

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 19, 2010

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ODJFS Urges Congress to Take Action to Help Unemployed Ohioans

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is urging Congress to act quickly to extend deadlines for the federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program, so that hundreds of thousands of unemployed Ohioans can continue to receive benefits.

If no extension passes before February 27, nearly 200,000 Ohioans receiving regular unemployment benefits will not be eligible for extended benefits, and this number will continue to rise. In addition, more than 232,000 Ohioans receiving extended benefits will be ineligible for the next “tier” of benefits. No extended benefits will be paid after July 31.

“Given these extraordinary times, we are urging Congress to extend the deadlines once more,” said ODJFS Director Douglas Lumpkin, who earlier this week sent a letter to members of the Ohio Congressional delegation, urging them to take action. “These benefits are a lifeline for thousands of Ohio families, who will face dire circumstances without them. In addition, extended benefits have a \$54 million monthly impact on Ohio’s communities. The loss of these dollars would be deeply felt, throughout the state.”

Eligible claimants may receive up to 26 weeks of “regular” unemployment benefits. However, because of the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008, those who exhaust all 26 weeks have been eligible for extensions. Congress has extended benefit deadlines three times since 2008. Earlier extensions created two “tiers” of benefits: Tier 1 (up to 20 additional weeks of benefits) and Tier 2 (up to 13 additional weeks of benefits). The latest extension, in November 2009, added 1 additional week to the Tier 2 benefits and then created two completely new tiers: Tier 3 (up to 13 additional weeks of benefits) and Tier 4 (up to 6 additional weeks of benefits).

Ohio’s December unemployment rate was 10.9 percent. As of February 13, 2010, more than 432,000 Ohioans were receiving unemployment compensation.

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