

N E W S R E L E A S E

Contact: Loree Levy
Aubrey Henry
916-654-9029

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Workers impacted by pandemic collect \$109 billion in unemployment benefits

Guidance for workers who may return to their claim if again unemployed

Sacramento – California workers who have lost jobs or had their hours reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic have received a total of **\$109 billion** in unemployment benefits since March, providing valuable support to families and communities throughout the state. According to the latest data released by the Employment Development Department (EDD), the benefits are associated with more than 16.1 million claims processed over the past eight months.

In just the last four weeks, a total of 4.4 million Californians have been paid unemployment benefits – down slightly from last week’s four-week rolling total. The latest available unemployment claims and trends data can be found on the [EDD’s online Newsroom](#).

In addition, the EDD also reports an overall decline of 67% since September 19 in the current backlog of claims – between those waiting more than 21 days for an Initial Claim to be resolved and those awaiting decision on a Continued Claim issue. The latest data on progress in burning down the backlog is posted on the EDD’s [Unemployment Data Dashboards webpage](#).

As efforts to contain the virus continue and a return to restrictions limit business operations in several parts of the state, the EDD is providing guidance to workers who may need to return to a previous unemployment claim. Individuals who may have initiated a claim earlier in the pandemic but stopped collecting benefits when they returned to work are encouraged to reopen their claim if they once again find themselves out of work or with reduced hours.

Individuals can learn more about [how to reopen a claim](#) on the EDD website. The process all depends on when they last certified for benefits:

- If it’s been **within 120 days**, individuals are encouraged to access their UI Online account to continue certifying on their already established claim. They’ll need to click on the Certify for Benefits button, select the appropriate week in which they last worked or had their hours reduced, and provide the needed eligibility information as required for the EDD to reopen the claim. There is no need to provide any certification information for prior weeks in which the individual was working – only for the weeks in which the individual lost work and is seeking the financial help of benefits.
- If it’s been **beyond 120 days** since individuals last certified for benefits, they should see the Reopen Claim button on their UI Online account homepage.

Click that button and provide the latest employment information needed for EDD to reopen the claim.

For any claims that started more than a year ago, individuals will have to file a new claim. The EDD recommends applying for unemployment benefits through [UI Online](#) for the fastest processing possible. Individuals looking to establish a new claim should be prepared to verify their identity through EDD's new ID.me verification tool by either providing documents or talking with a trusted referee representative.

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