OESC pays out more than $3.5 billion, first-call resolution reaches nearly 70%

Unemployment claims decline for the 19th consecutive week

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) reports that its first-call resolution hit 69.67%, a continued improvement from early August where the agency reported 43% first-call resolution, and a significant improvement from early in the pandemic when first-call resolution was under 5%. This means that nearly 70% of claimants who are calling to get assistance with unemployment claims are getting the help they need without requiring further assistance.

“It’s incredible to see the first-call resolution percentage continue to climb as improving our processes and systems has been a major focus for us,” said OESC Executive Director Shelley Zumwalt. “This is a significant improvement, and we will continue to work to help those in need as quickly and efficiently as possible.”

Since the beginning of the pandemic in March, OESC has paid out over $3.5 billion dollars in benefits to claimants. The total paid out is more than OESC paid out from 2010 to 2019 combined.

“In roughly eight months, OESC has paid out more than the last decade combined,” Zumwalt said. “Over those months and even now, OESC continues to work tirelessly to payout claims and solve claimant’s issues. Even with an outdated system and limited full-time employees to handle the high number of claims, we’ve processed more than 800,000 claims to help those that need it most.”

OESC also reports the continued decline in initial and continued unemployment insurance benefit claims, and the four-week moving average for continued claims decline for the 19th consecutive week.

Weekly Unemployment Numbers for Week Ending Oct. 31

- For the week ending Oct. 31, the advance number of initial claims, unadjusted, totaled 4,255, a decrease of 760 from the previous week's revised level of 5,015.
- Initial claims’ four-week moving average was 5,020, a decrease of 381 from the previous week's revised average of 5,401.
The advance unadjusted number of continued claims totaled 50,911, a decrease of 16,950 from the previous week’s revised level of 67,861.

Continued claims’ four-week moving average was 68,619, a decrease of 9,304 from the previous week’s revised average of 77,923.

Nationally, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims during the same period was 751,000, a decrease of 7,000 from the previous week's revised level, the U.S. Department of Labor reports. The four-week moving average was 787,000, a decrease of 4,000 from the previous week. For the week ending Oct. 24, DOL reports the advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment rate was 5%, a decrease of 0.3 percentage point from the previous week’s revised rate.

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](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 Oct. 31

**Initial Claims**

**Continued Claims**

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