

N E W S R E L E A S E

Contact: Loree Levy
Aubrey Henry
916-654-9029

Date: April 16, 2020

News Release No.: 20-10

EDD Registers Historic Number of Processed Unemployment Insurance Claims for Workers Impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic

Sacramento – New Unemployment Insurance (UI) claim data officially released today illustrates the historic nature of the current demand for unemployment benefits in California with a total of 660,966 UI claims processed last week, creating a four-week total of 2.7 million claims processed. That’s at least 2.3 million more than the highest one-month total since January 2010, when 375,735 unemployment insurance claims were processed.

Over the four-week period between March 15 and April 11, the EDD has paid out over \$975 million in unemployment benefits to Californians in need. On Sunday, April 12, the EDD also began automatically adding an extra \$600 in federal funds to each week of regular benefits a worker is eligible to receive. This is one of the first UI provisions of the federal CARES Act.

“These are historic times at the EDD, dramatically impacting our families, friends, neighbors and communities,” said EDD Director Sharon Hilliard. “Employees are rallying from throughout other EDD programs and state government to help us process this record claim load and get money into the hands of those in need just as quickly as possible. For most Californians, that continues to be about three weeks after applying for benefits.”

New additional UI Call Center

Beginning on Monday, April 20, EDD will launch a secondary call center line, so that Californians are able to call-in between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., seven days a week.

A total of 1,340 state employees have been redirected to increase staffing at the call center, and assist Californians with their UI claims as hours of operation are increased. Additional staff will be added in the short-term.

Status on other federal CARES Act unemployment provisions

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program – As [announced by Governor Newsom](#), the EDD is working around the clock with state partners to build the new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program for launch in two weeks.

(more)

This new program will provide unemployment benefits for those that typically don't qualify for regular state UI benefits, including business owners, the self-employed and independent contractors. There are new FAQs available through the EDD's [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance webpage](#) and we encourage impacted workers to monitor this page for more information as details and instructions become available.

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) – The third UI provision of the CARES Act is a new 13-week extension of unemployment benefits for those who run out of their regular UI benefits paid. The federal government will be paying for these additional benefits and just recently provided EDD the necessary guidelines to implement this extension. The EDD will be working to get this extension operational just as soon as possible. Workers are encouraged to monitor EDD's website for continuing updates.

Latest responses for questions from unemployed Californians

I used a third-party vendor to file my claim, will this expedite my claim?

No, The EDD is not affiliated in any way with any other third-party vendors offering help with submitting UI applications for benefits. We encourage everyone impacted by COVID-19 to seek assistance directly on the [EDD COVID-19 webpage](#) through your computer or mobile phone and utilize the various online resources we have for the fastest processing possible.

What is the best method to submit a UI claim?

Using the EDD's UI Online system is the best option for fastest processing due to the fact that we've been able to adjust usual eligibility requirements helping us process large volumes of claims automatically through the system. Using paper forms should be considered a **last resort** since EDD cannot auto process these forms, which can slow down the payment of benefits.

I need help, are services available in multiple languages?

UI Online is available in English and Spanish and there are a variety of video tutorials in five different languages to help people use the system. Customer service representatives are available in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.

How soon could I receive benefits?

Please visit our [Step-by-Step chart](#) to inform claimants of what to expect after they submit a UI application in order to continually receive benefit payments.

(more)

Will I be eligible for unemployment benefits if I answer no to the question about looking for work?

Given the unique economic situation and lack of available work created by COVID-19, the EDD has been able to adjust our usual eligibility requirements. You will not be penalized if you answer “no” to the question about looking for work and will be paid benefits for that week if you meet all other eligibility requirements.

Can I still qualify for benefits if my EDD notice shows that I have \$0 in benefits available?

Generally, a mailed notice showing a \$0 benefit award available may mean that we have no wage records reported by an employer to support an unemployment claim, or we need to verify your identity for the reported wages that belong to you. Employers, not workers, pay for unemployment benefits through a contribution paid on behalf of each employee.

Visit the [EDD FAQs](#) for more information about how to proceed in this situation, and for other helpful information being continually updated as details become available.

###