

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Unemployment benefit payments top \$12 billion in California *EDD preparing to launch new federal extension of benefits*

Important Note: Soundbites from EDD Director Sharon Hilliard about the new federal extension and PUA program can be downloaded here: <https://vimeo.com/418641612/24b3e94d03>

Sacramento – Demand for the financial support of unemployment benefits continues with a total of 350,687 claims processed and a total of \$3.4 billion in benefits paid last week alone by the California Employment Development Department (EDD) to eligible workers impacted by the COVID pandemic.

According to the latest data from the EDD, a total of **4.7 million claims** have now been processed since a surge in unemployment demand began during the week ending March 14, and a total of **\$12.3 billion in benefits** has been paid to workers in need. For a sense of how large these numbers are, at the height of the last recession the EDD processed about 700,000 claims over a two-month period.

The information in the Data Dashboard below reflects official claim totals combining regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) and the new federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program as reported to the U.S. Department of Labor for the prior week. California’s PUA claim estimate accounts for more than 16% of the nation’s PUA claim total (841,995). Payment data also includes the extra \$600 federal stimulus payment that the EDD is automatically adding to each week of benefits a claimant on either program receives – available until the end of July.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Data Dashboard – see footnotes below

Week Ending Date	Total Applications Submitted (Approx. UI Online applications <i>received</i> from unemployed workers) ¹			Total Claims Processed (Approx. applications <i>processed</i> by the EDD.) ^{1,2}			Total Benefits Paid (Approx. combination of first benefit payments and continued claim bi-weekly payments) ³			Individuals Paid Benefits (Expressed as four-week rolling totals to account for different bi-weekly payment cycles) ⁴		
	Reg. UI	PUA	Total	Reg. UI	PUA	Total	Reg. UI	PUA	Total	Reg. UI	PUA	Total
May 9, 2020	189,901	160,162 ¹	350,063	214,028	136,659 ¹	350,687	\$2.5 billion	\$943 million	\$3.4 billion	3.2 million	364,000	3.6 million ⁵
March 14 – May 2	3.7 million	400,000	4.1 million	3.8 million	298,000	4.3 million	\$8.6 billion	\$247 million	\$8.9 billion	3.2 million	104,000	3.3 million ⁶
TOTAL for last 9 weeks⁷	4.5 million			4.7 million			\$12.3 billion			This information isn’t meant to be totaled as it’s a four-week rolling total. ⁴		

1. The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) was released in California effective April 28, 2020; PUA running total figure represents less than 2 weeks of data. This figure represents data from April 28 – May 9, 2020.
2. Claims processed through UI Online, along with about 5% of claims that arrive via paper or phone. This accounts for claims received in the current week as well as in past weeks.
3. Includes \$600 federal stimulus payments EDD adds to each week of regular UI/PUA benefits. Regular UI benefits are paid out of California's UI Trust Fund with contributions from employers, PUA and \$600 federal stimulus payments are paid for by the federal government.
4. Four week rolling totals accommodate for numerous variables that dictate what claimants receive benefits in any given bi-weekly period. Data excludes claimants were who fully employed, disqualified or had excessive earnings that would disqualify them for a week of benefits.
5. Four-week running total between week-ending April 11 and week-ending May 2, 2020.
6. Four-week running total between week-ending April 18 and week-ending May 9, 2020.
7. Rounded totals. Claims processed counts can be higher than submitted applications due to processing of applications submitted prior to Week Ending March 14.

New federal extension planned for launch

The EDD has been working around the clock to implement a new 13-week federal extension of unemployment benefits called the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) established in the federal CARES Act. Due to the different dates, eligibility requirements, and interactions with other UI programs, including the new PUA program, the implementation of this extension has increased complexities. In order to make these PEUC benefits available as quickly as possible during this historic pandemic, the EDD will be rolling the extension out in two phases.

- **Phase 1** – Starting May 27th, the EDD will begin automatically filing PEUC extensions for those who exhausted all available benefits on their claim with a benefit year that started on or after June 2, 2019, and expects the first phase to be completed in early June. These individuals will receive a notice through the mail about 5-7 days after the PEUC extension is filed. This notice will include instructions on how to certify for extension benefit payments if you remain unemployed. Claimants are also encouraged to watch for updates in the Inbox of their UI Online account.
- **Phase 2** – Starting in early July, the EDD will begin mailing notices to those who ran out of their regular UI benefits sometime after July 2018 who are not part of the more recent group of those who exhausted benefits in Phase 1. More details will be released later. But the EDD recommends these individuals who remain out of work apply for another UI claim through UI Online if they haven't already done so. The EDD will be required to first check whether or not they would qualify for a new regular claim before an extension could be filed.

Second phase of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance launches next week

The EDD has also been diligently working to implement the next phase of the new federal [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program \(PUA\)](#) that applies to the self-employed, business owners, independent contractors and others who are not eligible for regular state-provided UI benefits and are unemployed as a direct result of COVID-19.

- **Starting on May 20th** - The EDD will have new programming available to potentially increase weekly benefit amounts that started at the minimum level of \$167 per week when the program launched on April 28 and will begin recalculating awards for qualified individuals. Based on the total income reported by the claimant for calendar year 2019, payments could go up to a maximum of \$450 per week. In general, claimants would have to earn more than \$17,368 annually to qualify for an increase. More information about this process will be available on the EDD website next week.
- **Retroactive** – Any increase in weekly benefit amounts calculated will be paid retroactively by the EDD to the start of an individual’s PUA claim. Those due higher benefit amounts will receive details in a notice sent through the mail and the EDD will automatically issue adjustment payments for prior PUA payments made at the lower amount.
- **Also starting May 20th** – The EDD is recalculating PUA benefits for those who may have had PUA benefits withheld to repay overpaid benefits due on a prior regular unemployment insurance claim. It’s been determined that federal guidelines do not call for offsetting PUA benefits for this obligation, and so any amount deducted due to a benefit overpayment will automatically be repaid to those eligible claimants.

New guidance offered for workers and employers as businesses start to reopen
As businesses start to reopen in California under the state government guidelines, the EDD has developed a new series of [FAQs](#) on our COVID-19 webpages to assist workers and employers in understanding impacts on the eligibility for UI benefits.

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The Employment Development Department (EDD) offers a wide variety of services to millions of Californians. Among the programs administered by the EDD are Unemployment Insurance, Disability Insurance, and Paid Family Leave.

Please visit the [Unemployment Benefits Guide](#) for instructions on how to apply for Unemployment Insurance or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

For additional information on financial resources please visit:
<https://covid19.ca.gov/get-financial-help/>.