

# N E W S R E L E A S E

Contact: Loree Levy  
Aubrey Henry  
916-654-9029

Date: October 21, 2021

News Release No.: 21-59

## **Employment Development Department Issues Unemployment Insurance Benefit Update**

SACRAMENTO—The Employment Development Department (EDD) today announced further improvements to unemployment insurance customer service, which include launching more mobile-friendly services and calling claimants directly when there is an issue that requires additional information or clarification. The Department also [posted further information](#) explaining why a person might see a maximum claim balance for extended federal benefits, but can no longer access those funds now that the federal programs expired.

EDD is also letting customers know that the UI Online and the EDD Customer Service Contact Center will be down for scheduled maintenance from Friday, October 22, 2021, at 8:00 PM to Saturday, October 23, 2021, at 8:00 PM.

### **UI Online Mobile-Friendly Upgrades**

As more customers use mobile phones and other devices rather than traditional computers, EDD took action to bring new mobile capability to the unemployment insurance platform. The Department updated the unemployment insurance online system to make it more user-friendly on any device. This action helps implement key recommendations from the Strike Team and State Auditor to invest in technology improvements that help improve the customer experience.

Now mobile users can access all the features of UI Online including the ability to upload documents, apply for benefits, submit bi-weekly eligibility certifications, and view payment history and claim status. EDD also optimized the homepage design so mobile customers can see any action items they need to complete at the top of the page.

Until now, there was a separate UI Online Mobile app that provided mobile access to the UI Online system with limited functionality. EDD will retire the UI Online Mobile app in the weeks ahead now that UI Online itself is mobile-friendly.

### **Outbound Call Strategy**

EDD has continued to issue a first payment to the majority of claimants within one week of receiving their eligibility certification. In July, EDD also [launched a pay-now policy](#) to get funds to continued claimants waiting more than two weeks for payment.

(more)

Hundreds of thousands have been paid under that program and are now waiting for an eligibility determination to be completed on their claim, but not payment. Claimants can learn more about what to expect with conditional payments on [EDD's website](#).

Most claims do not require a telephone interview to resolve eligibility. However for those claims that require an interview the wait has now reached up to 26 weeks. Interviews may be needed to clarify the reasons why a person left a job which requires EDD to speak with both the employer and the employee, as well as cases when EDD's wage records show wages from an employer that do not match information provided by the claimant.

To address this situation, EDD is implementing a number of measures including boosting vendor staffing by hundreds of workers a week and training more staff to handle the most common issues requiring interviews. EDD will continue exploring ways to convey this information on the data dashboard given that claimants are now paid under the conditional payment program, even though Department determination work remains.

EDD also started a program to call claimants whenever that conversation could resolve the issue in place of a formal determination interview. Agents will attempt to contact a customer to clarify an eligibility issue from Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Customers will see "ST OF CA EDD" or "800 300 5616" as the caller identification.

If the customer does not answer the call agents will leave a message advising that another call will be made in the next 24 hours. If the customer is again not available, EDD will leave a second message with a call back telephone number and individualized verification code that the specific customer can use to reach an agent.

### **Claim Balance Guidance**

EDD continues to receive questions from claimants who see a claim balance in their UI Online account but cannot access those funds. This is because the now-expired federal unemployment programs or extensions had a maximum number of weeks, but the program ended before each claimant could collect that maximum number of weeks if they remained unemployed.

Federal law does not allow benefits to be paid for any weeks of unemployment that occurs after a claim ends, even if a balance remains on a claim. For example, if a person was placed on a FED-ED extension on September 5, 2021, that extension would have usually provided up to 13 weeks of benefits. However, the last date payable for any FED-ED extension was September 11. Therefore, that claimant would have only received one week of benefits, even though the claim balance shows the value of up to 12 weeks of benefits remaining.

(more)

EDD added a Your Claim Balance section to the [Benefit Year End page](#) to explain that a claim balance shows the maximum benefit amount that could have been collected--not necessarily the full amount that a claimant can collect.

Although federal extended benefit programs have ended, claimants may still qualify for regular state unemployment insurance if they have earned enough in employer-paid wages. Information about this process is included in the [How Unemployment Insurance Benefits Are Computed](#) fact sheet. EDD has also created an [Unemployment Benefit Calculator](#). Information about how to file a regular unemployment claim in California is available on the [Filing an Unemployment Claim](#) webpage. The requirements to apply are posted on the [Eligibility Requirements](#) webpage.

### **Continued Outreach to Assist Disaster Victims**

The Employment Development Department is continuing its work with local communities at disaster assistance recovery centers to assist those impacted by recent wildfires. EDD sends dedicated staff to help people apply for unemployment assistance when authorized by FEMA.

Information about [Disaster Unemployment Assistance](#) is available here on the EDD website. All current state-declared disasters and the services available are posted on the [Disaster Related Services](#) webpage.

Eligible individuals who lost work or self-employment as a direct result of the Dixie Fire in Plumas, Lassen, and Tehama counties; the River Fire in Placer and Nevada counties; the McFarland Fire in Trinity and Tehama counties; and the Monument Fire in Trinity County, now have until November 30, 2021 to apply for Disaster unemployment assistance benefits.

### **Work Search and CalJOBS Registration Requirements**

In June, [EDD reminded Californians](#) on regular unemployment that they must search for work and register on CalJOBS to remain eligible for payment. CalJOBS is California's no-cost online job center with hundreds of thousands of job postings and tools to help people find work. It is also an excellent resource where employers can post job openings and find qualified job seekers to fill their positions. CalJOBS includes over a million job listings from private job boards and recruitment sites and more than 30,000 Fortune 1,000 companies; educational institutions; local, state and federal agencies; healthcare organizations; and many more public, private and non-profit employers.

EDD is reminding people to register on CalJOBS because if they fail to do so they may be denied benefits. Information about specific work search requirements are available on the [Job Seekers: Returning to Work webpage](#).

(more)

Some claimants will also be scheduled for an appointment to meet with an employment specialist at a local America's Job Center of California office. These appointments, known as a Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), are designed to help claimants re-enter the workforce. Claimants must attend the RESEA appointment and complete any follow up services to remain eligible for benefits.

Claimants will receive an appointment notice by mail and a follow-up telephone call with specific details about their appointment and information about their appointment is also available on their UI Online account.

**###**