FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 30, 2020
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Successful OESC Claims Events Conclude; Agency to Continue Serving Oklahomans in Need

$2.6 billion in claims paid while weekly filings continue to decline

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) has concluded its socially distanced claims events after a successful two days of helping Oklahomans in need in Ardmore. The events helped nearly 10,000 claimants get their unemployment benefits. Additionally, the agency has paid $2.6 billion in claims since March 1.

Interim Executive Director Shelley Zumwalt said the agency will continue to search for innovative, efficient ways to continue to serve Oklahomans in need. The state’s 27 regional offices remain open and will continue to assist claimants with the same issues the claims events addressed.

“Our most visible effort to help our fellow Oklahomans has concluded with resounding success,” Zumwalt said. “That’s thousands of people who not only have their benefits but also are not having to spend hours on the phone.

“While these claims events have taken place, we’ve lowered our call volume, hired and are training new staff, which will double the number of staff in the OESC Oklahoma City and Tulsa call centers, and continued processing claims at a high level,” she said.

The number of people filing for unemployment for the first time continued its drop during the week of July 25 to 7,614. That’s down from the previous week’s 9,879. That number has been falling since late June.

Continued claims – the number of people getting unemployment benefits – totaled 118,809 for the week, down from the previous week’s 127,134.

Staff at regional offices are able to assist with topics including Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, fraudulent claims, technological help, unemployment insurance and initial claims filing. The centers also have information about local work opportunities and how to access needed services available where claimants live.
“At this point, we aren't planning additional claims events, but I am constantly taking the
temperature of the situation,” Zumwalt said. “If another effort is needed to serve our claimants, I
will take action to make that happen.”

Visit https://oklahomaworks.gov for all regional office locations across Oklahoma. As a
reminder, claimants may call any of the regional offices to receive help, regardless of where
they live.

Weekly Unemployment Numbers for Week Ending July 25
Initial claims and continued claims for unemployment insurance benefits have both continued to
decline.

- For the week ending July 25, the advance number of initial claims, unadjusted,
totaled 7,614, a decrease of 2,265 from the previous week's revised level of 9,879.
- Initial claims’ four-week moving average was 9,149, a decrease of 2,698 from the
previous week's revised average of 11,847.
- The advance unadjusted number of continued claims totaled 118,809, a
decrease of 8,325 from the previous week's revised level of 127,134.
- Continued claims’ four-week moving average was 127,227, a decrease of 11,623
from the previous week's revised average of 138,850.

Nationally, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims during the same period was
1,434,000 - up 12,000 from the previous week's revised level, the U.S. Department of Labor
reports. The four-week moving average was 1,368,500, up 6,500 from the previous week. For
the week ending July 18, DOL reports the advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment
rate was 11.6 percent.

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, calling 405-962-
7524, or mailing OESC at P.O. Box 52006, Oklahoma City, OK, 73152-2006.

If a claimant returns to work full time, 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/](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 25**

![Initial Claims Graph](image1)

![Continued Claims Graph](image2)

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