

N E W S R E L E A S E

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**Unprecedented demand for unemployment benefits triggered by COVID-19**  
***New claim totals and guidance for workers and employers***

**Sacramento** – The demand for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits has skyrocketed as the Coronavirus impacts hard working Californians and their families. For the week ending March 21, the EDD processed 186,809 UI claims. This is a significant increase over the prior week, during which the EDD processed a revised 57,606 UI claims.

As the U.S. Department of Labor makes the California claim data available to the public each Thursday, the EDD will release weekly updates on the [EDD online newsroom](#).

**Addressing the Increase in Claims**

California leaders have taken steps to address COVID-19's impact on the UI system. Earlier this month, California Governor Gavin Newsom [waived the normal one-week waiting period](#), allowing Californians to be paid for their first week of unemployment or reduced hours, as long as they are found eligible. The Governor's action will provide eligible workers with a full two weeks of benefits on their first payment instead of one week being unpaid. To ensure workers receive these benefits as quickly as possible, California Labor Secretary Julie A. Su [directed](#) the EDD to streamline the UI Claims process by exercising flexibility in how the EDD determines a worker's eligibility for benefits.

These actions are on top of the EDD's effort to process the immense claim demand through a historic combination of tactics:

- Staffing claims processing around the clock.
- Redirecting hundreds of staff from across the department and state government, including some recent retirees with unemployment processing experience.
- Hiring more staff whenever possible.

"We know there are many Californians who are really struggling to provide for their families because of the massive economic impact created by the Coronavirus," said EDD Director Sharon Hilliard. "Unemployment benefits provide critical financial support and the EDD is employing all means necessary to get benefit payments out to those in need."

(more)

The EDD is closely monitoring developments with the federal government and any additional unemployment assistance that may become available. Any further details and guidance for workers will be posted to our [EDD Coronavirus 2019 webpage](#). You can also learn more about program benefits that may be available to you if you are self-employed or missing work because you are sick or caring for an ill or medically quarantined family member.

## **Guidance for Workers Seeking Unemployment Benefits**

### **How long will it take for my claim to make it through the process?**

When an unemployed worker files a claim, the process typically takes about three weeks from filing to the EDD making benefit payments to eligible workers. Claim processing will take additional time and require EDD to ask for further information from a worker if:

1. The information submitted does not match wage records;
2. A worker's identity cannot be verified.

Examples of situations where a claim could be delayed include a worker misclassified by their employer as an independent contractor instead of an employee, or a worker whose data may have been transposed when reporting it to the EDD.

### **What is the best way to ensure I submit all the required information?**

To ensure the fastest processing possible, use the [UI Checklist](#) for collecting the information necessary to apply for benefits and apply through the EDD's UI Online from your personal computer or mobile phone.

### **Are there changes to the application?**

Starting Friday, March 27, workers applying for unemployment benefits will be asked to check the options on the application's drop-down menu that indicate the Coronavirus is the reason for your unemployment or reduced wages.

### **How do I open a UI Online account?**

For assistance on how to open a UI Online account and how to use the system for filing and re-opening a claim, as well as certifying for ongoing benefits, visit our [video tutorials through the EDD website](#). Tutorials are available in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.

(more)

**What if I need additional assistance?**

If you need assistance in completing the application, you can find [your local America's Job Center of California](#) and call to set up a phone appointment with EDD's Workforce Services staff.

**Guidance for Employers Facing Layoffs****I need to close my business quickly, does the 60-day notice still apply?**

For employers that had to rapidly close down their businesses to prevent or mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, [Executive Order N-31-20](#) temporarily suspends the 60-day notice requirement in the California Worker Adjustment and Retraining Act (WARN) for those employers that give written notice to employees and satisfy other requirements. The EDD has [posted guidance](#) on this suspension.

**May I have an extension to file payroll reports?**

If your business is directly affected by COVID-19, you can request up to a 60-day extension to file your state payroll reports and deposit state payroll taxes without penalty or interest. The written request for extension, noting the impact of COVID-19, must be received within 60 days from the original delinquent date of the payment or return.

**Who do I contact if I need information on paid sick leave or workplace safety?**

If you need information about sick leave policies, workplace safety and health guidance, the [California Labor and Workforce Development Agency webpage](#) offers assistance.

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