

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Unemployment benefits during pandemic reach about \$50 billion in California

End of \$600 federal stimulus payments, eligibility for parents of school children

Sacramento – Unemployment benefits that support workers out of a job or working reduced hours in this historic pandemic have now reached a total of approximately **\$50 billion paid** since March. Just last week alone, the California Employment Development Department (EDD) paid \$4.1 billion in benefits, about \$3.5 billion more than the highest week of the Great Recession (\$542 million in February 2010). In addition, the EDD has processed a total of **8.7 million claims** in the last 4 ½ months between the regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, extensions, and the separate Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program – more than the entire highest year of the recession (8.1 million in 2010).

Unemployment Insurance (UI) - Data Dashboard				
		<i>Current Week</i>	<i>Prior Weeks</i>	<i>Total</i>
		July 18, 2020	WE 3/14 -7/11/20	WE 3/14-7/18/20
Total Applications Submitted <i>(Approx. UI Online applications received from unemployed workers)¹</i>	Reg. UI	117,253	4,889,002	5,006,255
	PUA	198,835	1,516,469	1,715,304
	PEUC²	37,857	345,578	383,435
	FED-ED³	5,637	31,521	37,158
	Total	359,582	6,782,570	7,142,152
Total Claims Processed <i>(Approx. applications processed by the EDD including reopened claims)⁴</i>	Reg. UI	292,673	6,595,332	6,888,005
	PUA	163,525	1,268,175	1,431,700
	PEUC²	42,038	375,735	417,773
	FED-ED³	5,639	31,140	36,779
	Total	503,875	8,270,382	8,774,257
Total Benefits Paid <i>(Approx. combination of first benefit payments and continued claim bi-weekly payments)⁵</i>	Reg. UI	\$2.2 billion	\$33.8 billion	\$36.1 billion
	PUA	\$1.7 billion	\$10.1 billion	\$11.8 billion
	PEUC²	\$181 million	\$1.6 billion	\$1.8 billion
	FED-ED³	\$15.6 million	\$405,000	\$16.0 million
	Total	\$4.1 billion	\$45.6 billion	\$49.7 billion
Individuals Paid Benefits^{6,7} <i>(Expressed as four-week rolling totals to account for different bi-weekly payment cycles)</i>	Reg. UI	3,400,000	3,390,000	
	PUA	1,003,000	899,000	
	Total	4,403,000⁸	4,289,000⁹	

1. The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) was implemented in California on April 28, 2020. This data includes new initial claims only.

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2. The Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) was implemented in California on May 27, 2020. PEUC claims are an extension of a regular UI claim. For the week ending July 11, 2020, (PEUC) total weeks claimed was 228,541.
3. FED-ED was implemented in California on July 1, 2020. FED-ED claims are an extension of a regular UI claim.
4. Claims processed through UI Online, along with about 5% of claims that arrive via paper of phone. This accounts for claims received in the current week as well as past weeks. The data also includes additional claims or claims that are re-opened when there is a break in certifying for benefits, for example when the claimant may return to work but then later come back to collect benefits on their initial claim.
5. Includes \$600 federal stimulus payments EDD adds to each week of regular UI, PUA, PEUC, and FED-ED benefits. Regular UI benefits are paid out of California's UI Trust Fund with contributions from employers, PUA, PEUC, FED-ED and the \$600 federal stimulus payments are paid for by the federal government. The Total Benefits Paid may not add up due to the rounding data.
6. Counts include individuals claiming regular UI, PEUC, and FED-ED benefits. If an individual claims a regular UI benefit, PEUC, or FED-ED benefit in a four-week rolling time period, they are only counted once.
7. 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.
8. Four-week rolling total between week-ending June 27 and week-ending July 18, 2020.
9. Four-week rolling total between week-ending June 20 and week-ending July 11, 2020.

Status of unemployment benefits as \$600 federal stimulus payments end

The extra \$600 federal stimulus payments are known as Pandemic Additional Compensation (PAC) in California. Unless the federal government takes action to extend the PAC payments that the EDD automatically adds to regular UI, extension, and PUA benefits, the extra boost on benefits will no longer be available for any weeks of unemployment or reduced hours for weeks from July 26 on. Weeks of unemployment up through July 25 will still be eligible for the extra \$600, even if the associated UI, extension, or PUA benefits for weeks between March 29 and July 25 are processed later.

- **Maximum weekly benefit amounts** - Claimants certifying for benefits for next week and beyond will only receive the maximum weekly benefit amount they qualify for on their regular UI, extension, or PUA claim. Those weekly amounts range from \$40 - \$450 a week for regular UI and from \$167 - \$450 for PUA, depending on income earned previously.
- **Extension benefits for regular UI** - If an individual runs out of their up to 26 weeks of benefits available on their regular UI claim, another up to 13 weeks of benefits is available on the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) extension provided by the federal government until the end of the year. If an individual runs out of PEUC benefits, up to another 20 weeks of benefits are available on a FED-ED extension if the individual meets eligibility requirements. The EDD is sweeping the system daily to identify these individuals and proactively file an extension claim where possible. Claimants will be sent notices in the mail as well as provided updates on their UI Online accounts. See [Top FAQs of the Week](#) for more information on the extensions and how EDD is proactively assisting claimants.

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- **Text message alerts** – To help keep customers informed on when either a PEUC extension or a FED-ED extension has been filed on their behalf, the EDD is also sending them [SMS text messages](#). Since mid-May, the EDD has sent more than 6 million text messages to our customers. Texts are also sent for other developments including when a claim is processed in our system, when a first benefit payment is issued, when documents are required to verify a claimant’s identity, and when an identity has been verified.
- **Extended Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits** – State legislation (AB 103) helped maximize federal unemployment support available through this pandemic, allowing another seven weeks of benefits to be added to PUA for eligible self-employed individuals and others who don’t qualify for a regular UI claim. The EDD is working to complete programming needed to increase the maximum PUA benefits available from 39 weeks to up to 46 weeks until the PUA program sunsets at the end of the year.

Since May 20, the EDD has been increasing an initial minimum PUA benefit amount of \$167 if there is enough in reported 2019 income to support that increase. Some claims take more time because they require complex re-computations, and the EDD has redirected additional staff to help complete these re-computations required to increase the PUA benefit amounts as quickly as possible.

School closures and eligibility for UI benefits

Working parents or guardians may be eligible for unemployment benefits if their child’s school is shut down or offering distance learning only and parents have to miss work to care for their child. These individuals can apply for UI benefits through UI Online and our EDD representatives will determine eligibility on a case-by-case basis by potentially scheduling a phone interview for more information if needed.

- If a parent or guardian quits a job, the EDD is required by law to determine if the individual had “good cause” for doing so before determining potential eligibility for UI benefits. Generally, an individual must continue to remain able and available to work in order to be eligible for benefit payments. But individuals could qualify for benefits if, for example, there are no other options for child care available.
- If an employer has temporarily allowed a parent or guardian to work less than full-time hours due to a child care situation, those individuals could be considered eligible for reduced unemployment benefits. That would all depend on the amount of the individual’s weekly earnings and whether he or she meets all other eligibility requirements.

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The first \$25 or 25 percent of wages, whichever is the greater amount, is not counted as wages earned and will not be reduced from a UI weekly benefit amount. For example, if the individual earned \$100 in a week, the Department would not count \$25 as wages and would only deduct \$75 from the weekly benefit amount. For someone who has a weekly benefit amount of \$450, the individual would be paid a reduced amount of \$375.

- In the event that an individual is not eligible for regular UI benefits and they have primary caregiving responsibility for a child who is unable to attend school as a direct result of COVID-19, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits may be available.

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