

2025 Year in Review

Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	3
II. Executive Summary.....	4
III. 2025 Highlights.....	6
IV. Top Accomplishments includes summary of the update/accomplishments, metrics, and impact on customers	8
a. Standing with Californians in Uncertain Times	8
i. LA Firestorms and Disaster Unemployment Assistance	
ii. Federal Government Shutdown	
b. Unemployment Insurance Program	10
i. Benefit Applications Are Easier to Understand and Complete	
ii. Faster Decisions, Quicker Payments	
iii. Accurate Weekly Wage Reporting Made Easier	
iv. Live-Agent Chat	
v. Faster, Secure Identity Verification	
vi. Better Password Reset	
c. State Disability Insurance Program.....	13
i. Disability Insurance - Application Updates	
ii. Claim Status Updates	
iii. Integrated Contact Center	
iv. Paid Family Leave	
v. State Disability Insurance - Benefit Rate Increase	
d. Workforce Services	16
e. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act	17
f. Youth Employment Services	18
g. Employers	18
i. Updated Payroll Tax Webinar Registration	
ii. Employer Guides Enhancements	
V. More Enterprise Modernization Progress	20
i. Speech to Text Project	
ii. Hardening IT Systems	
iii. Plain Language	
iv. Flexible Benefit Payment Options	
v. Public Education and Outreach	
vi. Language Access	
vii. Web Modernization	
h. Document Management System	20
VI. Looking forward to 2026	26

Introduction

California's Employment Development Department (EDD) is committed to making life easier for Californians who seek our benefits and services. In 2025, we kept improving the customer experience, delivering service faster and easier than ever before.

We simplified applications for unemployment and disability benefits, and upgraded the myEDD online benefit portal, so customers can check claim status, view payments, and manage benefits anytime, from anywhere. Our [contact centers now provide faster, more helpful support](#), including live-agent online chat in multiple languages to reach more communities. We achieved [historically high levels of service, speed, and accessibility](#) for unemployment customers, such as over 80% of customers resolved issues during a chat.

EDD keeps improving because we're committed to serving Californians with clarity, care, and efficiency — so people can focus on what matters most: their families, their work, and their future.

Learn more about our efforts at [EDDNext](#) and [Benefiting Californians](#).

Executive Summary

Over the past year, EDD continuously improved our services to empower Californians to thrive.

Serving Californians When They Need Us Most

In 2025, EDD serviced more than 2.3 million unemployment claims, nearly 827,064 disability benefit claims, and over 355,603 Paid Family Leave claims. We served over 2 million customers who chose to receive payments by direct deposit, the safest and fastest method.

These numbers represent our commitment to help Californians through some of life's most challenging moments.

“My service didn’t end when I left the military. My service continues. Now I get to do that today helping other veterans and be there to provide for my kids, and provide for myself.”

Cassandra G., US Army Veteran, received support from her local AJCC and now helps other veterans find meaningful work

Modernizing to Meet Expectations

In 2025 we simplified processes, modernized technology, expanded access, and improved experiences for California workers and businesses.

Some of our key 2025 advancements include:

- [Easier and more accurate wage-reporting for unemployment](#) to reduce application errors and the need for further investigation and potential delay or denial.
- [More customer-friendly webpages](#).
- [Simpler disability benefits application](#) with clearer language and fewer steps.
- [Live online chat](#) with agents for customers who want alternatives to a telephone conversation.
- [Enhanced virtual assistant \(chatbot\)](#) supporting customers 24/7 in California's top eight spoken languages.
- [Expanded online eligibility questionnaires](#) to avoid unnecessary phone interviews and speed unemployment benefit payments.
- [Updated materials in plain language](#) for easier-to-understand communication that puts customers first.
- [Improved disability contact centers](#) with more self-serve options and claim status information available online, empowering our customers to get claims status without needing to wait for a live agent.
- [Easier online identity verification services](#).

These improvements build on our multi-year commitment to improve customer service based on lessons learned from the pandemic, and from listening to our customers and delivering what they want.

Strengthening Trust, Transparency, and Responsiveness

We expanded our Voice of the Customer program to better listen to our customers and make improvements.

We received feedback on our customer surveys that includes over 22,300 responses to help us serve you better.

We also committed to improved communication: more accessible forms and notices, greater multilanguage support, and clearer instructions in all interactions.

Keeping People Employed

In addition to boosting payment efficiency, we also strengthened our programs to help people find new jobs or training to get back to work.

Our Workforce Services team supported more than 200,000 job seekers through the America's Job Center of California (AJCC) network.

We had another over 391,000 Californians receive support through our self-service options. This includes accessing CalJOBS for job opportunities and other information from our staff.

We delivered essential education to over 450 employers through our quarterly Work Sharing webinars, letting business owners know they have options to save their business and great staff when times get tough. This program saw over 1,600 employers participate in 2025, which is strong evidence that we are helping maintain jobs and business continuity.

More Online Help, Fewer Phone Calls

We introduced chatting with a live agent for unemployment customers (in their preferred language). This major boost to customer service opened a whole new communication option for our customers seeking live and direct help. Since launch on July 24, 2025, we've handled over 48,000 unemployment chats across all languages. Most were in English (95%), with 2,001 in Spanish and a small number in Mandarin, Korean, and Cantonese.

Over 70% of English chats and 73% of Spanish chats were resolved on the first contact. This shows that language support works, and in Spanish, it may even improve first-contact resolution.

We also boosted self-service options with an enhanced chatbot for disability and Paid Family Leave claim details. Usage has increased significantly over the first few months and we're finding more than half of customers are getting their questions resolved in this self-serve mode.

In addition, we streamlined identity verification and maintain tough fraud fighting filters to protect our customers. We protect over 850

billion records across nearly 3,000 servers. Our security team now [uses Elastic's tools](#) to identify potential risks and stop bad actors before they cause harm. This rapid detection has resulted in a 99% reduction in our meantime to respond, making sure that issues are resolved quickly to keep our services running smoothly. This coverage means we can safeguard data from cyber threats without disrupting access for the people who rely on our programs every day. We will continue to deliver improvements as a customer-centered Department.

This past year demanded resilience, collaboration, and bold action from our teams, our partners, and the communities we serve. As we move forward in 2026, we are focused on continually improving our services, listening to our customers, and helping millions of Californians.

EDD will keep working to be trusted, accessible, efficient, and caring.

Nancy Farias
EDD Director





2025 Highlights

Transforming Your Experience

See how we enhanced and modernized services for Californians in 2025.

Top Customer Improvements



24/7 Self-Service

Check your unemployment, disability, and Paid Family Leave anytime through myEDD.



Easier Applications

Alongside unemployment, we now have a faster, user-friendly online [application for disability](#) benefits.



Modern Contact Centers

Get support through a modernized platform and self-serve options for disability and Paid Family Leave.



Better Online Tools

Unemployment customers can report wages, clarify eligibility issues, and access benefits faster with our online tools.

Impact by the Numbers

80% Unemployment <u>customer satisfaction</u> with the new online application.	3 Awards for <u>our cybersecurity</u> , <u>plain language</u> , and <u>language access</u> efforts.	460+ Employers informed about the <u>Work Sharing program</u> through our quarterly webinars.	213,000+ Job Seekers served by the America's Job Center of California network.	18.8+ Million Employment and wage records managed.
48,000 Unemployment customers helped through our <u>virtual assistant (chatbot)</u> live chat feature. Over 70% of chats are resolved on first contact.	371,000+ Unemployment eligibility cases are resolved on average in less than 6 days with <u>our online questionnaire</u> . We added 15 more common issues to it this year.	1,200+ Webpages are easier to understand with our plain language efforts. This includes our top <u>unemployment</u> , <u>disability</u> , and <u>Paid Family Leave</u> benefits webpages.	79,000+ LA Firestorm survivors <u>assisted at local Disaster Recovery Centers</u> by our staff.	\$128.9+ Billion Collected from employers in payroll taxes.

In Your Neighborhood

By meeting Californians where they are in their community, we're making it easier to get the help they need. We're building a stronger future for our customers, one conversation at a time.

22 Community-based events we participated in

500,000 Californians supported

Building Partnerships that Last

3

Black and African American faith-based organizations.

4

Hispanic community-based organizations.

4

Asian American and Pacific Islander community-based organizations.

11

Trusted messenger partnerships with community-based organizations across the state to help connect Californians with valuable EDD services.



Standing with Californians in Uncertain Times

LA Firestorms and Disaster Unemployment Assistance

When the LA firestorms devastated California communities, we stepped in to support survivors, workers, and communities. We worked with local resources to help deliver temporary jobs, humanitarian assistance, and clean-up efforts. The [Department awarded up to \\$20 million](#) to Los Angeles County to support the immediate needs of workers who lost their jobs or had their hours reduced. The [award](#) created temporary jobs that addressed urgent needs and helped workers find transitional jobs, on-the-job training, and other workforce services.

Additionally, workers were able to seek out benefits. Regular unemployment benefits were available to workers impacted. [Governor Gavin Newsom issued a State of Emergency](#) and an [executive order](#) waiving the one-week waiting period to qualify for unemployment.



Workers could also [apply for disability benefits](#) if they were injured or if their health was impacted by the firestorms. Or, workers could apply for Paid Family Leave benefits to take time off to care for a family member impacted by the disaster.

Los Angeles County workers and the self-employed also applied for [federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance \(DUA\)](#). DUA is for workers who are not eligible for regular unemployment benefits and lost their jobs or had their hours reduced because of the disaster. At a local [Disaster Recovery Center](#), we met Margarita. She's a self-employed domestic worker who lost her clients. She didn't know she could qualify for help. We supported her with [applying for DUA](#), connected her to job training programs, and guided her to other resources.

We supported our employers as well. [Extension requests](#) to file and pay payroll taxes were accepted by phone through a dedicated disaster relief line at the Taxpayer Assistance Center and in writing via US Mail. We provided 7,154 extensions to employers within the evacuation zones. The extensions started January 7, 2025, and extended the filing and payment of the quarterly payroll tax returns and payments. It also provided [an automatic 60-day relief](#) from any billings or collection actions, in addition to the return and payment extension for the current quarter.

We're still here and helping survivors rebuild. We're proud to walk with Los Angeles to support worker and business recovery.

Federal Government Shutdown

In March 2025, many California workers lost their jobs due to [federal layoffs](#) and funding cuts impacting federal contractors. In October 2025, the [federal government shutdown](#) further impacted federal workers. We knew the transition would be difficult, so we stepped in. We wanted to make sure the more than 248,000 federal workers who call California home were supported and had the resources to find new jobs, develop skills, and meet employers.

- Created the [Unemployment Benefits for Federal Workers](#) webpage. This webpage guides workers through applying for benefits, answers questions, and provides helpful information and resources.
- Created the [Resources for Federal Workers](#) webpage. Workers can find job services such as webinars, understand how to apply for unemployment, find events and career opportunities across the state.
- Created the [Unemployment for Federal Employees During a Government Shutdown \(DE 2338FED\) \(PDF\)](#) guide. This guide shares the eligibility requirements, how to apply, and what the next steps are.
- Partnered with the California Labor Federation for a [webinar](#) to support federal workers.
- Created a [Federal Worker Social Media Toolkit](#) to help spread the news about resources we have for federal workers.

We serviced more than 7,000 claims for unemployment benefits during the 43-day shutdown. We'll continue to provide resources and support to California's federal workers as they face these times of uncertainty.

"We understand how deeply a federal government shutdown can affect the lives of federal workers and their families. During these uncertain times, EDD is here to provide meaningful support – offering resources and assistance to help our fellow Californians navigate financial hardship and find stability."

Nancy Farias, EDD Director

Unemployment Insurance Program

Benefit Applications Are Easier to Understand and Complete

Applying for unemployment benefits is now easier! With feedback from our customers, [we made the new online application simpler, faster, and more customer friendly](#). We took out unnecessary questions and confusing jargon. We also reworked it with clearer instructions for a smoother experience. Our goal is to make the process easier, so customers can focus on getting the support they need.

Since then, we've continued to see great results. Customers now finish the application **14% faster** than before and with fewer errors requiring less follow-up.

We've also received a lot of positive feedback from customers. **Over 78% of users have rated their experience as good or excellent.**

Many people have mentioned how much easier and quicker the process is now. Comments highlight how the new system is more streamlined, easier to follow, and a big improvement.

We're committed to making the unemployment process as easy and stress-free as possible. We're grateful our customers provide feedback so we continue to improve our programs and services.

Easier. Faster. Better.

Customers are already feeling the impact of our redesigned unemployment application.

"UI is much improved since I had to file a few years ago."

"Thank you for making this easier/user-friendly."

Faster Decisions, Quicker Payments

We're making it easier for our customers to respond to requests for eligibility information online and upload documents. Customers no longer need to wait for a phone interview or fill out paper forms. [When our unemployment customers need to provide more information, they can quickly do so online.](#)

To date, unemployment customers have responded to more than 371,000 eligibility cases in the online system. On average, those online customers saw their eligibility issues resolved in less than 6 days.

We expanded the number of eligibility issues available to customers online by adding 15 more eligibility issues to our online questionnaire. This means customers can quickly provide information on issues like:

- Missing information or late certifications.
- Not completing a CalJOBS registration or uploading a resume.



- Missing a required services appointment.
- Explaining why they didn't accept a job offer.
- Clarifying information when reporting wages like bonuses, pensions, or tips.
- And more.

Accurate Weekly Wage Reporting Made Easier

Keeping up with modernizing myEDD, the Department's online access to benefit programs, we added a [Weekly Wage Reporting Tool](#) to help unemployment customers accurately report any earnings they may receive while collecting benefits. The tool combines implementing a wage calculator along with helpful instructions to carefully explain the types of income to report.

By listening to unemployment customers, we learned that customers get confused about the large variety of earnings they may have to report. For example, differences between when wages are earned and when they are actually paid can potentially impact eligibility. Similarly, differences between, gross wages (earned before any deductions) and net wages can affect a person's benefit payment or eligibility. EDD's new Wage Reporting Tool is helping our customers navigate these issues and report information correctly.

Since launch, the new tool has **helped more than 13% of our customers complete more than 191,000 certifications with more accurate wage reports**. We're making it faster, easier, and simpler for our customers to get paid their unemployment benefits correctly and quickly.

Live-Agent Chat

We're making it easier for our unemployment customers to reach out to us. [Customers can chat with an agent on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.](#) This new chat option is designed to:

- Make it easier to get answers without having to call us.
- Provide support in their language.
- Give consistent, reliable service.
- Offer a chance to share feedback through a short post-chat survey, so we can keep improving!

When chatting with an agent, customers can expect to get estimated wait times, clear messages if the chat is not available, help in their preferred language, including Spanish,



Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Armenian, in addition to English. At the end of the sessions, customers can also save the chat in case they need to refer back to it later.

Since launch on July 24, 2025, we've handled over 48,000 unemployment chats across all languages. Most were in English (95%), with 2,001 in Spanish and a small number in Mandarin, Korean, and Cantonese.

Over 70% of English chats and 73% of Spanish chats were resolved on the first contact. This shows that language support works, and in Spanish, it may even improve first-contact resolution.

Faster, Secure Identity Verification

Verifying one's identity is a key step for customers applying for unemployment, disability, and Paid Family Leave benefits. We've heard from users that the process has not always been smooth or easy. It was frustrating switching between different websites. Now, [we're making it easier for customers to verify their identity](#). After rolling out updates with our unemployment program first, we'll also make it available for disability and Paid Family Leave. We partnered with Socure—a leader in digital identity verification and fraud prevention.

[Identity verification will start inside the myEDD portal using Socure's technology](#). That means no more switching between websites or logging into multiple accounts. Socure uses advanced technology to verify one's identity based on the information provided. For most users, the process will be seamless, fast, and automatic. With Socure, we're making it easier for customers to get their benefits and [harder for fraudsters to get in the way](#).



Better Password Reset

We improved our password reset to use ZIP Code, rather than a customer's last benefit payment amount that can be difficult to remember years later — a common source of frustration for our customers that we fixed.

Impact: We've seen a **58% drop in calls** to get help with resetting a password in the three weeks since this enhancement launched, in comparison to the same weeks in 2024. On average, that's **900 fewer calls per week** as more customers easily self-serve, allowing us more time to help customers over the phone when they need us most.

"SDI [disability and Paid Family Leave] provided the financial support I need to focus on my health and prepare for my baby's arrival. This benefit has made it possible for me to take time off from work without the worry of losing income, allowing me to focus on my recovery and well-being. I was well-rested and ready to embrace the new life I was bringing into the world..."

Youa V., received disability and Paid Family Leave benefits

State Disability Insurance Program

Disability Insurance - Simplifying the Application Process

The Disability Insurance program is a complex public benefit program, with detailed eligibility requirements and required medical certifications. We heard from our customers, employees, and advocates about how to make the application easier. The [new, online application includes](#):

- Revised instructions and questions that are easier to answer, using fewer technical terms.
- Help text with simple explanations.
- Reorganized questions to improve the overall application experience.
- Improved navigation through complex topics like the medical authorization and declaration signature pages.
- Relabeled page headings and titles to improve the customer experience.

These improvements, and many others, will help us collect accurate information from customers, process applications more quickly, and pay those eligible for benefits faster. We heard directly from some of our customers about how these changes have positively impacted their experiences:

- "Easy and fast to apply."
- "Everything was in order to make it easy to follow and complete."
- "I wasn't afraid of the system; I was able to read through and complete my application in no time. It was the friendly user experience that made me feel comfortable and excited."
- "I'm very satisfied with the whole process, easy to complete the claim process. I'm very satisfied with the customer service."
- "It was very easy to use, and the forms were self-explanatory. I filed my claim, and within days, I had my pay. I was shocked it didn't take weeks. I was very, very happy."



In 2026, we will continue to take action to improve the customer experience for DI and PFL customers. This will include seeking private sector solutions as part of EDDNext, like the technology we've deployed to keep modernizing UI. This year we will be moving forward with more innovative solutions and deploying additional technology as part of our ongoing modernization effort.

Keeping Customers More Informed on Their Claim Status

We're continuing to make it easier for customers to get updates and information on their claims. [Enhancements to myEDD offer more detailed information about the status of a customer's claim](#). This includes better descriptions of what is happening with a claim and any outstanding actions needed to finish processing the application. Some of these updates include:

- New Status column with updated claim statuses in plain language.
- Expanded Claim Status descriptions with clear instructions when a customer must act on the claim.
- Improved organization and page layout to improve the customer experience.

Since going live at the end of July, we found fewer customers clicking on Get Claim Help when looking for the claim's status. Adding details about claim status makes it easier for customers to track the progress of a claim and avoid having to call us for updates. Customers can also access the claim status through the chatbot. In early results, we're seeing more than half of the customers seeking claim details getting the information they're seeking through the convenient chatbot.

Enhancing the Contact Center with Amazon Connect Technology

We're committed to making it easier for Californians to get the services and help they need. In [2023, we began a major upgrade to our disability and Paid Family Leave contact centers](#). We replaced our outdated technology with Amazon Connect, [a modern, cloud-based platform designed to transform the way we serve our customers](#).

Our new system allows for faster authentication, smarter call routes, and better support for both customers and agents. We're also empowering people and making the experience

better for our customers and staff. Now, agents have real-time visibility into each customer's journey, equipping them with the information they need to resolve issues quickly and with care. For customers, they will get clearer communication and faster routing.

We're excited to share results from 2025 for our disability and Paid Family Leave programs.

- **Over 680,000 calls were answered by virtual hold.** Customers were able to get a callback instead of waiting in the queue to speak to an agent.
- **More than 1,000,000 customers used the self-service option for their claim payments.** Customers were able to get their claim payment information in their language.

Staff satisfaction is high, with many noting better call quality, easier navigation, and improved task tracking.

Paid Family Leave

Improving the Paid Family Leave Online Experience

We're working hard to make it easier for our customers to manage their Paid Family Leave benefits. We integrated the Paid Family Leave program into the same system used by disability customers. As a result, [customers can now get claim information in myEDD!](#) Before, customers could only check the status of their claim by calling us or through updates received by mail.

Now, customers can view and manage their benefits whenever and wherever. Checking the payment status, certifying, and viewing the claim history are only a click away! We're integrating systems behind the scenes to process benefits faster. This also reduces our calls. In addition, customers can now go online to certify and reopen a claim.

This update makes the claim process simpler online with less:

- Paperwork to fill out.
- Waiting time for mail.
- Time calling for claim information.

State Disability Insurance - Benefit Rate Increase

At the beginning of 2025, [we announced a major boost in Paid Family Leave and disability benefits for workers.](#)

For new claims with a start date of January 1, 2025, the benefit rate increased up to 70-90% of the regular weekly wages!

This landmark increase makes it much easier for Californians to take time off for an illness or injury, or to care for loved ones.

This is a huge win for California families with more being supported to be there for the moments that matter most.

"PFL [Paid Family Leave] was there to make sure I could fulfill my duties as a father and husband without worrying about using my vacation, sick leave, and losing my paycheck...I highly encourage anyone who is having a child and who qualifies to make use of Paid Family Leave because it is an amazing opportunity, and I don't know what I would have done without it."

Solomon B., received Paid Family Leave benefits

"This benefit boost makes it more affordable to take time off work and care for an ill family member, bond with a child, or recover from illness or injury. These investments strengthen California's workforce and improve the lives of millions of Californians."

EDD Director Nancy Farias



Workforce Services

Jobs First - Regional Investment Initiative

The Regional Investment Initiative is a new approach to economic development that seeks to center disadvantaged communities as part of California's transition to a clean energy, carbon neutral economy, creating good-paying jobs and prosperous communities for all. In 2025, the Inter-Agency Leadership Team, comprised of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development with the administrative/contracting support of the Employment Development Department, Workforce Services Branch continued to support the implementation of the Regional Investment Initiative programs including the following major accomplishments:

- In February 2025, Governor Gavin Newsom announced the California Jobs First State Economic Blueprint (Blueprint) to streamline the state's economic and workforce development programs. The Blueprint set the statewide strategy for job creation, retention, and access to good paying jobs. Following the release of the Blueprint, the Regional Investment Initiative advanced economic development with a core focus on fostering equity and sustainability.
- The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development released a request for proposals for the Tribal Investment Phase and Implementation Phase in February 2025. The Tribal Investment Phase request for proposals was designed as a flexible fund, with \$15 million available, for California Native American Tribes, coalitions of Tribes, and tribally led organizations to support planning, pre-development, and implementation projects.
- The California Jobs First and Council Co-Chairs awarded the full \$15 million in available funding to 14 projects in June 2025.
- In August 2025, the California Jobs First and Council Co-Chairs awarded \$80 million to 11 projects across seven regions supporting 23,000 jobs in the following sectors: life sciences, aerospace and defense, agriculture and technology and farm equipment, and bioeconomy. These investments build on the \$182 million awarded to the 13 Jobs First regions in 2024 to design and pilot projects tailored to the unique needs of their local communities. Building on statewide momentum, the California Jobs First Council accelerated the second round of implementation funding to October 2025, approximately three months ahead of schedule.



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Under the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#), our Department helps Californians get the skills they need to find good jobs and start careers. This year was no different. We invested in a variety of workforce groups throughout the state.

- Earlier this year, we awarded [\\$850,000 to the Verdugo Workforce Development Board](#). This award supports the BioPharma Grant Project. The project is designed to create a centralized pool of qualified biotechnology technicians to meet the needs of California's Life Science industry. The industry employs 466,888 workers and generates over \$414 billion in annual economic output. The award will help with training and evaluation to help local LA basin employers hire up to 5,000 workers per month over the next 5 years.
- We invested [\\$2 million in training for allied health careers](#). California's healthcare industry has grown by nearly 220,000 jobs since 2020. In partnership with the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, we awarded \$1 million each to the San Diego State University Research Foundation and South Bay Workforce Investment Board. The Allied Health Program is a [California Jobs First](#) initiative that prepares participants for high-demand allied health careers. Because the healthcare industry is growing, we want to make sure we're helping people get access to these great careers and professions.
- California's farmworkers are at the heart of its \$49 billion agriculture industry. We awarded [\\$950,000 to the Workforce Development Board of Ventura County](#) to support agricultural workers. In Ventura County, workers were affected by the closures of Houweling's Tomatoes and NB Farms. With this funding, workers will get job support services including job training, career assessments, and coaching.
- We also awarded [\\$11 million to expand career opportunities for farmworkers](#). This award is a part of the Farmworker Advancement Program, a [California Jobs First](#) initiative that helps farmworkers adjust to the industry's changing demands. The program will provide hands-on-training and important training in English, math, and digital literacy. By investing in farmworkers, we are empowering them and strengthening our agricultural workforce.

In addition to investing in different workforce groups, we redesigned the [California Workforce Supply and Demand Dashboard](#). The dashboard is more interactive and [easier to use](#). It helps workforce partners, businesses, and educational institutions use data to better connect to education and career opportunities. The dashboard shows how education programs line up with job openings and online job postings. Users can see which careers match certain fields of study.



“California farmworkers feed the nation and are vital to putting food on our tables every day. We’re here to help them when they need it most. Together with our partners in the community, we’ll deliver vital support to help transition workers to new jobs.”

Nancy Farias, EDD Director

Youth Employment Services

As we continue to invest in our workforce, we're also supporting our youth and young adults. On behalf of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, we announced [the Opportunity Young Adult Evaluation and Technical Assistance \(OYA ETA\) grant](#). With approximately \$1.7 million, the funds will provide evaluation and technical assistance for program awardees. Awardees will be able to connect with apprenticeship programs, community colleges, and adult school programs. These funds will support organizations that help young adults to reach their educational and employment goals.

We're committed to helping young adults find good jobs. We awarded \$28 million in grants through Governor Newsom's [Freedom to Succeed Executive Order](#). The award will [train young adults to work](#) in agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing, and other growing industries. Our [Youth Employment Opportunity Program](#) is another resource. This program helps youth get ready for school, work, and a successful future. We also have the [Employment Services for Youth](#) webpage dedicated to helping the youth with their journey.



Employers

For our employers and businesses, we're making sure we have resources and services that allow employers to focus on their businesses.

e-Services for Business Enhancements

We improved our [e-Services for Business](#) to provide valuable features and resources. We redesigned the e-Services for Business enrollment to be more user-friendly and revised on-screen instructions in plain language to guide users to the correct enrollment type.

We also created a new web request to support customers affected by disasters or emergencies. Instead of submitting a written request or calling the Taxpayer Assistance Center, employers can now request an

extension to file reports and pay taxes online. This feature is available both within and outside of e-Services for Business, making it easier for impacted employers to access and submit their requests.

In addition, customers can now correct payment issues online instead of submitting a written request to make a correction. These changes include changing payroll dates and deposit schedules and moving payments to another quarter or to another account.

Updated Payroll Tax Webinar Registration

We offer free payroll tax webinars to help employers understand and follow state and federal payroll tax laws. On May 1, 2025, we modernized our payroll tax webinar registration system by upgrading to Cvent. With this upgrade, our customers can:

- See the new modernized look and feel.
- Add webinars to their Google, Apple, or Outlook calendar.
- Modify user information or cancel registrations.
- Get friendly email reminders about their registration and more.

Since the launch of the new system, we have had over 2,000 successful registrations.

Employer Guides Enhancements

We made formatting improvements to the *2026 California Employer's Guide* (DE 44) and the *Household Employer's Guide* (DE 8829). These improvements include:

- Adding clear, easy-to-read headings.
- Removing tables that aren't needed.
- Improving formatting for better accessibility.
- Arranging sample materials clearly.
- Updating callouts for easier reading.

These edits increase readability and reduce the time needed to make it accessible online, without changing any of the content.



More Modernization Progress Across EDD

Helpful Virtual Assistant (Chatbot)

We've upgraded [our website's virtual assistant, also known as our chatbot](#). Along with English and Spanish, it's now available in Armenian, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

These eight languages represent the top spoken languages of working-age adults in California. To get started, customers will select the Help button in the bottom-right corner of our webpages. After picking the preferred language, customers can get answers to general questions. Customers can:

- Learn about unemployment, disability, and Paid Family Leave benefits and how to manage your claim.
- Find jobs fairs and workshops, training, career guidance, and other employment support services.
- Understand payroll taxes, how to manage a tax account, hiring and training opportunities, and other business support services.
- Understand payroll taxes, how to manage a tax account, hiring and training opportunities, and other business support services.

Better Document Management

We're continuing to make progress on one of our key modernization efforts, [a new Document Management System \(DMS\)](#). The new system is transforming how we process and manage millions of customer documents every year.

Since the original system was implemented in 1999, technology has improved, and California has grown more diverse. The new DMS adds modern automation tools to dramatically reduce manual effort. The foundation and system are more flexible and allow for scalable workflows. This helps speed up claims processing and reduces errors from manual work.

To make document processing more efficient, we added powerful tools to use advanced machine learning to automatically and accurately extract written data from diverse forms and documents in all of the State's most-commonly-



spoken languages. If the system flags uncertain data, staff will jump in and review. This means staff can focus only on the exceptions, while the system handles the bulk of the work, significantly increasing speed and accuracy.

The first phase of our project successfully went live at the end of August 2025. This release covered unemployment benefits forms. By the end of its first month, the system:

- Routed over 792,862 documents to the new system.
- Processed 85% of all documents on the same day as we got them.
- Began automatically reviewing some documents without any need for manual review.

This represents a major step forward in our modernization journey. By automating document intake and integrating smart data capture, we're freeing up staff to focus on higher-value work — serving customers faster, with greater accuracy, and with less manual effort.

Faster Response to Voicemail Messages

We're continuing to improve our Department's operations. This includes our [Speech to Text project](#). Every month, our message hotline receives nearly 900 voicemails, and many are in languages other than English. Before this project, those messages were translated manually, often requiring multiple replays, delayed referrals, and in some cases, longer wait times — especially for non-Spanish languages. Some translations could take days.

Our Speech-to-Text Translation Project has reduced processing time for voicemails by 30% and brought faster resolution to more Californians, no matter what language they speak. With this new system, voicemails are:

- Automatically transcribed and translated into English within minutes.
- Detected in over 150 languages.
- Reviewed more quickly and securely by staff.
- Flagged for common issues like silence or unclear audio to speed human review.

For our team and the Department, this means less time spent listening and re-listening! And more time solving cases and helping customers.

Further Securing IT Systems

By delivering services and benefits to Californians, we handle a vast amount of sensitive information. Protecting that information is important to allow for a secure and reliable customer experience. To make sure our customers' information is safe and to get access to services, we get support from Elastic Security.

With Elastic, our security team can monitor, detect, and respond to threats quickly and effectively across our entire network. Elastic provides our teams with clear, visual dashboards that consolidate data across multiple systems. This allows us to spot unusual activity and vulnerabilities, balancing robust security with the accessibility our customers need.

A few key metrics with our work with Elastic include:

"Our main goal is to support and assist people. If we don't take steps to prevent bad actors, they might disrupt the access that everyone relies on," says Leone. "We have to stay ahead to protect data and resources and provide services around the clock for Californians in need."

Douglas Leone, EDD Chief Information Security Officer

- **850 billion records secured:** we protect more than 850 billion records through the scalability and speed of Elastic Cloud.
- **3,000 servers connected:** Elastic integrates into IT systems across the Department. This brings visibility that lets the security team to better spot patterns and vulnerabilities across the organization.

For more information about our work with Elastic, read about [our story](#).

Our work with Elastic has not gone unnoticed. We were honored as a winner of the [2025 Elastic Excellence Awards](#) for our innovative use of Elastic Security to protect Californians' data. This recognition highlights our commitment to leveraging advanced technology to strengthen security and improve the overall customer experience.

Ensuring Customer Friendly Communication

When people turn to us, they're often facing a difficult time. The last thing they need is to struggle with confusing language or unclear instructions. At EDD, [we're rewriting how we communicate](#). We're updating online applications, benefit guides, and 1,200+ webpages.

- Applications are simpler, with step-by-step guidance and jargon removed.
- Our new homepage highlights the most-used services based directly on user feedback.
- We're reducing confusion and helping more people find what they need faster.

This year, 3,790 of our EDD employees joined in to complete training about how to communicate better. With all our efforts, our plain language initiative, [Plain Language, Real Impact, was awarded Best Workforce Initiative](#).

This award recognizes our commitment to making government services more accessible, inclusive, and human-centered.

Flexible Benefit Payment Options

The Department began using Money Network in 2024 to send benefit payments to customers. Money Network helps our customers manage their benefits safely and easily. It also gives customers more ways to get help. Customers can choose direct deposit, call customer service anytime, and talk with staff who speak many languages.

Direct Deposit

In [June 2024, we added direct deposit as another way for customers to get their benefit payments](#). This was an important step in improving how we serve customers.



Direct deposit is safe, easy, and the fastest way for customers to get their money into their bank account. Payments usually arrive within 3 business days, and the money is ready to be used right away.

In 2025, 2,103,614 customers received payments by direct deposit. On average, Money Network sends 842,452 payments by direct deposit each month.

Public Education and Outreach

We know that when people need support, timing and trust matter.

This year, [we went deeper into our communities](#) to bring help, answers, and resources directly to the people who need them, right where they are.

We're staying connected. We're partnering with local leaders, community groups, churches, and organizations that people already know and trust.

Together, we're building long-term relationships that help break down barriers.

Community Partnerships

We are working hard to make it easier for all Californians to access information on unemployment, disability, Paid Family Leave, payroll taxes, and job support. Our outreach strategy focuses on engaging communities that may experience barriers to accessing government services by providing in-language resources, bilingual staff, and in-person support at culturally relevant events. We supported customers at 22 outreach events in 2025.

As part of our expanded outreach strategy, we partnered with community-based organizations to connect with diverse communities. In addition to the outreach events, we were at 12 partner outreach events. Collaborating with trusted local organizations allows our Department to share program information more effectively. We were able to bridge communication gaps, expand visibility, and reach individuals who may not have engaged with the Department in the past.

Our community partners used a range of outreach strategies, including video announcements, distributing our materials, hosting booths at local events, sharing posts on social media, hosting virtual workshops, and featuring our information in newsletters.

We connected with over 4,800 customers at these events in their language! This included Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Mon-Khmer, and more.

Digital Outreach

We also led a targeted advertising campaign to increase awareness of our programs and services. The campaign utilized a mix of media channels, including digital banners, video, connected TV, streaming audio, and social media. With messaging available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, Armenian, Mandarin, and Cantonese, the campaign reached a broad audience across California. With our efforts, we created a total of over 241.4 million digital impressions.

"By going deeper into our most diverse communities, we're building stronger relationships and breaking down barriers to access. Meeting customers where they are helps us serve Californians with care and respect."

Kelsey Howard, EDD Marketing and Communications Section Chief

"Connecting with the Chinese community was a great experience, and offered a better understanding of their needs for upcoming events."

EDD Outreach Team Member

Number of Digital Impressions

Digital Banners (<i>all languages combined</i>)	14,106,064
Digital Video (<i>English and Spanish combined</i>)	20,043,973
Connected TV (<i>English and Spanish combined</i>)	11,239,938
Streaming Audio (<i>all languages combined</i>)	12,543,297
Social Platforms (<i>all languages combined</i>)	97,575,859
Radio (<i>Broadcast</i>)	36,900,300
Print (<i>all languages combined</i>)	4,739,000
Out-of-home (<i>Transit shelters in LA, SF, SD, SAC</i>)	44,273,208

Total: Over 241.4 Million

Social Media

We used social media to promote language access and culturally relevant engagement across California's diverse communities. To raise awareness about Language Access Services, the Department produced short-form videos featuring relatable, real-life scenarios that helped customers understand how to access multilingual resources. As part of our omni cultural outreach efforts, we also boosted social media posts. For example, we boosted two Spanish-language posts for Paid Family Leave campaigns tied to Mother's Day and Father's Day and shared non-paid Spanish posts across other platforms to reach Spanish-speaking Californians. We also highlighted our participation in community events. We created short-form videos to show audiences a closer look at how we connect directly with communities.

More Language Access

When customers come to us, we want to make sure they can use our services and resources in their preferred language. Our efforts, including the [Speech-to-Text project](#), our [virtual assistant \(chatbot\)](#), and [chatting with a live agent](#), remove language barriers and improve access for all the communities we serve. We continue to provide interpreter services in over 150 languages and have expanded our offerings within the past year to include Indigenous Spanish languages, further improving access for the communities we serve.

We also made sure we had language resources available in our most vital unemployment information documents in the top 15 non-English languages. Vital information means information necessary to understand how to obtain aid, benefits, services, or training.

We also make sure we're supporting our deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. We [invested \\$2.7 million in employment and training services](#) for the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. We selected five organizations that provide specialized employment and job training services to help workers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing who face barriers to employment and career-advancement opportunities. With feedback from our deaf and hard-of-hearing communities, we coordinated, planned, and prepped for the implementation of

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) on-demand services for early 2026 for our staff to assist our deaf and hard of hearing customers. This allows customers who use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment and a qualified interpreter. It is the most widely used communication method within the community today.

A Better Public Website

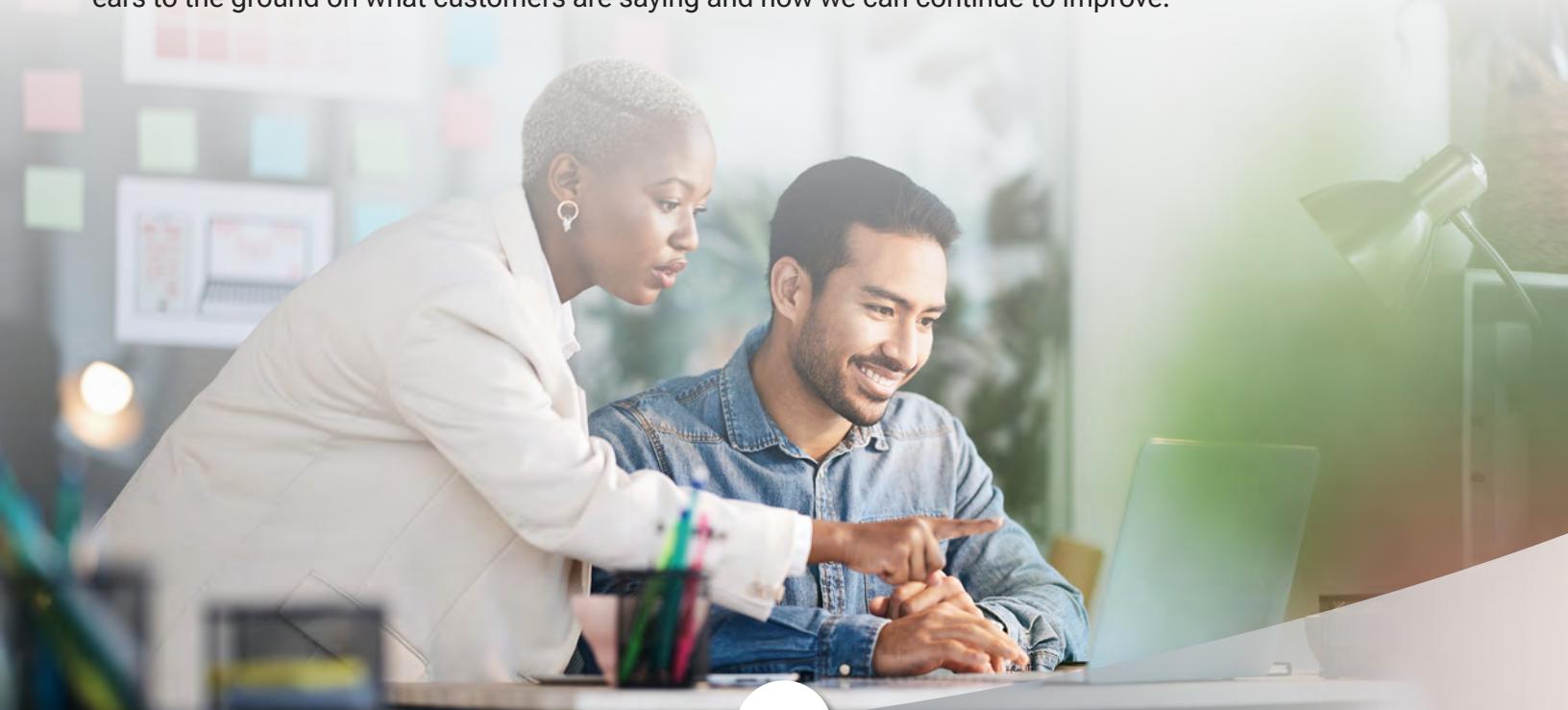
This year, we've made it even easier for customers to get the help they need by [creating a new homepage](#) and [improving our benefit webpages](#). When customers turn to us, we want to make sure they have all the information they need. The information is easy to understand, clear, and user-friendly.

We listened to our customers to make these changes. We improved our homepage by updating our menus. We've made our [unemployment](#), [disability](#), and [Paid Family Leave](#) benefits webpages more customer-friendly and easier to use. Customers can quickly find information they need with step-by-step instructions when applying for benefits or managing claims. The new step-by-step instructions guide customers through each part of the benefit claim process. We also created [how-to videos](#) and [tutorials](#) for extra support.

All our web modernization work together to make the customer experience easier and faster:

- **Easier Navigation:** Simpler menus and step-by-step instructions to find the information.
- **Plain Language:** Our webpages are easier to understand and more accessible for all Californians.
- **Modern Design:** Smart, welcoming, and easy to use.
- **Customer-Centered Changes:** Customer research ensures our webpages work for everyone.
- **Easy Access to News:** Because customers deserve to know how we're transforming the experience.
- **Improved Search:** We've removed unnecessary clutter from the search page, added synonyms to make searches more successful, and added a list of the most common search phrases to choose from.
- **Ongoing Webpage Improvements:** We're not done yet, and we won't be anytime soon. We'll continue to make more changes to our webpages.

By using Qualtrics NLP technology, **we can see a 17% improvement in the ease** (effort needed) and **7% improvement in the sentiment** (how positive customers feel) of our customers. We will continue to keep our ears to the ground on what customers are saying and how we can continue to improve.



Looking Forward to 2026

We're proud to continue to leverage our ongoing technological modernization work with Salesforce, Amazon Web Services, and other leading companies to further accelerate modern solutions not only for unemployment, but also disability and Paid Family Leave.

In 2026, we will select additional private sector support to help us build an integrated claims management system to make the experience of using our programs more seamless. This includes customers that move from receiving disability benefits after birth right into Paid Family Leave to bond with their new baby.

Already in the works are many EDDNext improvement efforts, including:

- **Improving In-Person Service:**

We're making visits to our offices faster and easier! A new check-in system for disability and Paid Family Leave customers will help reduce wait times and make your experience smoother from start to finish.

- **Modernizing Claim Systems:**

We'll announce the award for upgrading our core systems so we can serve you faster and more reliably. Our new Integrated Claims Management System will make it easier to manage claims, share information securely, and improve the overall experience for all Californians.

- **Simplifying Unemployment:**

We're redesigning the biweekly certification questions in myEDD to make them clearer and easier to complete. These updates will help ensure faster, more accurate payments and a simpler experience for everyone.

- **Expanding Self-Service:**

We're making it easier to get answers—anytime, anywhere. Soon, unemployment customers will be able to chat online 24/7 to check claim status and more, without waiting on hold.

- **Simplifying Identity Verification:**

We're continuing our work to deliver a smoother experience when verifying your identity for benefits. The same smooth experience that unemployment customers enjoy will expand to disability and Paid Family Leave programs.

- **Improving Document Efficiencies:**

Continuing our work to modernize how we process mail and paper documents, we're integrating disability and Paid Family Leave into our new Document Management System (DMS). That means faster processing and more efficient service for you.

- **Enhancing Claim Status Updates:**
We're adding more real-time information in myEDD so you can easily check your disability or Paid Family Leave claim status—no need to call an agent.
- **Modernizing Employer Login Security:**
We're introducing multi-factor authentication for e-Services for Business to help employers protect their accounts with enhanced security and peace of mind.
- **Improving Language Access:**
We're expanding the information available on our webpages in California's most commonly spoken languages, so more people can easily understand and access the services they need.
- **Enabling Online Appeals:**
We're creating a new online process for unemployment customers to submit benefit appeals right through myEDD. This will make the process faster, simpler, and more transparent.
- **Modernizing Contact Centers:**
We're improving our UI contact center by adding real-time security and enhancing the customer experience by collecting more information at the beginning of the call to quickly navigate customers to a representative for assistance.
- **Improving Payroll Tax Experience:**
We're streamlining payroll tax systems and simplifying forms to make filing faster and easier for California employers, helping you spend less time on paperwork and more on your business.
- **Expanding SDI Online Language Access:**
We're expanding SDI Online to include California's top eight languages, ensuring more customers can use our systems comfortably in the language they prefer.
- **Transforming CalJOBS:**
Looking for work and finding qualified candidates is getting easier! We're modernizing the State's job search portal, CalJOBS, to make it easier for job seekers to find that next great job, for employers to locate great candidates, and to better assist our workforce partners who help make those connections across the state.

