

N E W S R E L E A S E

Contact: Loree Levy
Aubrey Henry
916-654-9029

Date: May 21, 2020

News Release No.: 20-19

Unemployment benefit payments top \$16 billion in California

New higher benefit amounts available for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program

Sacramento – Today, the Employment Development Department (EDD) announced that \$3.9 billion in unemployment benefits was paid to California workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic last week. This brings the total to **\$16.1 billion** since a surge in demand for unemployment assistance began during the week ending on March 14, 2020. According to the latest data from EDD, a total of **5.1 million claims** have been processed over that same timeframe.

The information in the Data Dashboard below reflects official claim totals combining regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) and the new federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program as reported to the U.S. Department of Labor for the prior week.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Data Dashboard

Week Ending Date	Total Applications Submitted (Approx. UI Online applications <i>received</i> from unemployed workers) ¹			Total Claims Processed (Approx. applications <i>processed</i> by the EDD.) ^{1,2}			Total Benefits Paid (Approx. combination of first benefit payments and continued claim bi-weekly payments) ³			Individuals Paid Benefits (Expressed as four-week rolling totals to account for different bi-weekly payment cycles) ⁴		
	Reg. UI	PUA	Total	Reg. UI	PUA	Total	Reg. UI	PUA	Total	Reg. UI	PUA	Total
May 16 2020	157,506	126,798	284,304	246,115	112,791 ¹	358,906	\$3.2 billion	\$725 million	\$3.9 billion	3.3 million	453,000	3.8 ⁵ million
March 14 – May 9	3.9 million	560,000	4.5 million	4.3 million	435,000	4.7 million	\$11.1 billion	\$1.2 billion	\$12.3 billion	3.2 million	364,000	3.6 ⁶ million
TOTAL for last 10 weeks⁷	4.8 million			5.1 million			\$16.1 billion			This information isn't meant to be totaled as it's a four-week rolling total.		

1. The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) was released in California effective April 28, 2020.
2. Claims processed through UI Online, along with about 5% of claims that arrive via paper or phone. This accounts for claims received in the current week as well as in past weeks.
3. Includes \$600 federal stimulus payments EDD adds to each week of regular UI/PUA benefits. Regular UI benefits are paid out of California's UI Trust Fund with contributions from employers, PUA and \$600 federal stimulus payments are paid for by the federal government.
4. 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.
5. Four-week rolling total between week-ending April 25 and week-ending May 16, 2020.
6. Four-week rolling total between week-ending April 18 and week-ending May 9, 2020.
7. Rounded totals. Claims processed counts can be higher than submitted applications due to processing of applications submitted prior to Week Ending March 14.

(more)

Increased Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits

As of May 20, the EDD is now able to increase the weekly benefit amounts paid to eligible workers applying for the federal [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance](#) program or already collecting PUA benefits. This separate federal program launched April 28 in California and applies to the self-employed, business owners, independent contractors and others who are not eligible for regular state-provided UI benefits and are unemployed as a direct result of COVID-19.

To make the program available as quickly as possible, the EDD rolled out PUA in phases beginning with paying eligible workers the minimum of \$167 per week in benefits, along with the \$600 stimulus payments. The second phase of PUA programming is now complete, allowing the EDD to calculate a higher weekly benefit amount based on claimants' 2019 income. PUA claimants can expect:

- **Automatic recalculations for current PUA claimants** - The EDD is now recalculating benefit awards for qualified individuals based on the total income reported by the claimant for calendar year 2019. Those due higher weekly benefit amounts who applied through UI Online will receive a notice in the mail 5-7 days after the benefit adjustment is made and will automatically be paid retroactively to make up the difference from the start of the individual's PUA claim. Those adjusted payments for current claimants are likely to be completed within about a week and issued through their existing payment method. It could take a few more days for those who filed via phone or paper.
- **Maximum is \$450 per week** – In order to get some kind of increase above the minimum weekly benefit amount, individuals would have to have earned more than \$17,368 last year. To qualify for the maximum of \$450 per week in PUA benefits, individuals' net self-employment income for 2019 would need to be more than \$46,696, which equates to at least \$11,674 per quarter.

New 13-week federal extension launches next week

Starting May 27th, the new extension called the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) will be available to Californians impacted by the pandemic. The federal CARES Act required the development of three new provisions to each state's regular UI program, each one demanding extensive and complex programming due to differing dates and eligibility rules involved.

The EDD has implemented the first two provisions which are a \$600 federal stimulus payment added to each week of benefits a claimant receives, and the launch of the new separate PUA program. The third and final provision is a new 13-week extension of federal funds for anyone who exhausts up to 26 weeks of regular state-provided UI benefits.

(more)

In order to make these PEUC benefits available as quickly as possible during this historic pandemic, the EDD will be rolling out the extension in two phases.

Phase 1

- Those with a benefit year for their UI claim that started on or after June 2, 2019, and have run out of all available benefits will automatically have their federal extension filed for them. While these individuals will receive a notice through the mail about 5-7 days after the PEUC extension is filed, the EDD strongly recommends these individuals closely watch their UI Online accounts within the week following May 27 for an update. That will allow them to move quickly to certifying to the EDD that they remain unemployed and otherwise eligible to receive extension benefits.
- Extension benefits are available for weeks beginning on or after March 29 through the end of 2020. If someone is still within their current benefit year but ran out of all regular UI benefits prior to the week beginning March 29, that gap does not meet eligibility for extension benefits. The gap will be filled by retroactive PUA payments.
- Extension benefits will be paid per the existing payment method for the claimant, for most people that is the EDD Debit Card. The EDD recommends that if a claimant has lost or misplaced their card to visit the ["Replace My Card"](#) section of the Bank of America website to have a new card issued right away and not delay the receipt of extension benefits.

Phase 2

- Starting in early July, the EDD will have further required programming completed to begin mailing notices to those who ran out of all available regular UI benefits sometime after July 2018 and are not part of Phase 1. These individuals will have to apply for the PEUC extension since their benefit year has expired. More details will be released later. But these individuals should not delay applying for a new regular UI claim through UI Online if they haven't already done so in the event they have further wages to support a new claim and remain unemployed.

The Employment Development Department (EDD) offers a wide variety of services to millions of Californians. Among the programs administered by the EDD are Unemployment Insurance, Disability Insurance, and Paid Family Leave.

Please visit the [Unemployment Benefits Guide](#) for instructions on how to apply for Unemployment Insurance or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

For additional information on financial resources please visit:
<https://covid19.ca.gov/get-financial-help/>.