

September 3, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with notice regarding the upcoming expiration of the following federal pandemic unemployment insurance benefit (UIB) programs: Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), Pandemic Unemployment Compensation/Pandemic Additional Compensation (PUC/PAC), Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) and Federal-State Extended Duration (FED-ED) benefits and appropriate mid-period county actions as the result of a voluntary recipient report.



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DIRECTOR

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GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

September 3, 2021

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: JENNIFER HERNANDEZ, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT: FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFIT PROGRAM
EXPIRATION AND APPROPRIATE MID-PERIOD COUNTY
ACTIONS FOR CALWORKS, RCA, ECA, AND TCVAP, AND
CALFRESH PROGRAMS

REFERENCE: [H.R. 748 \[PUBLIC LAW NO. 116-136 \(3/27/20\)\] CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY ACT; H.R. 133 CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2021, EXECUTIVE ORDER N-59-20, MAY 1, 2021; ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-22; ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-24-21; MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES \(MPP\) SECTIONS 40-115.22, 69-201.4, 69-301 AND 70-105](#)

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with notice regarding the upcoming expiration of the following federal pandemic unemployment insurance benefit (UIB) programs: Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), Pandemic Unemployment Compensation/Pandemic Additional Compensation (PUC/PAC), Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) and Federal-State Extended Duration (FED-ED) benefits and appropriate mid-period county actions as the result of a voluntary recipient report. Many of these federal unemployment benefit programs were enacted under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and extended under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Except for FED-ED benefits, these UIB programs will no longer be payable after September 4, 2021. FED-ED benefits will no longer be payable after September 11, 2021.

VOLUNTARY MID-PERIOD REPORTS AND COUNTY ACTIONS

As a result of these programs ending, CWDs should anticipate an increase in voluntarily reported changes in income made by recipients. These reports may be made in writing, online, verbally, or in person to the CWD. The CWD will only take mid-period action on those voluntary reports that will result in an increase to benefits.

Some recipients may report a reduction in these federal UIBs but would still be receiving state unemployment benefits. Therefore, CWDs are reminded that the amount of UIBs that continue to be reasonably anticipated for the remaining payment period would still be considered unearned income for purposes of determining eligibility and monthly grant or benefit amounts for CalWORKs and CalFresh.

In some cases, voluntarily reported changes may result in an increase in benefits for one program, while decreasing benefits for the other program. For example, an increase in CalWORKs benefits could result in a decrease in CalFresh benefits.

CALWORKS

A CWD action to increase the grant and/or allotment due to decreased income as a result of the reduction or discontinuance of UIBs is effective the first of the month in which the change occurred or is reported, whichever is later.

The recipient must provide verification of the change within the 10-day period listed on the request for verification. If verification is not received within 10 days, the CWD shall send a "no-change notice of action (NOA)" to the AU/household which states that no action to increase benefits was taken because verification was not received. If verification is provided after 10 days, the date the verification is provided shall be considered the date of the voluntary report. Adequate verification may include, but is not limited to, a letter from the Employment Development Department (EDD), an Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) report, or, pursuant to MPP Section 40-115.22, when verifications do not exist, a sworn statement is considered adequate.

CALFRESH

The CWD must act mid-period on information voluntarily reported by a household if that information results in increased benefits. When a reported change results in an increase to the household's benefits, the change must be effective no later than the first allotment issued 10 days after the date the change was reported.

The CWD should not take action on voluntary mid-period reports that would result in a decrease in a household's benefits, unless specified otherwise. Whenever the CWD does not take action on information that would result in a decrease in a household's benefits, the CWD must document clearly in the case record the reason for not taking action and must send the household a No-Change Notice of Action (NOA). The notice must also remind the household that they have to report the information at the next SAR 7 or recertification, whichever comes first.

The CWD must not verify changes in income if the income source has not changed and if the amount has changed by \$50 or less, unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or outdated (older than 60 days). Since CWDs must only act on information that results in an increase to the household's benefits, unless otherwise specified, the CWD must only require verification of an income change if it is over \$50, the income source has changed, or the change would result in an increase to the household's benefits. The CWD must inform the household in writing of the additional verification requirements and that failure to provide the verification within the specified date will result in no change to benefits. If the household fails to provide the required verification within 10 days of the change being reported, but provides the verification at a later date, then the timeframe for taking action on changes must run from the date verification is provided rather than from the date the change was reported.

PRIOR GUIDANCE REGARDING FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

PUA

The PUA program provides unemployment coverage to individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits (UIBs) and are unable to work due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, such as self-employed workers (including gig workers and independent contractors), part-time workers, and those with limited work histories.

These payments were not exempt for CalWORKs under Executive Order N-59-20 and are to be treated in the same manner as regular state unemployment insurance benefits. PUA payments will end September 4, 2021.

Payments from PUA are also not exempt for CalFresh and are considered unearned income for the CalFresh program according to the ACIN I-24-21.

PEUC

The PEUC program provides additional weeks of federally funded unemployment compensation to individuals who have exhausted their state UIBs. These payments were not exempt for CalWORKs under Executive Order N-59-20 and are to be treated in the same manner as regular state unemployment insurance benefits. PEUC payments will end September 4, 2021.

Payments from the PEUC program are also not exempt for CalFresh and are considered unearned income for the CalFresh program according to ACIN I-24-21.

PUC/PAC

PUC/PAC extends supplements to individuals receiving unemployment benefits with an additional \$300 per week. PUC/PAC payments are exempt from consideration as income and resources for the purposes of determining CalWORKs and CalFresh eligibility and grant amount (ACL 21-22), as such, there should be no change in the monthly grant if only a report of discontinued PUC/PAC benefits is reported. PUC/PAC payments will end September 4, 2021.

MEUC

MEUC provides a supplement of \$100 per week in any unemployment case in which an individual received at least \$5,000 in self-employment income in addition to employment compensation in the most recent taxable year ending prior to the individual's application for regular compensation. These individuals must also be eligible for regular unemployment benefits and cannot be receiving PUA payments. MEUC payments are not exempt income used to determine CalWORKs eligibility and the grant amount. MEUC payments are retroactive to December 27, 2020, and claimants can receive up to a total of 36 weeks of payments through September 4, 2021.

MEUC payments are also not exempt income and considered unearned income for CalFresh purposes.

FED-ED

FED-ED provides additional benefits for people who used all their unemployment during a period of high unemployment and who had sufficient earnings. FED-ED benefits can only be paid during the extended benefit period, which is based on the state's unemployment rate, and only after people have collected all regular state UIBs as well as any PEUC extension benefits they were eligible to.

FED-ED benefits are considered unearned income. FED-ED benefits are not exempt and will be used to determine CalWORKs eligibility and the grant amount. FED-ED benefits will no longer be payable after September 11, 2021.

FED-ED benefits are also not exempt income and considered unearned income for CalFresh purposes.

RCA, ECA, AND TCVAP ADMINISTRATION

The RCA, ECA, and TCVAP cash assistance programs follow the CalWORKs administrative rules with certain exceptions; however, for purposes of treatment of these payments, these programs follow the CalWORKs cash payment rules. Pursuant to MPP Section 69-201.4, CalWORKs program regulations apply to financial eligibility and for the RCA program, unless specifically superseded by RCA regulations. Unless otherwise provided, ECA and TCVAP recipients must be provided cash assistance under the same conditions and to the same extent as the RCA program per MPP Sections 69-301 and 70-105, respectively.

ADDITIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Please refer to the [EDD website](#) and the [Federal Unemployment Benefits End Fact Sheet \(PDF\)](#) to learn more about benefits ending and other assistance programs still available.

If you have questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, contact:

For CalWORKs, the Early Engagement and Eligibility Bureau at (916) 654-1322.

For CalFresh, the CalFresh Policy and Employment Bureau at (916) 651-8047.

For RCA, ECA, and TCVAP, the Refugee Programs Bureau at (916) 654-4356.