

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Date: February 28, 2022

News Release No.: 22-11

Employment Development Department Joins Communities Across California To Strengthen Multilingual Service

SACRAMENTO—The California Employment Development Department (EDD) today announced it has reached a landmark agreement with representatives of diverse communities across California that will boost multilingual unemployment benefit customer service.

"The Employment Development Department partners with communities across California to provide multilingual information and support," said EDD Director Nancy Farias. "One in five Californians communicate in languages other than English, making it critical that EDD communicates with customers in many languages."

Under the agreement, EDD will continue efforts to identify customer language preferences, add more dedicated phone lines with multilingual agents, and expand written translation of vital unemployment insurance information and online resources, including applications. EDD will also convene a multilingual advisory board to help ensure information reaches California's diverse communities. Other key investments include:

- Continued no-cost language interpreter services for unemployment insurance claimants in any language the claimant requests.
- Expanding existing in-language unemployment insurance phone lines from Cantonese, English, Mandarin, Spanish and Vietnamese to include Armenian, Korean and Tagalog so that California's top non-English languages have dedicated EDD phone lines.
- Translating vital unemployment insurance documents for claimants into the top 15 non-English languages used in California: Arabic, Armenian, Cantonese, Farsi, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer (Cambodian), Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese.

Today's agreement follows major EDD language access expansion already underway supported by a [language access budget proposal](#) and legislative reform from [AB 138](#).

EDD is also building a multilingual website access portal that will make it easier for many customers to access services and information in their preferred languages. EDD is also establishing a Language Access Office to further expand language translation and interpreter services.

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The Department is [actively recruiting](#) to fully staff this effort. EDD also launched a \$2 million language access grant program to be awarded to fund ten community-based organization programs.

EDD now offers professional language interpreter services through all its call centers. This service provides claimants with no-cost qualified interpreters who are fluent in over one hundred languages. Customers can also now identify their spoken language preference in UI Online to help EDD deliver better customer service.

California is the most linguistically diverse states in the nation with almost half of residents speaking a language other than English at home. EDD has trained all unemployment insurance call center staff to offer professional, no-cost language interpreters to any claimant who needs language assistance.

Californians can get help with unemployment insurance claims 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Pacific time), seven days a week, except state holidays. Beginning March 3, the Unemployment Customer Service Center hours will change to 8 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Pacific time), Monday through Friday:

English and Spanish: 1-800-300-5616

Cantonese: 1-800-547-3506

Mandarin: 1-866-303-0706

Vietnamese: 1-800-547-2058

California Relay Service (711): Provide the UI number (1-800-300-5616) to the operator

TTY: 1-800-815-9387

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing helped mediate today's agreement.

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