



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **OESC serves more than 1,000 in Tulsa, 6,200 overall at claims events**

*Since March 1, OESC has paid \$2.4 billion in unemployment benefits*

**OKLAHOMA CITY** — At in-person, socially-distanced events on July 1-2, July 6-9, and July 13-16, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) has helped more than 6,200 Oklahomans receive their unemployment benefits at the Reed Event Center in Midwest City and the Tulsa Fairgrounds. To continue serving Oklahomans safely and efficiently, OESC has added more events in Tulsa on July 22-23 with the goal of serving another 2,000 claimants, an increase from the 1,200 expected to be seen July 15-16 combined.

In addition, since the beginning of the pandemic (March 1 to current) OESC has paid out more than \$2.4 billion in unemployment benefits.

“Oklahomans are still hurting, but we are continuing to help people with their claims and get them the services they need,” said OESC Interim Executive Director Shelley Zumwalt. “The claims events in Tulsa have continued the success we saw in Oklahoma City, serving more than 1,000 people in just two days – with more expected next week.”

Beyond the claims events, OESC has continued to resolve challenges it has faced since the pandemic began in March.

The number of first-time callers who had their issue resolved has increased by more than 33% since May. Additionally, 50 new Tulsa staff members are completing training for the agency’s local call center – doubling the number of trained professionals ready to assist Oklahomans.

In 14 days, another 30 staff members will be ready to help at OESC’s Oklahoma City call center, which will also double the total staff at that facility. Meanwhile, a monumental behind-the-scenes technological restructuring continues to catapult OESC’s 40-year-old computer system into the modern age.

“We’re taking manual processes that require a human and automating those,” Zumwalt said. “This will eventually move the mainframe into something from 2020. This is a huge undertaking that often takes many months to complete – and we are getting it done as soon as possible while ensuring we don’t disrupt service to our claimants.”

## Weekly Unemployment Numbers for Week Ending July 11

- Initial claims and continued claims for unemployment insurance benefits fall for the third consecutive week.
- For the file week ending July 11, the advance number of initial claims, unadjusted, totaled 8,621, a decrease of 802 from the previous week's revised level of 9,423.
- For the same file week, the less volatile initial claims four-week moving average was 23,766, a decrease of 19,039 from the previous week's revised average of 42,805.
- For the file week ending July 11, the advance unadjusted number of continued claims totaled 122,452, a decrease of 8,582 from the previous week's revised level of 131,034.
- For the same file week, the continued claims four-week moving average was 150,244, a decrease of 12,727 from the previous week's revised average of 162,971.

Nationally, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims during the week ending in July 11 was 1,300,000, a decrease of 10,000 from the previous week's revised level of 1,310,000. The four-week moving average was 1,375,000, a decrease of 60,000 from the previous week's revised average of 1,435,000. The advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment rate was 11.9% for the week ending July 4, a decrease of 0.3 percentage point from the previous week's revised rate of 12.2%.

The national weekly seasonally adjusted initial claims report is one of 10 components in the Composite Index of Leading Economic Indicators. To smooth out the volatility in the weekly initial claims data, a four-week moving average is used to assess trends.

### **Claimant Resources**

Individuals seeking unemployment benefits under the CARES Act should go to <https://ui.ok.gov> and create an account with the Get Started button to connect their social security number and pull all unemployment information into one location.

Unemployment claimants should be aware that not returning to work when recalled or when work is available could potentially lead to disqualification from receiving unemployment benefits.

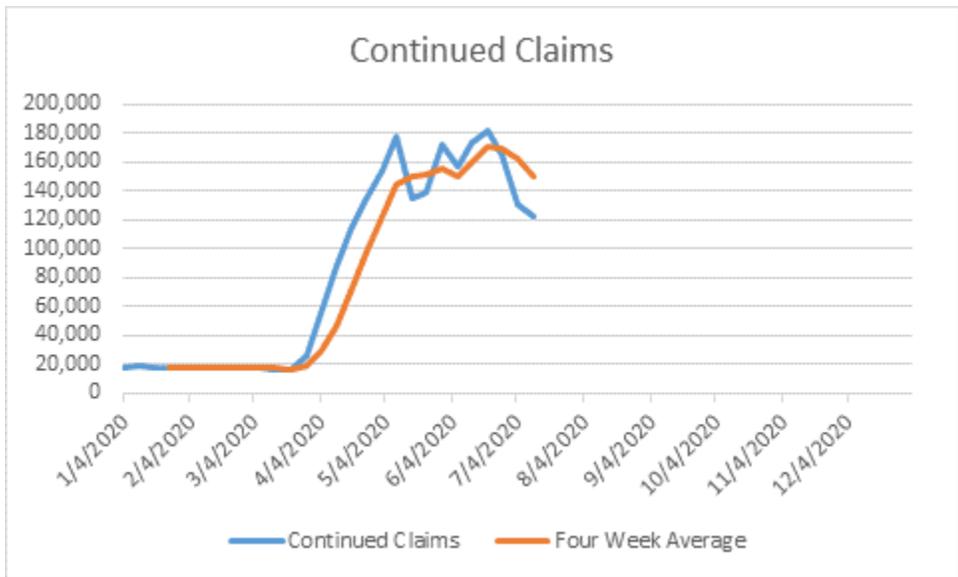
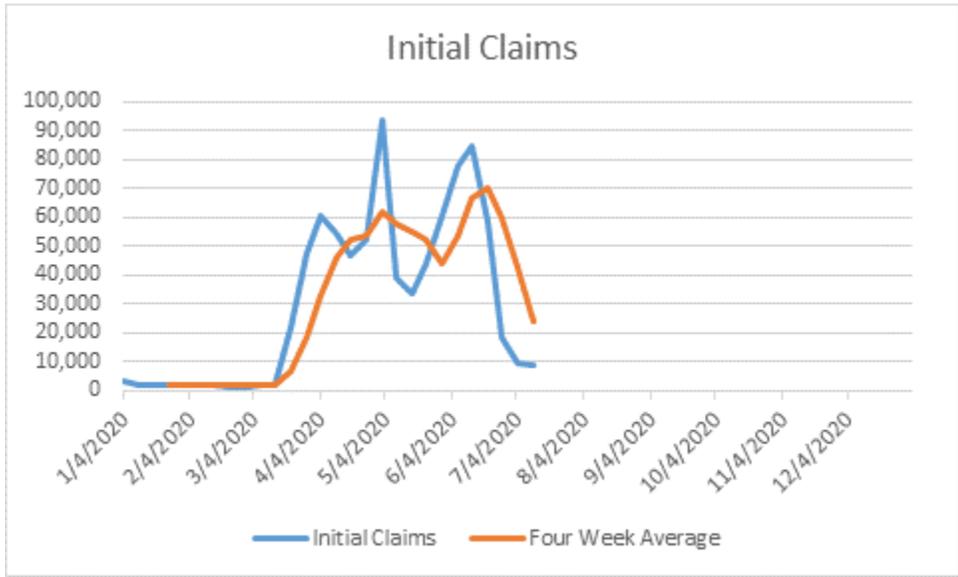
Employers may report this activity by emailing [returntowork@oesc.state.ok.us](mailto:returntowork@oesc.state.ok.us), calling 405-962-7524, or mailing OESC at P.O. Box 52006, Oklahoma City, OK, 73152-2006.

If a claimant returns to work fulltime, they should keep their unemployment claim open with OESC and not certify a weekly claim. If they return part-time, a claimant may continue to certify their weekly claim and must report all gross earnings for the week to potentially receive a partial benefit. Eligibility for continued benefits is determined on the circumstances of each individual claimant.

OESC is an excellent resource for people looking to re-enter the job market by connecting Oklahomans with available employment through <https://okjobmatch.com/>.

If a PUA-eligible claimant reopens their business, they will still receive backdated unemployment benefits to when their COVID-19-related job loss or business closure occurred.

### Updated Graphs for Week Ending July 11



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