

N E W S R E L E A S E

Contact: Loree Levy
Aubrey Henry
916-654-9029

Date: July 6, 2021

News Release No.: 21-39

EDD Strengthens Work Sharing Program to Help Businesses Retain and Bring Back Skilled Workers

Employers Should Act Now to Apply

NOTE: This news release was amended July 30, 2021 to reflect additional statements from the San Francisco Opera, Zeller Electric, and Gentry Surveying Company.

SACRAMENTO--Building on ongoing efforts to aid workers and employers as California reopens, the Employment Development Department (EDD) today announced actions to strengthen the state's [Work Sharing](#) program--a growing and innovative unemployment insurance program that helps employers bring furloughed or laid off employees back to work with subsidized pay.

"The Work Sharing program subsidizes wages for workers kept on employer payrolls, as an alternative to being let go," said EDD Director Rita Saenz. "EDD has automated and improved this Work Sharing program to help employers bringing their skilled workers back after the pandemic," Saenz added.

The Work Sharing program allows workers to collect both their pay for hours worked and unemployment benefits for reduced hours--including the federally-funded boost of \$300 in weekly benefits. The program is fully funded by the federal government [until September 4, 2021](#), when federal unemployment benefit programs are scheduled to expire.

The Work Sharing program lets employers with a reduced business keep valued employees and avoid the costs of recruiting and training new employees when conditions improve. Many economists say Work Sharing is one of the best ways to strengthen the labor market because employers preserve their relationships with employees.

"California's Work Sharing program gives businesses the flexibility to adjust work hours as demand changes--keeping more workers on payrolls and helping rehire previously laid-off workers," said UCLA Professor of Economics Till von Wachter during a stakeholder meeting this week with EDD and organizations representing employers across California. "Now is a great time for businesses to participate in the Work Sharing program and speed rehiring during the economic recovery."

(more)

The Department has heavily invested in improving this program for the benefit of workers and employers. The Department has automated application processing of Working Sharing plans submitted by employers and the weekly certifications to make it easier for employers to participate.

Businesses can now [apply for the program online](#) and easily submit Work Sharing plans electronically. Employees approved by their employers to take part in the program can also complete their weekly certifications online.

"The Work Sharing program helps our company keep more employees on payroll--saving us the cost and challenge of having to rehire workers as product supply chains open up," said Jerry Wilkins, President and CEO of Custom Kitchens by John Wilkins Inc.

As recently [recommended](#) by the U.S. Department of Labor, EDD has also ensured that Work Sharing is open to anyone laid off during the pandemic. These actions mean that employers with laid off workers can now apply for the program right away and without their employees first returning to work for any period of time.

"This program was very helpful in allowing our business to keep its employees working--which is number one," said Bruce Kamolnick, Director, Secretary and CFO of The Jupiter Foundation, Inc.

"This program is 100 percent effective in retaining employees," said Oxnard Family Circle Administrator Katy Krul. "Work Sharing helps employers not have to lay off employees and then lose time and money on rehiring back those who are still available, or looking for one employees to hire and train."

"The EDD Work Sharing program has been extremely helpful for our company," said Radhika Kataria of the San Francisco Opera. "The program has enabled us to compensate employees with wage cuts due to the pandemic and no other means for income. As our company budget was halted being an arts nonprofit, the extra income the program provided to our workforce has helped alleviate the financial strain to a great extent—and we could still offer our employees partial pay and benefits."

"The Work Sharing program really helped us out during a period that construction had slowed down considerably," said Laura Zeller of Zeller Electric. "It worked out great for all of us--we kept a great crew and they still worked during a very slow period. It really is a good program."

"The EDD Work Sharing program helped the employees at Gentry Surveying Company or the company and the employees would of been laid off and shut down," said Christiana Page of Gentry Surveying Company.

(more)

EDD has created a [Work Sharing information page here](#), with frequently asked questions and links to the new online applications for employers. The [Employers: Reopening Your Business and Hiring Employees](#) page can also offer guidance and resources designed to help employers find qualified job candidates to fill their openings. Last week the Department also hosted a stakeholder workshop with organizations representing employers across California to provide useful tools information about programs such as Work Sharing.

EDD offers [many services to assist people looking for safe and suitable work](#) and get training. That includes the CalJOBS online labor exchange system, as well as the job search assistance, resume and interview preparation, and access to job training available through America's Job Center of California (AJCC) locations throughout the state. CalJOBS is a no-cost virtual job center with hundreds of thousands of job postings and tools to help people find work.

###