



N E W S R E L E A S E

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Unemployment benefits to pandemic-impacted workers reach \$63.9 billion

Update on customer service enhancements

Sacramento – Unemployment benefits for Californians out of work or working reduced hours since this historic pandemic began now total \$63.9 billion – helping support families and sustain businesses during this COVID-19 created crisis. Since March, the Employment Development Department (EDD) has processed more than 10.2 million claims for benefits between the regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, extensions, and separate Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program.

Last week the EDD paid an average of \$686 million a day in benefits – about \$600 million more than the daily average paid at the height of the Great Recession (\$86.9 million during the same week of 2010). Over the last few weeks, about half of the claims for regular UI come from re-opened claims. These are claims when someone stops certifying for benefits for a while and then later comes back to their claim to collect further benefits.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) - Data Dashboard				
		<i>Current Week</i> August 8, 2020	<i>Prior Weeks</i> WE 3/14 -8/1/20	<i>Total</i> WE 3/14 -8/8/20
Total Applications Submitted <i>(Approx. UI Online applications received from unemployed workers)¹</i>	Reg. UI	66,685	5,191,346	5,258,031
	PUA	196,168	2,270,247	2,466,415
	PEUC²	41,903	470,479	512,382
	FED-ED³	5,190	92,198	97,388
	Total	309,946	8,024,270	8,334,216
Total Claims Processed <i>(Approx. applications processed by the EDD including reopened claims)⁴</i>	Reg. UI	213,482	7,365,542	7,579,024
	PUA	163,805	1,860,273	2,024,078
	PEUC²	45,703	513,512	559,215
	FED-ED³	5,263	55,063	60,326
	Total	428,253	9,794,390	10,222,643
Total Benefits Paid <i>(Approx. combination of first benefit payments and continued claim bi-weekly payments)⁵</i>	Reg. UI	\$1.8 billion	\$41.1 billion	\$42.9 billion
	PUA	\$2.1 billion	\$16.3 billion	\$18.4 billion
	PEUC²	\$177 million	\$2.3 billion	\$2.5 billion
	FED-ED³	\$16.6 million	\$117 million	\$133 million
	Total	\$4.1 billion	\$59.8 billion	\$63.9 billion
Individuals Paid Benefits^{6,7} <i>(Expressed as four-week rolling totals to account for different bi-weekly payment cycles)</i>	Reg. UI	3,444,000	3,447,000	
	PUA	1,270,000	1,201,000	
	Total	4,714,000 ⁸	4,648,000 ⁹	

1. The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) was implemented in California on April 28, 2020. This data includes new initial claims only.
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 August 1, 2020, (PEUC) total weeks claimed was 270,747.
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. The total claims processed from 3/14 - 8/8/20 will include multiple claims from the same applicant.
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 July 18th and week-ending August 8th, 2020.
9. Four-week rolling total between week-ending July 11th and week-ending August 1st, 2020.

Status of federal stimulus payment for unemployment benefits

The EDD is working closely with state and federal partners to assess the implementation of the [Presidential Memoranda](#) on lost wage assistance for eligible claimants.

Claimants with any eligible weeks of benefits between March 29 and July 25, will receive the prior \$600 stimulus payments, even if those payments are processed at a later date.

Without the stimulus payments, claimants will still receive the 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.

Helping customers meet requirements for unemployment payments

The EDD continues to take action to assist claimants during this unprecedented pandemic, including expanding the amount of time available for a claimant to submit a certification for benefits from the prior 21 days after the claim is processed to now 120 days. This additional time will help claimants certify for their first payment, as well as for continuing payments every two weeks. Such an effort addresses more than 500,000 claimants that a recent EDD analysis shows have not taken the necessary action to certify eligibility for payment.

While some claimants will never certify for payment for one reason or another (i.e. they've returned to work), the EDD has taken steps to help claimants with certification when they do want benefits, including:

- The EDD has **sent a total of 513,000 additional emails** to such claimants reminding them of the need to certify for payments if still needed and making past weeks available to certify once again in case there had been too much time that elapsed before.

(more)

- The EDD has developed a [step-by-step Unemployment Insurance Claims guide](#) for helping claimants complete the continued claim certification form for each week they seek payment. Tips are included for best practices that can help avoid delays in payments.

Other developments to enhance customer service so far include:

- Enhanced training for call center staff to better assist customers.
- EDD continues its hiring effort to add 5,300 new staff throughout California with increased federal administrative funding received. So far more than 4,900 applicants have been approved for hire with more than 3,100 of them already with a start date, in training, or on the job.
- EDD continues to update the [Top FAQs](#) on a weekly basis. Customers can also obtain answers through the “EDD Help” chat on the [website](#) or via “Send Message” on our [Facebook page](#). The chat bot, virtual agent service on our UI web page, is currently answering more than 220,000 questions per week in English and Spanish.

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