

Fact Sheet

Disaster Unemployment Assistance

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is a federal program that provides financial assistance to jobless workers and the self-employed when they are unemployed as a direct result of a major natural disaster.

A major disaster means any hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, high water, wind-driven water or tidal wave, earthquake, drought, fire or other catastrophe declared by the President to warrant government assistance to communities and individuals.

The DUA program is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor and State Employment Security Agencies under the Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974, as amended by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Act of 1988.

Who is Eligible for DUA?

When a major disaster has been declared by the President, DUA is generally available to any unemployed worker or self-employed individual who lived, worked, or was scheduled to work in the disaster area at the time of the disaster; and due to the disaster:

- no longer has a job or a place to work; or
- cannot reach the place of work; or
- cannot work due to damage to the place of work; or
- cannot work because of an injury caused by the disaster.

An individual who becomes the head of household and is seeking work because the former head of household died as a result of the disaster may also qualify for DUA benefits.

Benefit Payments

DUA consists of weekly payments that are computed in the same way as regular unemployment insurance (UI) payments, that is, figured on a base period of earnings as prescribed by state UI law. The base period for all DUA claimants is the most recently completed tax year prior to their last date worked. For most claimants this is the prior calendar year.

The exception to this is that unemployed self-employed individuals may base a claim on net self-employment earnings. They may use an alternate tax year, but it must still be their most recently completed tax year.

The minimum weekly amount will be 50 percent of the average unemployment compensation amount in California during the quarter immediately preceding the date of the disaster.

Under federal regulations, weekly DUA payments are reduced by:

- partial earnings;

- any insurance for wage loss due to illness or disability;
- supplemental UI benefits resulting from union agreements; or
- private income protection insurance.

Duration of Benefits

DUA benefits are payable only for weeks that fall within the Disaster Assistance Period, which begins with the first Sunday's date following the date of the disaster and ends on a Saturday 26 weeks after the disaster is declared.

Restrictions on Entitlement

DUA benefits are not payable to individuals who are entitled to regular unemployment compensation or waiting period credit; or who would be entitled to unemployment compensation benefits or waiting period credit if not for excessive earnings or for being fully employed.

Any eligible individual whose entitlement to unemployment compensation exhausts before the end of the Disaster Assistance Period is entitled to DUA benefits for the remaining weeks of unemployment in the Disaster Assistance Period, or until a new valid benefit year becomes available, whichever is earlier.

For additional information on DUA, call:

- English 1-800-300-5616
- Spanish 1-800-326-8937
- Cantonese 1-800-547-3506
- Mandarin 1-866-303-0706
- Vietnamese 1-800-547-2058
- TTY 1-800-815-9387

For more information on other Employment Development Department (EDD) programs and services, or to apply online, visit our Internet site at www.edd.ca.gov.

The EDD is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Requests for services, aids, and/or alternate formats need to be made by calling 1-866-490-8879 (voice). TTY users, please call the California Relay Service at 711.