



Resources for California Unemployment During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Q: I've been laid off, what should I do?

A: The first thing you should do is go to the California Employment Development Department (EDD) website and [file a claim for unemployment](#). Even if you have questions about eligibility or are unsure about different unemployment programs, file your application now. EDD has a backlog of applications to review, so apply now.

Q: What unemployment benefits are available if I've been laid off?

A: Eligible individuals can receive regular California unemployment benefits that range from \$40-\$450 per week. Depending on your maximum total award and your weekly benefit amount paid, you may receive benefits payments for between 13 to 26 weeks. Eligible individuals will also receive an additional \$600 per week in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation through July 31, 2020, which Congress authorized in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This will be paid in addition to and at the same time (but not necessarily in the same check) as California unemployment benefits. It is an addition to the stimulus check of up to \$1,200 for eligible single filers and \$2,400 couples filing jointly.

Q: What if I am self-employed or an independent contractor?

A: In the CARES Act, Congress created the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program to help people who are self-employed or independent contractors. These people would not normally be eligible for unemployment. PUA provides up to 39 weeks of benefits, starting February 2, 2020, and continuing through the end of 2020, depending when you lost work because of the pandemic. PUA recipients may also be eligible for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation through the end of July. The EDD will begin accepting online applications for this program on Tuesday, April 28. Eligible Californians receiving PUA can also receive the stimulus check worth up to \$1,200 for eligible single filers and \$2,400 couples filing jointly.

Q: I have applied for unemployment, now what?

A: Most recent online applicants will receive an email message from the EDD with a subject line of "New Online Account Created." That means your registration was automatically completed in the system. If you do not receive a confirmation email, and if you have not filed for unemployment in the past several years, you should receive your letter with an EDD Customer Account Number in the mail. Use this to complete set-up of your EDD unemployment claims account. After you receive your claim package in the mail verifying your eligibility for benefits, or you receive an email from the EDD notifying you that your registration has been automatically completed, it is time for you to "certify" for your first benefit payment. Certifying is the process of answering basic questions every two weeks that tells us you're still unemployed and otherwise eligible to continue receiving payments.

Q: I have questions, but I can't get through to EDD. What should I do?

A: We are aware that EDD is unable to keep up with the volume of unemployment claims and questions from Californians. Over 2.7 million Californians filed for unemployment since the start of the coronavirus

pandemic, and the unemployment rate has jumped over 30% in the last month. California's government officials are responding to the increase in unemployment claims, including reassigning state employees from other departments to EDD, and providing phone support from 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week. A full list of EDD contact information including phone support in six different languages, [is available here](#). Answers to frequently asked questions [are available here](#).

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