



COMMUNITY
LEGAL SERVICES
IN EAST PALO ALTO

Information About Unemployment Benefits

If you have lost work or had your hours reduced because of COVID-19 and the shelter in place order, but are otherwise able and available to work, you can **apply for unemployment benefits** through the California Economic Development Department (EDD). If you are unable to work because you are sick or caring for someone who is sick, you are probably not eligible for unemployment, but you may be eligible for other benefits, like disability benefits.

Eligibility: To qualify for unemployment benefits, you must meet 3 basic requirements:

1. You must be unemployed “through no fault of your own”;
2. You must have earned enough wages in the year before you apply (your “base period”); and
3. You must be “able and available to work.”

Generally, **undocumented workers** are not eligible for unemployment benefits. To qualify, you will have to show that you have valid work authorization (like a green card or a work visa) at the time you apply, during your base period before you apply, and throughout the time period during which you receive benefits. Undocumented workers **can**, however, access other state benefits like [disability](#) and [paid family leave](#) benefits, and paid sick leave under the Coronavirus Response Act (“CARES”). More information on available resources [here](#).

How do I apply for unemployment benefits?

The easiest and fastest way to apply for unemployment is **online**, through the EDD website. You can find step by step directions about how to do this here: https://www.edd.ca.gov/unemployment/UI_Online_File_a_Claim.htm

You will first need to create a Benefit Program Online Login on the EDD website at <portal.edd.ca.gov>. Then, you can log in on that same page, select “UI Online,” select “File a Claim,” enter your information, and submit your claim.

What documents or information do I need in order to apply?

You will need: your social security number; the date you last filed for unemployment insurance, if you ever have; your driver's license; pay stubs, or estimates of your total wages earned; the dates that you started and stopped working; and the mailing address of your employer/s.

How much will I get if I qualify?

Your weekly benefit amount depends on your income, and under normal circumstances **can range from \$40 to \$450**. To get an estimate of what you will receive, you can use the [UI Benefit Calculator](#) on the EDD website at <https://www.edd.ca.gov/unemployment/UI-Calculator.htm>.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the federal government is now contributing an **additional \$600** per week for everyone who is eligible for benefits until July 31, 2020, for a total of up to \$1050 per week.

It is a good idea to regularly check the EDD website for updates about unemployment benefits and the coronavirus, here: https://www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm. The EDD should soon have a separate application for **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (“PUA”)**, a new benefit program that many workers who are not eligible for regular unemployment may be able to access, such as independent contractors, freelancers, and workers who do not have a long-enough work history to qualify for state UI benefits. Undocumented workers, however, are not eligible for this benefit.

Please note that the information above is for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. If you have a specific question about your situation, please reach out to Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto at (630) 326-6440, or another legal services provider.