



## Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

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As part of the federal [CARES Act](#), the new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program helps unemployed Californians who are business owners, self-employed, independent contractors, have limited work history, and others not usually eligible for regular state UI benefits who are out of business or services are significantly reduced as a direct result of the pandemic. The provisions of the program once operational include:

- Up to 39 weeks of benefits starting with weeks of unemployment beginning February 2, 2020, through the week ending December 26, 2020\*, depending on when you became directly impacted by the pandemic.
- An additional \$600 to each PUA weekly benefit amount you may be eligible to receive, as part of the separate CARES Act Pandemic Additional Compensation program. Only the weeks of a claim between March 29 and July 25\* are eligible for the extra \$600 payments.

\* Under the CARES Act of 2020, the \$600 additional benefits are available through 07/31/20. However, the U.S. Department of Labor has issued guidance to clarify that, for most Californians, the last full week of benefits will end on 07/25/20. Similarly, the PUA program has a legislative end date of 12/31/20, but for Californians the last full week of benefits will end on 12/26/20.

**Benefits can be retroactive to weeks starting on or after February 2, 2020**, depending on your last day of work due to COVID-19 and regardless of when you submitted your claim application. The effective date of your claim will begin the Sunday of the week when you last worked and became unemployed due to reasons directly related to COVID-19.

### Important Information

**Note:** Because this is a brand new program, each state will need time to develop all of the necessary system programming, forms, processes, and procedures. This page will be updated as information becomes available, including when and how to apply for these benefits. Once this new complex program is built and staffed, it will likely rival the size of the regular UI program the EDD already administers.

As we work to implement this new program, you can:

- Review the [eligibility requirements](#) the federal government has prescribed in order to receive these federally paid benefits.
- Contact your local [America's Job Center of California<sup>SM</sup>](#) where EDD staff work with local partners to provide employment assistance. You could be eligible for [Supportive Services](#) funding to help you with basic needs.

### Eligibility

The PUA benefits are payable if you don't qualify for regular UI benefits in California or another state and also do not qualify for State Disability Insurance or Paid Family Leave benefits. This includes:

- Business owners
- Self-employed individuals
- Independent contractors

You can also be eligible if you qualified for regular UI benefits, but have collected all benefits for which they are eligible.

If you are not a citizen of the United States, you cannot be paid PUA benefits unless you were legally permitted to work in the United States at the time such services were performed. In addition, you must be authorized to work for any week of PUA benefits claimed to be eligible for payments.

You must also meet **one** of the following criteria:

- You have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking a medical diagnosis.
- You are unable to work because a health care provider advised you to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- A member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- You are providing care for a family member or a member of your household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- A child or other person in the household for whom you have primary caregiving responsibility is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 **and** the school or facility care is required for you to work.
- You became the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19.
- You have to quit your job as a direct result of COVID-19.
- Your place of employment is closed as a direct result of COVID-19.
- You were scheduled to start a job that is now unavailable as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- You are unable to reach the place of employment as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- If you work as an independent contractor with reportable income, you may also qualify for PUA benefits if you are unemployed, partially employed, or unable or unavailable to work because the COVID-19 public health emergency has severely limited your ability to continue performing your customary work activities, and has thereby forced you to stop working.

## Benefit Payments

In order to provide benefits as quickly as possible, payments will be issued in phases. If you qualify for PUA, and depending on the effective date of your PUA claim, the **initial payments** you will receive are as follows:

- Phase 1  
**\$167 per week** for each week you were unemployed from **February 2, 2020 to March 28, 2020** due to a COVID-19 related reason.
- Phase 2  
**\$167 plus \$600 per week** for each week you were unemployed from **March 29, 2020 to July 25, 2020**, due to a COVID-19 related reason.

- Phase 3  
**\$167 per week**, for each week from **July 26, 2020 to December 26, 2020**, that you are unemployed due to a COVID-19 related reason, up to a total of 39 weeks (minus any weeks of regular UI and certain extended UI benefits that you have received).

**Note:** If you qualify for your claim to be backdated to an earlier PUA effective date based on your last day of work, you could receive payment for prior weeks you were unemployed due to COVID-19.

You will be required to “certify” for your 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 biweekly payments.

#### When to File a Claim

We have a dedicated team working around the clock with state partners to build this new program as quickly as possible. **The EDD will begin accepting online applications for this program on Tuesday, April 28.** This page will be updated with instructions for filing a claim for PUA benefits when details become available.

If you are unsure if you are an independent contractor or an employee who could be eligible for benefits, [file for regular Unemployment Insurance benefits](#) and we will determine your eligibility.

After you have filed, refer to our [step-by-step UI claims process](#). You’ll learn what to expect and the actions you need to take through the course of your claim for receiving benefit payments as long as you’re eligible.