Oklahoma Initial and Continued Unemployment Four-Week Average Declines for Seventh Consecutive Week

State evaluating next steps for DOL Lost Wages Assistance program

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission reported a continued decline in unemployment claims for the week of Aug. 8. For the seventh consecutive week, both the initial and continued claims four-week moving average declined, down 14.3% and 2.7% respectively from the previous week.

“As unemployment numbers continue to decrease, we are maintaining our commitment to helping Oklahomans get their unemployment benefits,” said OESC Interim Executive Director Shelley Zumwalt. “We’re working on technology solutions, continuing to train employees and implementing new measures to combat fraud.”

Federal Unemployment Assistance

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced further guidance yesterday on the Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program, which would provide claimants in most unemployment insurance programs up to $400 per week in additional benefits from Aug. 1 to Dec. 27.

“OESC is working with state and national leadership to assess our state’s options regarding the recently announced U.S. Department of Labor’s Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program and guidance,” Zumwalt said. “We do not have details to share yet, but will provide updates as available.”

Weekly Unemployment Numbers for Week Ending Aug. 8

- For the week ending Aug. 8, the advance number of initial claims, unadjusted, totaled 4,673, a decrease of 1,936 from the previous week’s revised level of 6,609.
- Initial claims’ four-week moving average was 7,522, a decrease of 1,252 from the previous week’s revised average of 8,774.
- The advance unadjusted number of continued claims totaled 118,131, a decrease of 4,990 from the previous week’s revised level of 123,121.
- Continued claims’ four-week moving average was 124,001, a decrease of 3,450 from the previous week’s revised average of 127,451.
Nationally, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims during the same period was 963,000, a decrease of 228,000 from the previous week's revised level, the U.S. Department of Labor reports. The four-week moving average was 1,252,750, a decrease of 86,250 from the previous week. For the week ending Aug. 1, DOL reports the advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment rate was 10.6%, a decrease of 0.4 percentage point from the previous week’s unrevised 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 Aug. 8**