Disaster Unemployment Assistance ending soon for 15 California counties impacted by wildfires

SACRAMENTO – The Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program for those impacted by the August 2020 California wildfires is coming to an end on February 20, 2021. California Employment Development Department (EDD) administers DUA to eligible workers, business owners, and self-employed individuals who have suffered lost or reduced employment due to the wildfires.

These DUA benefits are offered to those who were impacted by the wildfires that burned in 15 California counties. The week ending February 20 will be the last payable week for these disaster benefits. Although the initial deadline to file DUA claims for this disaster has passed, impacted individuals can still submit applications and be paid, if they provide a good reason for not submitting the application sooner. However, the last date that any applications can be considered is February 20, 2021, regardless of the reason.

Applicants must meet the program’s eligibility criteria, which includes that they do not qualify for regular state unemployment insurance, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), FED-ED extensions, or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits.

The DUA benefits are available to those impacted by the wildfires that began in August 2020 in the following California counties, including the two counties that FEMA most recently added, which are Mendocino and Stanislaus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Butte</th>
<th>Lake</th>
<th>Lassen</th>
<th>Mendocino</th>
<th>Monterey</th>
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<tr>
<td>Napa</td>
<td>San Mateo</td>
<td>Santa Clara</td>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
<td>Solano</td>
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<td>Sonoma</td>
<td>Stanislaus</td>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>Tulare</td>
<td>Yolo</td>
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The disaster assistance applies to covered losses beginning the week of August 16, 2020, and individuals can receive between $40 and $450 a week in benefits, for a maximum period of 27 weeks. The last payable week of this benefit ends February 20, 2021.

These DUA benefits are offered to victims of a disaster and are available to individuals who meet any of the following criteria:
- Worked or were a business owner or self-employed, or were scheduled to begin work or self-employment, in the disaster area. This includes, but is not limited to, those in the agricultural and fishing industries.

(more)
• Cannot reach work because of the disaster or can no longer work or perform services because of physical damage or destruction to the place of employment as a direct result of the disaster.
• Can establish that the work or self-employment they can no longer perform was their primary source of income.
• Cannot perform work or self-employment because of an injury as a direct result of the disaster.
• Became the head of their households because of a death caused by the disaster.
• Have applied for and used all regular unemployment benefits, extension benefits, and PUA benefits from any state, or do not qualify for other unemployment benefits and remain unemployed as a direct result of the disaster.

To receive DUA benefits, all required documentation must be submitted within 21 days from the day the DUA application is filed. Required documentation includes a Social Security number and a copy of the most recent federal income tax form or check stubs, or other documentation to support that the individuals were working or self-employed when the disaster occurred. Documentation for the self-employed can be obtained from banks, government entities, or affidavits from individuals having knowledge of their business.

The fastest and easiest way for new claimants to apply for DUA is to use EDD’s UI Online application, which is available in both English and Spanish.

Claimants can also apply for DUA by phone between 8 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., seven days a week:
• English: 1-800-300-5616
• Spanish: 1-800-326-8937
• Chinese (Cantonese): 1-800-547-3506
• Chinese (Mandarin): 1-866-303-0706
• Vietnamese: 1-800-547-2058

EDD’s Disaster-Related Services webpage includes more information for individuals and businesses impacted by disasters, including tax filing extensions for affected employers. EDD also encourages individuals to visit the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services wildfire recovery website for information on Local Assistance Centers where individuals, families and businesses can access disaster assistance programs and services.

The EDD administers the federal disaster-benefits program in California for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, on behalf of the Emergency Management Agency.

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