

# EDD CARES Act Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

[https://edd.ca.gov/about\\_edd/coronavirus-2019/pandemic-unemployment-assistance.htm](https://edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019/pandemic-unemployment-assistance.htm)

## PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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 of ending December 31, 2020, depending on when the individual became impacted by the pandemic.
  - An individual may be eligible to receive an additional \$600 to each PUA weekly benefit amount. Only the weeks of a claim between March 29 and July 31 are eligible for the extra \$600 payments.

### Eligibility

The PUA benefits are payable if individuals 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
- Individuals who may have qualified for regular UI benefits but have collected all benefits for which they are eligible.

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

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

- Have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking a medical diagnosis.
- Unable to work because a health care provider advised the individual to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- A member of the household has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Providing care for a family member or a member of the household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- A child or other person in the household for whom the individual has 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 the individual to work.
- Individual becomes the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19.
- Individual has to quit his/her job as a direct result of COVID-19.
- Individual's employment is closed as a direct result of COVID-19.

- Individual was scheduled to start a job that is now unavailable as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- Individual is unable to reach the place of employment as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- Individual works as an independent contractor with reportable income, he/she may also qualify for PUA benefits if unemployed, partially employed, or unable or unavailable to work because the COVID-19 public health emergency has severely limited his/her ability to continue performing customary work activities, and has thereby forced them to stop working.

### **When to File a Claim**

The EDD is sorting through details from the U.S Department of Labor as to how they want this complex program to work in issuing payments that the federal government will be funding. The EDD website will be updated with instructions for filing a claim for PUA benefits when details become available.

For those unsure if they are an independent contractor or an employee who could be eligible for benefits, file for regular Unemployment Insurance benefits and EDD will determine eligibility.

**NOTE:** This is a brand new program, each state will need time to develop all of the necessary system programming, forms, processes, and procedures. The EDD website 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.