

About 3,000 of the total eligible claimants exhausted all of their benefits prior to April 11. Because of the time lapse, they're being mailed a notification to apply for the FED-ED extension and verify for the department that they're still unemployed and eligible to receive further benefits. They will also receive extra claim forms for any back weeks of FED-ED benefits they may be owed.

Including the FED-ED extension, California workers can receive up to a total of 79 weeks of UI benefits. Ordinarily workers are eligible for a maximum of 26 weeks of UI benefits. A first and second federal extension of benefits was approved by Congress and signed into law last year, bringing the available total to 59 weeks. The FED-ED extension adds up to 20 weeks of benefits.

Payments under the FED-ED program cannot be made if someone is qualified first to file a new regular UI claim. In addition, the program carries more stringent requirements for claimants than other UI benefits, including:

- Providing a documented job search on their claim forms for each week of benefits they receive;
- Possibly accepting a minimum wage position if local labor market information shows prospects of obtaining work in their usual occupation within a short period of time are not favorable; and
- Accepting work if the weekly gross earnings offered equal or exceed their weekly UI benefit amount, excluding the extra \$25 federal stimulus payment currently being added to each week of UI benefits.

Information about federally-extended benefits and regular UI claims is available on EDD's Web site at www.edd.ca.gov. You can also submit questions about the program and individual claims through the ContactEDD feature on the front page. A vast majority of unemployed workers should be able to file their claims and submit their questions or concerns online.

FED-ED payments are entirely federally funded under the Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) for most employers, which means that employers will not be charged for any benefits paid to claimants on FED-ED extensions filed with an effective date on or before December 20, 2009. Governmental entities and federally-recognized Indian Tribes will be charged for 100 percent of FED-ED extension benefits paid.

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For news media inquiries only, contact the California Employment Development Department (EDD) Communications Office, at (916) 654-9029. TTY users, please call the California Relay Service at 711.