

N E W S R E L E A S E

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More Californians receiving extended federal benefits

Sacramento – Californians impacted by the historic COVID-19 pandemic are now starting to see the availability of up to 11 weeks of additional unemployment benefits from two federal programs. The California Employment Development Department (EDD) is automatically re-opening Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Assistance (PEUC) claims for those who had a balance remaining on those claims when the federal CARES Act expired on December 26. These claimants will NOT have to re-open their claims, EDD is doing that for them.

The EDD will let claimants know via email, text, or mailed notices when they can certify for benefit payments under these programs. Some first payments are already occurring as of January 10 and the Department anticipates completing the re-opening of these extended claims by January 22. Individuals who re-opened their claim online before receiving an official notification from EDD will be allowed to certify for later weeks in January and EDD will separately make earlier weeks beginning December 27 available to them.

California is one of the first states in the nation to make the extended benefits program available to the public. Since January 3, California has provided \$526.9 million in aid to more than one million Californians through the extra \$300 Federal Pandemic Additional Compensation (PAC) added to benefits individuals receive.

Next Phase

The next phase of implementing the extended PUA and PEUC benefits will include those claims that did NOT have a balance still remaining as of December 26, 2020. EDD is working to complete the necessary programming and will notify impacted individuals. Only those weeks of unemployment starting December 27 will be payable.

EDD is currently assessing new US Department of Labor guidance for implementing the remaining federal provisions, including a potential waiver of PUA overpayments and the new Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation program. EDD encourages claimants to look for messages from EDD and monitor our [Federal Provisions for Unemployment webpage](#) for details on these benefits and further updates.

Californians can also learn more about the various benefits available through our updated [Unemployment Benefit Programs Flowchart](#).

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Working to validate claims and weed out fraud

To help strengthen fraud prevention measures, EDD has applied further screening to 9.7 million unemployment claims established during the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in more than 1.4 million claims identified as potentially fraudulent. The individuals associated with these claims are receiving emails through their UI online account, or notices sent through the mail, indicating that further payment is temporarily suspended. EDD requires additional information to validate identity or eligibility so payments can resume for eligible claimants.

The following actions are underway to resolve this group of claims:

1. **Identity verification (vast majority)** – EDD started sending notifications on January 6th to verify claimants' identity. These individuals are being routed to ID.me in phases for validating their identity or through EDD's manual ID verification process for those without a UI Online account. As claimants have their identity verified, EDD is removing barriers on claims so payments can continue for eligible claimants – something that can occur in a matter days.
 - EDD encourages claimants to review these resources they are receiving to make the process through ID.me as seamless and quick as possible:
 - The [step-by-step guide \(PDF\)](#) walks you through completing your verification.
 - While providing documents online is the fastest option, ID.me does offer an option to [verify your identity on a video call \(PDF\)](#).
 - **Claimants should continue to certify for benefits for each week that they wish to claim benefits while this additional verification effort is completed.** This action will minimize any delays in processing their claims.
2. **Request for Information** – These claims have an eligibility issue associated with them. EDD requires individuals to complete a questionnaire to determine if they meet requirements for continued benefits.
3. **Notice of Determination and Appeal Rights** – These claims don't meet requirements for payment and individuals associated with them are being notified about the reason for the disqualification of benefits and their appeal rights.

This suspended payment process is **separate** from Bank of America assessing potential fraudulent claims and transaction involving the debit cards, much like any credit card in the banking system. If someone has experienced issues with accessing funds on those cards and have NOT received a message from EDD indicating that more information is needed, then this is an issue that only Bank of America can resolve by calling the number on the back of the card (1-866-692-9374).

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Resolving old backlogged claims

As of January 13, 95.1% (1,563,449) of the 1.6 million claims identified by the EDD Strike Team as backlog have been resolved. That includes Initial Claims and Continued Claims where first or further payment is pending past 21 days. Status on these older claims, included with more recent ones, appear in these [two separate backlog dashboards](#).

Latest Claim Activity

A total of 19.1 million claims have been processed by EDD during this historic pandemic for various unemployment benefits to support California workers and their families. The latest available unemployment claims and trends data can be found in the [EDD's online Newsroom](#).

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