

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Employment Development Department Further Expedites Unemployment Eligibility Determination Process

SACRAMENTO—In an effort to [further speed the process](#) of determining eligibility for unemployment benefits, EDD will begin mailing written fact-finding questionnaires to many claimants who do not have scheduled telephone eligibility interviews.

Over the next several weeks, EDD will phase in the written questionnaires for claimants with the most common eligibility issues related to wage information or the reason for leaving employment. Each questionnaire will be customized to a claimant's specific eligibility issue—in the same way as in a telephone interview.

Those who have already scheduled telephone interviews will keep those appointments and not receive a written questionnaire.

Claimants whose eligibility is related to other matters, such as responses to the required biweekly certification, will still require a telephone interview with an EDD agent. EDD will be expanding the written questionnaire program to cover these other issues in the future.

EDD took action last year [to conditionally pay hundreds of thousands of claimants](#) awaiting eligibility determinations. However, claimants paid conditionally must still be found eligible for unemployment benefits.

EDD has paid approximately 27 million unemployment insurance claims during the pandemic and most claimants never need a determination interview or one of the new eligibility questionnaires.

Common reasons that trigger the need for an eligibility determination interview include instances when wage information provided by a claimant does not match what an employer provided. Another common issue is the reason for leaving a job and whether the claimant quit voluntarily. By law, unemployment benefits are for those who lose their job through no fault of their own.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does EDD schedule telephone interviews to determine eligibility?

By law, EDD must determine whether a person is eligible to receive benefits and sometimes this determination requires additional communication with the claimant to clarify information they have provided.

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EDD took action last year [to conditionally pay hundreds of thousands of claimants](#) who encountered delays in benefit payments due to eligibility issues, however the work to determine eligibility remains even though the claimants were paid. The high volume of claims meant that some interviews were scheduled months into the future.

Why is EDD mailing written questionnaires to claimants?

The DE 4365FF (Request for Eligibility Information) questionnaire form enables EDD to collect information to determine a claimant's eligibility for benefits without requiring a phone interview. This will allow EDD to more quickly complete the required determination.

Will every claimant waiting to schedule an interview now get a written questionnaire instead?

No. EDD is only sending written questionnaires to claimants with the most common eligibility issues related to wage information or the reason for leaving employment. Other topics, such as certain answers to the required biweekly certification, will still require a telephone interview with an agent, however EDD will be expanding the program in the future to include these other eligibility issues.

Claimants who already have a scheduled interview will not receive a written questionnaire.

Who is getting a written questionnaire?

EDD will mail written questionnaires to selected claimants in the coming weeks. EDD will mail the DE 4365FF questionnaire to claimants when there is a question regarding the reason for ending employment. For example, whether the worker was fired for misconduct or voluntarily quit. Questionnaires will also be mailed to claimants in instances when wage information provided by the claimant does not match what the employer provided. Any wages beyond a minimum amount must be deducted from unemployment benefits.

What questions will EDD ask in the questionnaire?

Questions surrounding the claimant's specific eligibility issue, just as would occur during a telephone determination interview. For example, if a claimant has an eligibility issue related to a voluntary quit separation, the claimant would be asked questions regarding the reason for the separation. EDD has a [Benefit Determination Guide](#) with detailed information about eligibility for benefits and links to Frequently Asked Questions.

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What are the benefits of this questionnaire?

Claimants who receive the questionnaire no longer have to wait for a telephone interview to be scheduled and can immediately respond to the questions in writing and get a determination of eligibility.

Do those who get a questionnaire still have to participate in a scheduled telephone interview?

Written questionnaires for the most common eligibility issues will replace the need for a telephone interview with EDD.

What is EDD doing to assist claimants in other languages?

EDD will send the written questionnaires in English and Spanish to those who have one of the specified eligibility issues. Those who indicated a preference for a language other than English or Spanish in their communications with EDD will continue to complete the process through a standard telephone interview, with the assistance of an interpreter provided by EDD at no cost to the claimant. Anyone receiving a written questionnaire who requires translation assistance may call EDD's dedicated multilingual phone lines or the main EDD line to access an interpreter and request to be scheduled for a phone interview in their preferred language:

- 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
- Hundreds of additional languages through no-cost language translators: 1-800-300-5616

What should a claimant do when receiving a questionnaire?

The claimant should answer the questions to the best of their ability and return the questionnaire to EDD at the address provided in the questionnaire as quickly as possible to help EDD resolve the eligibility issue.

How will claimants know whether EDD received their response to the questionnaire?

If EDD confirms a claimant's eligibility, the claimant will receive an Additional Instructions (DE 238) notice, which will show the weeks they were found eligible. If a claimant did not meet eligibility requirements, the claimant will receive a Notice of Determination, which can be appealed.

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What if a claimant doesn't respond to the questionnaire?

EDD will determine eligibility based on the available information, which could result in a finding that the claimant was not eligible for the benefits received and may have to return those funds.

Will EDD send these questionnaires electronically by email or through UI Online?

The first phase of this project involves mailed questionnaires. EDD will refine the process as this program expands to ensure a smooth transition to electronic questionnaires in the future.

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