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Unemployment claims decline for the 20th consecutive week
*The agency rolls out Digital ID verification requirement*

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) reports a continued decline in the initial and continued unemployment claims with the continued claims four-week moving average down for the 20th consecutive week.

“I’m pleased to see continued claims numbers this week declined by 15%,” said OESC Executive Director Shelley Zumwalt. “Oklahomans are showing their resilience as they continue to get back to work during this trying year. We know the difficulties many Oklahomans have faced, and we will continue to prioritize helping claimants secure benefits for themselves and their families.”

Digital ID Verification

Throughout the pandemic, OESC saw a significant rise in fraudulent claims. To combat this, OESC is rolling out its Digital ID Verification initiative to further protect claimants’ personal information and prevent fraud.

Digital ID uses facial recognition technology called ID.X, an identity verification tool from Idemia in partnership with Granicus, OESC’s current third-party provider of the GovService and GovDelivery portal.

A digital identity is the online equivalent of a real person, comprised of multiple characteristics, including physical features as well as personal data. Verification information will come from documents and biometric data, verified against a trusted source like state and national registries. For biometric identification, special liveness software is used to ensure biometrics being captured are genuine and not a sophisticated fraudulent attempt.

Starting today, Nov. 12, claimants filing weekly claims on ui.ok.gov are required to verify their identity. OESC has implemented a hotline for those having issues with this initiative, and can call 405-521-2371 to get help.

“I’m thrilled to have this technology and service to help us fight fraudulent activity before it even occurs,” Zumwalt said. “Without verification, claimants will not be able to claim unemployment benefits. In addition, Digital ID verification will happen every 90 days, so the sooner claimants can get used to the process, the easier it will be for future attempts.”
OKJobMatch Hotline

OESC has added a new self-help feature available on OKJobMatch for citizens needing to complete work registration, but some claimants may be experiencing issues with logins and/or passwords. OESC has set up a dedicated hotline for this at 405-521-3263.

“OESC is continually evolving to ensure Oklahomans are able to file unemployment claims and seek employment,” Zumwalt said. “Our team has responded quickly this week to adapt to claimant questions, and have stood up these dedicated hotlines to sort out issues specific to both OKJobMatch and Digital ID verification.”

Weekly Unemployment Numbers for Week Ending Nov. 7

- For the week ending Nov. 7, the advance number of initial claims, unadjusted, totaled 3,858, a decrease of 1,095 from the previous week’s revised level of 4,953.
- Initial claims’ four-week moving average was 4,776, a decrease of 418 from the previous week’s revised average of 5,194.
- The advance unadjusted number of continued claims totaled 50,115, a decrease of 9,023 from the previous week’s revised level of 59,138.
- Continued claims’ four-week moving average was 62,609, a decrease of 8,067 from the previous week's revised average of 70,676.

Nationally, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims during the same period was 709,000, a decrease of 48,000 from the previous week’s revised level, the U.S. Department of Labor reports. The four-week moving average was 755,250, a decrease of 33,250 from the previous week. For the week ending Oct. 31, DOL reports the advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment rate was 4.6%, 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 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/.

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 Nov. 7

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Initial Claims

Continued Claims

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