

N E W S R E L E A S E

Contact: Loree Levy
Patti Roberts
(916) 654-9029

Date: July 22, 2010

News Release No.: 10-29

More than 400,000 Californians regain access to federal unemployment extension benefits. EDD quickly processing and issuing retroactive extension benefits

Sacramento – More than 400,000 unemployed workers in California who have experienced disruptions in federal unemployment extension benefits will now see their access to such benefits restored. President Obama has signed new federal legislation that reauthorizes access to extension benefits retroactively to June 2, 2010, and extends the filing deadlines through November 30, 2010.

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) has already begun processing the retroactive benefits. Staff will continue working through the weekend to issue checks for eligible claimants who were able to submit claim forms over the course of the weeks-long Congressional debate. The remaining customers will have extension claims automatically filed for them by EDD and will receive claim forms to complete and send back. There is no need to contact the department.

“Here at EDD, we have been preparing to quickly address the needs of more than 400,000 customers in the event Congress eventually reauthorized the extension program,” said EDD Chief Deputy Director Pam Harris. “We understand how critical these benefits are to workers and their families who have suffered long bouts of unemployment in this recession. We are working around the clock to file extended benefit claims and will begin mailing payments to eligible customers next week.”

Out of the approximately 400,000 customers impacted by the Congressional impasse, about 145,000 of them had been receiving extension benefits known as the FED-ED extension here in California, but could not continue because the FED-ED program ended. EDD has been advising these customers to continue submitting their bi-weekly claims forms in the event of further Congressional action on the extension program. For those who did, EDD should be able to start issuing checks to eligible claimants within the next few days. For those who didn't, EDD will be sending claim forms to all affected customers next week.

-- More --

The remaining 255,000 of the customers impacted recently ran out of their regular state Unemployment Insurance (UI) claim or one of the four tiers of federal extension benefits and were prevented from filing any further extensions for which they may have otherwise been eligible. EDD will be automatically filing the next level of extension claim for these customers and sending out claim forms early next week.

Once affected customers complete and mail back the first claim form, they can expect to receive a rapid succession of claim forms to complete and return to EDD in order to get them caught up on any retroactive benefits they may be entitled to receive. Such retroactive benefits cannot be paid in one lump sum, but rather in two-week increments.

While the new federal legislation grants more time for eligible unemployed workers to collect extension benefits, it does not add any more benefits to the current maximum total of up to 99 weeks of benefits. So there is no additional unemployment extended benefit assistance for the separate 150,650 people in California who have run out of their maximum total of benefits.

EDD has worked with legislative leaders, other state departments, and community organizations to produce a summary of local services and resources that may be able to provide additional assistance to long-term unemployed individuals if needed. That Assistance for Unemployed California Residents flyer can be found on the Department's Web site at www.edd.ca.gov.

The new federal legislation does not extend issuance of \$25 federal stimulus payments that were enabled by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. New regular claims filed after May 23, 2010, will not be eligible for the additional \$25 that has been added to every week of benefits paid since April 2009. Any existing claims already getting the \$25 stimulus payments can continue doing so until the week ending December 11, 2010, or until the customer runs out of unemployment benefits, whichever happens first.

Unemployed workers are encouraged to continue monitoring the EDD Web site for any further developments and additional details. Customers can also sign up for Twitter messages to receive updated information from EDD.

#####