emergency management agencies. The DUA announcement covered potential unemployment benefits for those living or working in one of 26 counties declared disaster areas following the severe wildfires affecting the state December 1, 2005, and continuing.

The language in the original announcement read in part “DUA applications will only be taken for a 30-day period...” The language has been amended to “DUA applications will be taken for a 30-day period...” Those living or working in the affected counties can still apply for DUA benefits after the deadline, but must provide an explanation for filing after the end of the 30-day filing period. If it is determined that the individual had legitimate cause for filing late, that person could still be eligible for DUA benefits.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance provides financial support to individuals who are not eligible for regular unemployment benefits, but whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of a major disaster. Counties included in the declared disaster area are **Bryan, Canadian, Carter, Choctaw, Cotton, Creek, Garvin, Hughes, Lincoln, Logan, Mayes, McIntosh, Murray, Muskogee, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Payne, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Seminole, Stephens, Tulsa, and Wagoner** counties.

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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