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ODJFS Urges Congress to Take Action to Help Unemployed Ohioans

Columbus, Ohio – Unless Congress acts in the coming days, tens of thousands of unemployed Ohioans will begin losing unemployment benefits each week, starting the week of Christmas and increasing week by week. An extension by Congress of the deadlines for the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program will ensure that Ohioans continue to receive these benefits uninterrupted.

The law states that claimants who exhaust their regular 26 weeks of unemployment benefits after December 19 will not be eligible for any federal extended benefits. In addition, claimants who exhaust their extended benefits after December 26 will not be eligible for any additional extended benefits.

Congress is considering including an extension of the deadlines for the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill, and the House of Representatives has taken some encouraging steps toward its passage. However, legislation must address the December 19, 2009, deadline in order for there to be no lapse or delay in benefits for unemployed workers.

“We have been working diligently behind the scenes, even before the latest extension was passed, to encourage Congress to extend the deadlines,” said Douglas Lumpkin, director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), who earlier this week sent a letter to members of the Ohio Congressional delegation, urging them to take action. “We have been hopeful that they will act, but they must act quickly.”

Later this week, ODJFS will be calling all claimants in Ohio who might be immediately impacted.

“Without this extension, hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers throughout Ohio will be affected,” Director Lumpkin said. “These workers rely on the financial support of unemployment benefits to pay for ongoing basic needs during these trying times. We need Congress to act today.”

For more information about Ohio’s unemployment compensation program, go to www.unemployment.ohio.gov.