

## Services For Victims of Domestic Violence Abuse

Individuals who are unemployed or unable to work due to domestic violence abuse may be eligible for partial wage replacement benefits from the Employment Development Department (EDD) through the Unemployment Insurance (UI) or State Disability Insurance (SDI) programs. These programs provide temporary payments to workers to ensure that some of life's necessities can be met during periods of unemployment.

The UI and SDI programs have different eligibility requirements and benefits cannot be collected at the same time. The following provides information on both programs:

### **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM**

The Unemployment Insurance Program, commonly referred to as UI, provides weekly benefit payments for workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. Benefit payments are financed by employers who pay taxes on wages paid to each of their workers.

#### ***Benefits and Eligibility Requirements***

Benefit payments range from \$40 to \$450 per week up to 26 weeks, and are based on workers' past earnings.

To be eligible for UI benefits, individuals must have a substantial attachment to the labor force. This attachment is measured by an earnings test requiring a minimum amount of prior wages to qualify for benefits.

Eligibility for benefits also requires that claimants be able to work, be available for work, be seeking work, and be willing to accept a suitable job when offered.

#### ***UI Eligibility for Victims of Domestic Violence Abuse***

Workers who quit their jobs may be eligible for UI benefits if there was "good cause" for doing so. Under the law, good cause exists for leaving work if the reason for leaving is "real, substantial, and compelling and would cause a reasonable person genuinely desirous of retaining employment to leave work under the same circumstances." The EDD must make a determination of good cause and eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

In California, the law provides that victims of domestic violence who quit their jobs to protect themselves or their families from domestic violence abuse may have good cause for leaving that job, provided the EDD finds that all reasonable steps were taken to keep the job, such as requesting a transfer, leave of absence, or other workplace accommodation.

During the eligibility process, individuals should be prepared to describe their efforts to preserve employment, as well as provide whatever proof that an act or threat of domestic violence abuse occurred. Employers will also be asked to verify employees' reasons for leaving and attempts to remain employed. While victims of domestic violence may be hesitant to discuss the specifics of their separation from work, the EDD must ask questions to determine good cause for quitting a job due to domestic circumstances. The EDD maintains customer confidentiality at all times.

Individuals must also meet all other eligibility requirements, including being physically able to work and available for work, actively seeking work, and ready to accept work. An individual who is not eligible for UI benefits because they are sick or injured, caring for an ill family member, or bonding with a new minor child, can file a claim with California's SDI program.

### **STATE DISABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM**

The SDI program is a partial wage replacement insurance program for most California workers. It is state-mandated and funded through employee payroll deductions. Workers covered by SDI are covered for two separate benefit programs, Disability Insurance and Paid Family Leave. Some workers who are not required to participate in SDI, such as employers or the self-employed, may elect coverage.

#### **Disability Insurance**

The Disability Insurance Program, commonly referred to as DI, provides short term partial wage replacement benefits to individuals who are unable to work, or are suffering a loss of wages due to a non work-related illness or injury, or due to pregnancy or childbirth.

### ***Benefits and Eligibility Requirements***

Benefit payments range from \$50 to \$917 per week for up to 52 weeks.

To be eligible for DI benefits, individuals must have a minimum amount of prior earnings to qualify. Individuals must also be employed or actively looking for work at the time they become disabled, and must be unable to do their customary work for at least eight consecutive days. In addition, the disability must be certified by a doctor. EDD may require an independent medical examination to determine eligibility for benefits.

### **Paid Family Leave**

The Paid Family Leave program, commonly referred to as PFL, provides benefits to individuals who take time off work to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, parent, or registered domestic partner, or to bond with a new minor child.

### ***Benefits and Eligibility Requirements***

Benefit payments range from \$50 to \$917 per week for up to six weeks in any 12-month period.

To be eligible for Paid Family Leave benefits, individuals must be covered by SDI and have a minimum amount of

prior earnings to qualify. Individuals must supply medical information if providing care for a family member, or documentation to support a claim for bonding with a new minor child. Employers may also require that workers use up to two weeks of unused vacation leave prior to the initial receipt of benefits.

### **EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES**

In addition to the UI and SDI benefit programs, the EDD also provides a comprehensive range of employment and training services in partnership with state and local agencies and organizations. These services are provided statewide through One-Stop Career Centers or EDD Workforce Services Offices, and include an initial assessment of skill levels to assist in identifying appropriate employment and training options, assistance with résumés and job applications, interview skills workshops, and other job search and placement assistance.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For additional information on the UI and SDI programs, or to learn about employment and training services offered by EDD, please visit the EDD Web site at [www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov).