

N E W S R E L E A S E

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## End of Federal Extensions of Unemployment Benefits as Congress Continues to Discuss Fiscal Cliff Issues

**SACRAMENTO** – The federal extensions of unemployment benefits are set to expire after Saturday, December 29<sup>th</sup> as Congress works to determine if the program should be reauthorized and whether benefits should continue for an estimated 400,000 impacted Californians.

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) which administers the federal extension program in California along with the regular state-provided unemployment benefits is keeping customers alerted to the latest developments so they'll know what to expect. The necessary technical programming to restart extension benefits has already been prepared in the event Congress and the President do agree to extend payments in their federal extension program without making changes in the existing weeks or tiers of benefits.

“Because the situation regarding the federal extensions is so fluid at this time and the cut-off of these benefits can have devastating effects on many long-term unemployed in California, the EDD is closely monitoring the discussions in Washington D.C.,” said Pam Harris, the EDD Director. “We strongly encourage our customers to keep an eye on our EDD website, Facebook, and Twitter pages for any updates on developments so they can be as prepared as possible.”

If the extension benefits are reauthorized within a few days of their expiration this weekend, then any interruption in extension payments should be avoided. The EDD will automatically re-open extension claims and send customers the necessary paperwork. Customers do NOT need to contact the department as EDD will work to seamlessly restart the extension program.

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But the longer any decision to reauthorize the program goes beyond the expiration date on Saturday, the longer potential delays could occur in eventually restarting extension payments. If Congress makes major changes in the existing program, EDD will require some additional time to make those changes and will work diligently to ensure that potential delays are minimized. And, if the U.S. Congress decides NOT to reauthorize the extension of unemployment benefits, then customers need to be aware that no further extension payments can be made by the EDD after this week- even if someone remains unemployed and still has a balance remaining on their current extension claim.

For the last 4 1/2 years, the federal government has provided anywhere between 47 and 73 weeks of additional benefits to the unemployed who had run out of their original up to 26 weeks of regular state-provided benefits. With the unprecedented demand of the recession, a total of more than \$40 billion has been paid in federal extension benefits in California.

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