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Contact: Brian Harter
Phone: (614) 466-6650
E-mail: Brian.Harter@jfs.ohio.gov

ODJFS Notifying Unemployment Claimants That Extended Benefits Are Ending

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is notifying unemployment claimants who exhausted their maximum 26 weeks of benefits last week (the week ending February 27, 2010) that no federal extended benefits are available at this time, after Congress let deadlines for the program expire on February 27.

Because of inaction by Congress, deadlines for the federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program expired, along with federal funding for State Extended Benefits and the Federal Additional Compensation (FAC) program, which has given claimants an additional \$25 a week payment. Although the House approved an extension, a similar measure stalled in the Senate. Congress could still act to restore EUC and impose new deadlines. However, even if it does, many claimants will still experience a lapse in benefits.

More than 432,000 Ohioans receiving unemployment benefits will be affected, starting with about 20,000 people this week and about 24,000 each week after that. Those who exhaust their “regular” unemployment benefits will not be eligible for extended benefits. Those who exhaust their current “tier” of federal extended benefits will not be eligible for additional extended benefits. No extended benefits will be paid after July 31.

“This is an extremely unfortunate situation for thousands of Ohio’s families, who still are suffering the effects of the national economic downturn,” said ODJFS Director Douglas Lumpkin, who sent a letter to members of the Ohio Congressional delegation last month, urging them to extend the deadlines. “Ohio’s unemployed workers need these benefits to help them weather the storm while they continue to search for employment. We encourage Congress to take immediate action to help them.”

Over the next week, ODJFS will be notifying all claimants via an automated dialer message and posting updates to www.unemployment.ohio.gov. Ohio’s December unemployment rate was 10.9 percent.