

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Date: May 4, 2021

News Release No.: 21-28

EDD Provides Update on Unemployment Insurance Program Advancements, Continued Customer Service Improvements

SACRAMENTO—The Employment Development Department (EDD) today provided an update on various actions to improve the customer experience for Californians seeking unemployment benefits.

Since President Biden signed the [American Rescue Plan on March 11, EDD](#) has worked to ensure millions of Californians continue to receive federal benefits extended by the new law. The Department has paid over \$29 billion in total benefits this year.

EDD continues to implement new call center and website features to enhance the customer experience for claimants. These efforts further the Department's goal of continually improving customer service and addressing issues brought forward by claimants.

Recently, the Department launched a new [AskEDD](#) platform that is more user-friendly. The new site includes enhanced navigation to help people find information more easily, improved search functions, and additional monitoring to identify trending issues so that EDD can continually improve the quality of information.

These website improvements are part of an ongoing effort to provide more transparent and helpful guidance to customers regarding state and federal unemployment requirements. Recently, the Department posted [new information](#) to help people understand what to do at the end of their benefit year. The webpage with this information has been viewed more than 3.7 million times in just a few weeks. The Department's English and Spanish [Ask Eddy videos](#) are also educational resources for claimants seeking information about the benefit year end and how to certify for benefits.

The Department's strategy for managing call center demand includes directing people to online resources and increasing permanent state staff with high-quality training necessary to help customers. The Department is actively recruiting, hiring and training hundreds of new employees to assist claimants and answer their questions.

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The Department has also launched new tools to enhance customer service, including a multi-million dollar investment in language interpreter services and a new online library to help staff research information more quickly. Other actions the Department has taken to improve the customer experience include:

- Improving the [online help text](#) to clearly explain what is required by the bi-weekly certification questions to help claimants avoid delays.
- Continually improving the mobile phone-ready version of the Department website so claimants can file claims and easily access information on their phones and devices.
- Deploying document upload, including a mobile-friendly version, to help claimants save time over mail.
- Calling customers directly from the remote virtual call center to seek clarifying information and resolve claims.
- Launching a new feature that allows a caller to hold their place “in line” when contacting the call center, eliminating the need to wait on hold until the Department calls the claimant back.
- Continuing to monitor customer areas of confusion and trending issues and addressing them with improved public information.
- Posting information through UI Online to let claimants know they could be eligible for a [tax credit](#) to lower health insurance costs or [housing assistance](#) for renters and landlords.
- Launching a more extensive and user-friendly [unemployment data dashboard](#) to provide greater transparency on claim filing activity.

Curbing Fraud, Thwarting Scammers, and Helping Identity Theft Victims

EDD shut the door last year on unprecedented levels of criminal fraud by launching new identity verification and robust fraud filters that check claimant information against extensive databases, including law enforcement records.

In January, the Department began an analysis of 1.48 million suspicious claims that were suspended until identity or eligibility could be verified. Of those who needed to verify their identity, approximately 37 percent did so and were then cleared to resume obtaining benefits if otherwise eligible while the others were disqualified and were provided appeal rights. Further details will be provided when the full analysis is complete.

The Department is also continuing to take action to hold fraudsters accountable who took advantage of the crisis last year. The EDD’s investigations unit continues to provide valuable leads and evidence to local, state and federal investigators and prosecutors. Last week the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services announced the state Task Force on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Fraud has led to the [arrest of 68 suspects and the opening of 1,641 additional investigations](#). This activity will continue to ramp up as the Department provides more leads and evidence to investigators and prosecutors.

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Other actions the Department has taken to curb fraud and prevent it from happening again include:

- [New partnerships](#) with law enforcement [and other states](#) to share data with other jurisdictions to help catch multi-state fraudsters.
- [Cross referencing data](#) against law enforcement records.
- Suspending payment to investigate suspicious multiple claims from single addresses.
- Implementing [State Auditor recommendations](#) to convene a fraud unit that coordinates fraud prevention and detection.
- Thwarting scammers by no longer automatically backdating federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claims, a program that was vulnerable to fraud.

The Department also continues to help victims of identity theft and warn the public about any new scams that might emerge as fraudsters try to compromise the state's new fraud fortress. In January, the Department set up a designated phone line and online reporting system for anyone who receives a 1099-G form with an inaccurate report of benefits and believes that identity theft was involved. Customers can visit EDD's [Form 1099-G Information Center](#) for more information, including information in multiple languages.

Anyone who receives a form 1099-G from EDD and suspects identity theft should report this as fraud by going to [Ask EDD](#), selecting "Form 1099G" and then choosing "Report Fraud." EDD will investigate and issue a corrected form 1099-G as appropriate. The [IRS recommends the public save copies](#) of whatever documentation they have regarding their attempts to get a corrected 1099-G from the state. The [IRS has made clear](#) that taxpayers who are unable to obtain a timely, corrected 1099-G should still file an accurate tax return, reporting only the income they received.

EDD has posted resources for Californians to help fight fraud and avoid new scams. A [What You Should Know About Unemployment Scammers](#) guide is posted in multiple languages on the [Help Fight Fraud page](#).

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