

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Employment Development Department Launches Enhancements to the Unemployment Insurance Program

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) today issued an update on several enhancements being implemented within the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program—including adding dedicated phone lines in Armenian, Korean, and Tagalog, so California’s eight most commonly spoken languages are served with direct access assistance, as well as launching the first phase of a new call back feature on the call center. EDD is also notifying identified Californians of the expanded federal eligibility for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefit claims.

Additional Languages for Customer Phone Lines

EDD is continuing its major investment in multilingual services to reach California’s diverse communities. The Department just added three additional dedicated phone lines for Korean, Armenian, and Tagalog-speaking customers, along with its existing lines for English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese-speaking customers. EDD also offers no-cost language interpretation services for all customers in over 100 languages.

The new phone lines allow customers to receive assistance directly from an EDD language-skilled agent in the UI Customer Service Center in their native language. The dedicated language lines feature a new simplified Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system securely accessed through random numeric passcodes. Messaging will indicate that the line is only for speakers of the targeted language and if callers do not speak the language, they would need to disconnect and contact the EDD general customer service number. If a caller speaks with an agent, but does not speak the targeted language, the agent will transfer the caller to the general customer service number.

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The Department's expanded unemployment customer service phone line numbers, which are featured on the individual Language Resources pages (see the EDD website globe icon), include:

English and Spanish: 1-800-300-5616

Armenian: 1-855-528-1518

Cantonese: 1-800-547-3506

Korean: 1-844-660-0877

Mandarin: 1-866-303-0706

Tagalog: 1-866-395-1513

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

More information about the EDD's [Language Access Plan](#) and customer service contact options can be found on the EDD website.

Scheduled Callback Service Implementation

The EDD continues to expand its callback features to help customers during periods of high call volume. Under this first phase of the new system, customers may be offered an opportunity to schedule a same-day appointment time to receive a callback. These scheduled callbacks will help minimize the amount of time a customer would spend on hold. This service enhances the existing "virtual hold" function that allows customers to hold their place in the call center phone queue and automatically connects them with an available customer service agent.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Reassessment Notices

This month, EDD continued its PUA reassessment effort, including additional notices to approximately 100,000 claimants who initially did not qualify for benefits but who may now be eligible for benefits under retroactive [federally-expanded PUA eligibility provisions](#). These claimants were identified through automated system sweeps and were first notified in 2021 through their UI Online account of their new opportunity to complete the PUA reassessment form.

The expanded federal eligibility for benefits include workers who refused to work for an employer that violated COVID-19 safety standards, school employees whose usual work schedule was affected by COVID-19, or workers laid off or who had hours reduced as a direct result of COVID-19.

EDD is now sending additional notices by mail to those who did not respond to the electronic notices or who are not registered in UI Online and prefer to receive information and certify for benefits by mail.

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Claimants identified as eligible for the mailed PUA Reassessment process that have not opted out of text notifications will also receive an SMS text message notifying them of PUA reassessments and to check their postal mail for more information. The following is the SMS text message that will be sent to eligible claimants:

“EDD Alert: If you were previously denied PUA benefits, you may now qualify under new federal guidance. Check your postal mail for more information.”

Claimants will have 30 days from the mailing date to return the PUA reassessment form to the PO Box address listed on the form.

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