

2. Automatic 5% Areas for Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program

(Effective June 1, 2013 - May 31, 2014)

The Oklahoma Quality Jobs Act and the Oklahoma Small Employer Quality Jobs Act offer specific benefits for companies locating in certain economically distressed geographic areas.

For the Quality Jobs Program, companies locating in “Automatic 5% Counties” may qualify for a 5% net benefit rate. Within “Opportunity Zones”, in addition to a 5% net benefit rate, average wage requirements may be waived in the Quality Jobs Program. Other thresholds will still need to be met in order for a company to qualify for the Quality Jobs Program.

For the Small Employer Quality Jobs Program, a small employer may only locate in a high population county (Oklahoma, Tulsa, and Cleveland counties) if such location is in an Opportunity Zone. A small employer will not need to locate in an Opportunity Zone to qualify for the program if it locates in any of the state’s 74 other counties. Other thresholds will still need to be met in order for a company to qualify for the Small Employer Quality Jobs Program.

Generally, an Automatic 5% County is:

- 1) Reviewed once every year
- 2) Includes all areas within a County where:
- 3) The County’s Per Capita Income is 15% or more below the Oklahoma Per Capita Income, OR
- 4) The County as a whole has experienced a decrease in population over the last 10 years, OR
- 5) The County’s unemployment rate exceeds the lesser of 5% or 2 percentage points above the state average unemployment rate.
- 6) The legal definition of an Opportunity Zone can be found in **Oklahoma Statutes Title 68, Section 3603 Definitions**, but generally an Opportunity Zone includes individual Census Tracts where: 30% or more of the population lives below poverty.

If you have questions about the benefits of locating within an Automatic 5% County or an Opportunity Zone, contact the Oklahoma Department of Commerce at 1-800-879-6552.

If you have questions about which areas in Oklahoma qualify as Automatic 5% Counties or as Opportunity Zones, contact Lesli Walsh with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce by e-mail at lesli_walsh@okcommerce.gov or by phone at (405) 815-5120.