

EDD Workforce Services offices open on Saturdays

EDD also began opening some Workforce Services offices on Saturdays to coincide with the Call Center availability. The 25 offices from Redding to San Diego are identified on EDD's Web site at www.edd.ca.gov, and will provide customers access to computers and phones for those who don't have access to such items at home.

Auto-file extensions

EDD has begun to automatically file UI extensions without the claimant having to re-file a claim or contact the department. Previously, claimants had to reapply for their first federal extension claim due to the unique programming requirements of the federal extension and stimulus programs. EDD can now automatically transition an unemployed worker into a federal extension claim as soon as they exhaust their regular UI benefits.

On March 27th, Governor Schwarzenegger signed legislation **ABX3 23**, which will give long-term unemployed Californians who meet specific criteria up to an additional 20 weeks of UI benefits once their first two federal extensions run out. Approximately 1,000 claimants could be eligible retroactively to February 22, 2009, and EDD will be sending them a notification. Another 76,000 claimants may be eligible by April 12 and EDD is working to automatically file their claims, notify the claimants, and pay the benefits. California will receive up to \$3.2 billion in federal funds for conforming and implementing the 20-week extension, which will not cause an increase in state costs during calendar year 2009.

Purchase of hundreds of new computers

EDD is in the process of purchasing approximately 500 new computers and printers for use in the One Stop Career Centers and in EDD Workforce Services offices. These new computers will provide staff more tools and more capacity to help clients filing UI claims in the offices, as well as assist them in looking for jobs and training opportunities using online resources.

Purchase portable network hubs for Rapid Response and Emergency Response

EDD is purchasing portable office communications kits which would be used to bring UI resources for on-site claim filing at community forums or used on-site when mass layoffs occur.

(more)

Revisions to EDD UI Website

EDD is revising the UI portion of its Web site to make it easier for claimants to find information about starting and managing a UI claim without making a call. In addition, EDD has just launched three new Tip Sheets designed to simplify the process for filing UI claims, completing bi-weekly claim forms for benefits, and setting up a personal access number to obtain updates on UI checks.

EDD is processing a record number of initial claims for UI benefits, including regular UI, reopened, and federal extension claims, which doubles the demand of a year ago. In January, EDD processed 525,000 initial claims, which was the highest total in the nation and more than the next two highest states of New York and Florida combined.

Additionally, EDD is currently paying a total of \$77 million a day in UI benefits with \$45 million in regular UI benefits, \$26 million in federal extension benefits, and another \$6 million in federal stimulus payments, which works out to an additional \$25 a week for every UI client. California was one of only a few states able to start paying the extra \$25 stimulus payments on the first day of eligibility March 2.

Information about regular UI benefits, federally-extended benefits and claim filing is available on EDD's Web site at www.edd.ca.gov. You can also submit questions through the "ContactEDD" feature on the front page. A vast majority of unemployed workers should be able to file their claims and submit their questions or concerns online.

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For news media inquiries only, contact the California Employment Development Department (EDD) Communications Office, at (916) 654-9029. TTY users, please call the California Relay Service at 711.