



OKLAHOMA

Employment Security Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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High Unemployment Claims Trend Continues

OKLAHOMA CITY – The number of initial Unemployment Insurance claims dipped slightly from the previous week as COVID-19 related closures and the energy crisis continue to take a toll on Oklahoma's workforce.

For the week ending April 11, 2020, unadjusted initial claims in Oklahoma totaled 48,977, a decrease of 11,557 from the previous record-setting adjusted week high of 60,534, revised up from the initially reported total of 47,744.

Nationally, the seasonally adjusted initial claims totaled 5,245,000, a decrease of 1,370,000 from the previous week's revised level of 6,615,000. The advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment rate for the country was 8.2 percent for the week ending April 4, up 3.1 percent and the highest seasonally adjusted rate since the previous high of 7.0 percent in May 1975.

"Our numbers for last week are still extraordinarily high as additional employers cut staff and implemented layoffs to adjust to this dramatic downturn in the economy," said OESC Executive Director Robin Roberson. "As an agency responsible for connecting displaced workers with unemployment benefits, we continue to make tremendous strides in disbursing funds to provide relief."

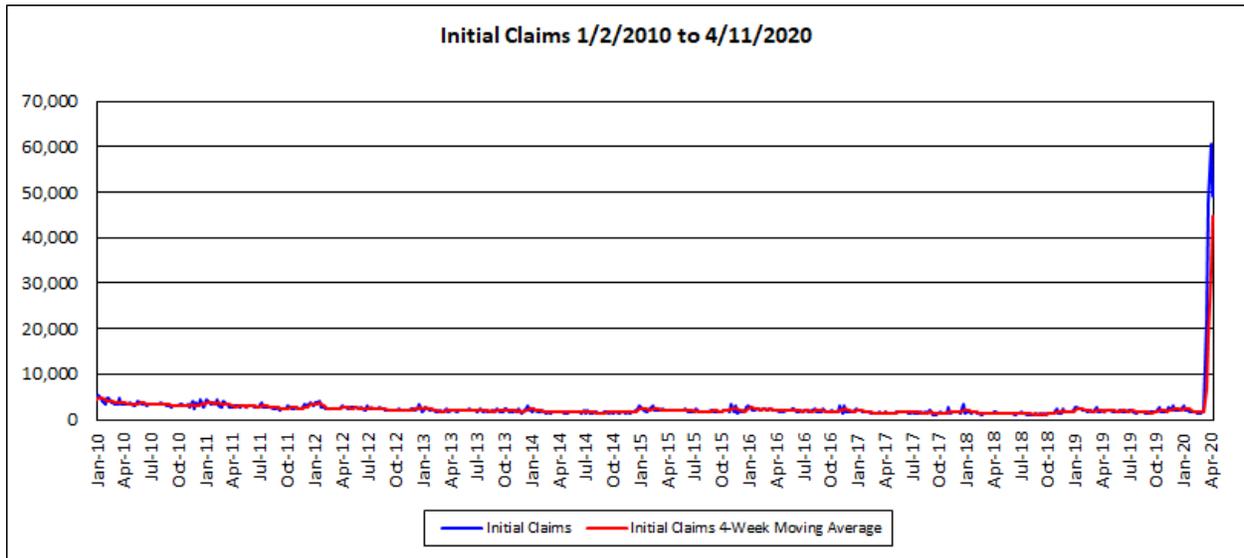
The agency now has around 1200 claims representatives manning the call center and the online chat feature, including 200 Tier 2 specialists to handle escalated claims with eligibility or other issues. The call drop-off rate has fallen below one percent as Oklahomans are successfully connecting with claims agents.

Out of work Oklahomans are encouraged to first file initial claims online as this remains the fastest way to file a claim. A new mobile app is nearing completion and will soon be available as another tool for claimants to file a claim, submit eligibility documentation, and otherwise communicate with OESC.

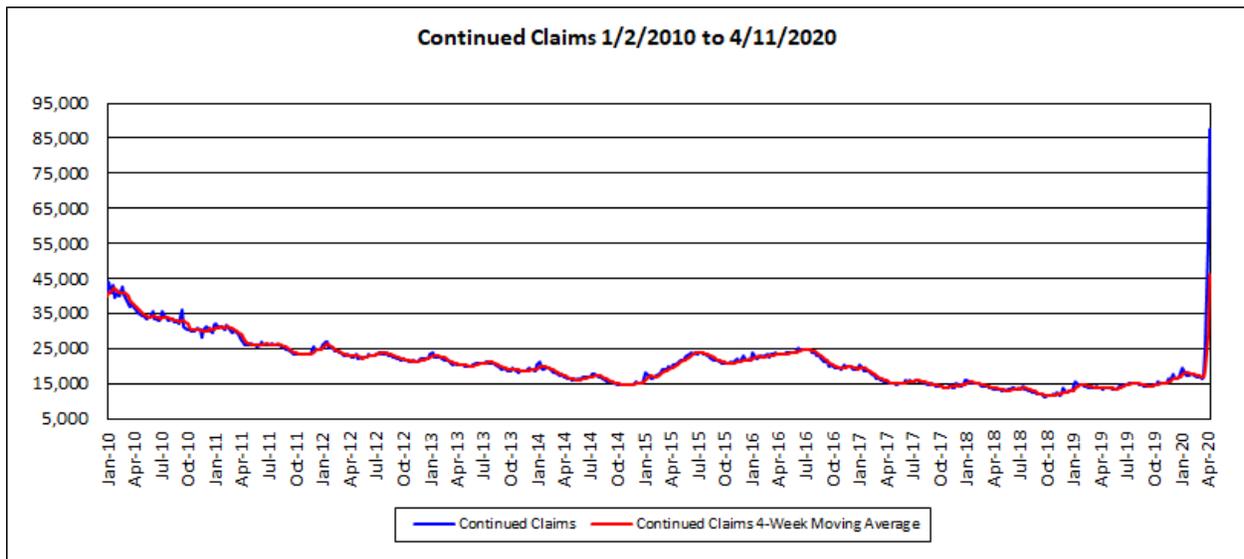
"The ability to assist individuals who don't qualify for regular unemployment benefits or have exhausted their benefits will be available as soon as Oklahoma receives the go ahead for release and processing of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claims," Roberson said. "We remain optimistic these funds will be available this week to assist gig workers, independent contractors, and other self-employed individuals seeking relief."

The national weekly seasonally adjusted initial claims report is one of ten components in the Composite Index of Leading Economic Indicators. To smooth out the volatility in the weekly initial claims data, a 4-week moving average is used to assess trends.

In Oklahoma, the less volatile initial claims four-week moving average climbed 11,785 to 44,975 for the week ending 4/11/2020.



The advance unadjusted number for continued claims totaled 87,512, an increase of 32,483 from the previous week. The continued four-week moving average increased 17,758 to 46,166.



While the number of unemployed Oklahomans has topped 200,000 since mid-March, many employers urgently need workers. Look for jobs at www.okjobmatch.com.

Unemployment Claims may be securely filed online at www.oesc.ok.gov.