

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits now available for those impacted by widespread fires in multiple California counties

SACRAMENTO – Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits are now available for workers, business owners and self-employed individuals who lost their jobs or businesses or had their work hours substantially reduced as a result of the wildfires that began in several California counties on August 14, 2020. The federal disaster [declaration](#) on August 22 provides DUA benefits for people who are directly affected by the fires, but who do not qualify for regular state unemployment insurance, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), FED-ED extensions, or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits.

DUA provides temporary unemployment benefits to people whose jobs or work hour losses, or loss of businesses are a direct result of a disaster. Affected individuals are encouraged to apply for DUA through the California Employment Development Department (EDD), which will first check to see if applicants can qualify for state unemployment benefits, PEUC, FED-ED extensions or PUA benefits. The deadline for filing a DUA claim related to these fires is September 28, 2020.

“These destructive fires have taken lives and threatened the livelihoods of workers and employers throughout California,” said EDD Director Sharon Hilliard. “We encourage individuals who have been impacted by the fires to apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance to help recover some of their lost income during this difficult time.”

DUA benefits have been made available to those impacted by the wildfires that began on August 14 and are ongoing in the following California counties:

- Lake
- Monterey
- Napa
- Santa Cruz
- San Mateo
- Solano
- Sonoma
- Yolo

DUA applies to losses beginning the week of August 16, 2020, and individuals can receive up to \$450 a week in benefits for a maximum period of 27 weeks.

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These unemployment assistance benefits are offered to victims of a disaster and are available to individuals who meet any of the following criteria:

- Worked or were a business owner or self-employed, or were scheduled to begin work or self-employment, in the disaster area. This includes, but is not limited to, those in the agricultural and fishing industries.
- Cannot reach work because of the disaster or can no longer work or perform services because of physical damage or destruction to the place of employment as a direct result of the disaster.
- Can establish that the work or self-employment they can no longer perform was their primary source of income.
- Cannot perform work or self-employment because of an injury as a direct result of the disaster.
- Became the head of their households because of a death caused by the disaster.
- Have applied for and used all regular unemployment benefits from any state, or do not qualify for regular unemployment benefits and remain unemployed as a direct result of the disaster.

To receive DUA benefits, all required documentation must be submitted within 21 days from the day the DUA application is filed. Required documentation includes a Social Security number and a copy of the most recent federal income tax form or check stubs, or other documentation to support that the individuals were working or self-employed when the disaster occurred. Documentation for the self-employed can be obtained from banks, government entities, or affidavits from individuals having knowledge of their business.

The fastest and easiest way for new claimants to apply for DUA is to use [EDD's UI Online application](#), which is available in both English and Spanish.

Claimants can also apply for DUA by phone between 8 a.m. and 12 noon, Monday through Friday:

- English: 1-800-300-5616
- Spanish: 1-800-326-8937
- Chinese (Cantonese): 1-800-547-3506
- Chinese (Mandarin): 1-866-303-0706
- Vietnamese: 1-800-547-2058

[EDD's Disaster-Related Services](#) webpage includes more information for individuals and businesses impacted by disasters, including tax filing extensions for affected employers. EDD also encourages individuals to visit the [Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#) wildfire recovery website for information on Local Assistance Centers where individuals, families and businesses can access disaster assistance programs and services.

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In addition, job seekers can find the [America's Job Center of CaliforniaSM](#) location nearest them (currently appointment-only due to the ongoing pandemic) for access to job-search resources, job postings and training programs, as well as assistance with exploring career options, résumé and application preparation, career development and more. Job seekers also may connect with potential employers through [CalJOBSSM](#), EDD's online job-search system.

The EDD administers the federal disaster-benefits program in California for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, on behalf of the Emergency Management Agency.

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