

## CALIFORNIA CORONAVIRUS WEEKLY RECAP

*A weekly digest to keep you up to speed on the California coronavirus outbreak.*

Dec. 1, 2021

Welcome to the 90th issue of the California Coronavirus Weekly Recap newsletter.

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### **The Economy & Your Finances: U.S. and California unemployment fall; EDD requiring proof of self-employment**

U.S. claims for unemployment fell to [199,000 last week](#), the lowest level since 1969.

However, the slow-down in claims might have been impacted by the Thanksgiving holiday. Claims are trending down as employers work to keep employees due to labor

shortages. Employers probably added [more than half a million workers](#) in November, for a second straight month.

In California during October, monthly initial unemployment insurance claims filed decreased by 68,315 from the prior month, [to 271,921](#). Last week, just over 52,000 claims were filed, which was down 7,000 from the prior week. Totally weekly claims numbered 1,860,086 that month. Compared to last year, initial claims were down 419,392.

Although Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits have ended, the [Employment Development Department](#) (EDD) is now requesting PUA recipients to provide documentation to prove that they were self-employed during the calendar year before and up to the start of their PUA claim. Remember, you may have to [submit proof of self-employment](#) even though PUA benefits have ended. You can upload the required documentation through the “Upload Employment Document” section on your UI Online homepage. Acceptable documents include state or federal tax identification numbers, business licenses, tax returns, business receipts or invoices, signed affidavits verifying self-employment status, contract agreements and bank statements from a business account showing self-employment. Providing more than one document may help support review of your proof of self-employment. Your deadline to submit the required documents will be on your UI Online homepage. You may be able to request more time if you have good cause, but if you don’t provide the required documentation by your due date, you may be required to repay any benefits determined to be an overpayment.

Sources: *EDD, KQES, Bloomberg*

## **The Market & Industry: California market strong; mortgage rates rise slightly, mortgage applications rise and refinancing dips**

Despite a quiet Thanksgiving week, [November home sales](#) in California look promising. Existing single-family home sales were roughly 14 percent below November 2020 levels, but that was still a strong trend above 400,000 units.

[Thirty-year fixed rate](#) mortgages rose to 3.31 percent from 3.24 percent. The 15-year fixed-rate mortgage rose to 2.44 percent. The 5/1 adjustable-rate mortgage is at 3.13 percent. As a response to the rise in mortgage rates, mortgage refinance applications dropped 15 percent from the week before, which was 41 percent lower than the same week one week prior. Conversely, mortgage applications to buy a home rose 5 percent. Pending home sales in October were 7.5 percent higher in October compared to September.

Sources: *CNBC, C.A.R. Market Minute*

## **Around the State: First U.S. Omicron variant case found in San Francisco; California cases remain low**

The first Omicron variant case in the U.S. has been found in [San Francisco](#). It was found in a test from someone who had traveled to the U.S. from South Africa on Nov. 22 and tested positive for COVID-19. The person was fully vaccinated and is self-quarantining. They are experiencing mild symptoms and are improving. All close contacts of the person have been contacted and tested negative.

As of 10:30 a.m. [yesterday](#), there were 5,062,586 reported cases of COVID-19 in the state, for a daily average of 4,101. This is a decrease of 19.6 percent from two weeks prior. [Hospitalizations](#) statewide are quite low (though some of the more rural regions remain high), at 3,229, a very slight increase of 1.6 percent. Statewide, [23.7 percent of ICU beds](#) are available. California has administered [57,325,138 doses](#) of the vaccine, and 71.9 percent of residents have received at least one dose. Among all Californians, 64.1 percent are fully vaccinated. Experts say that about 85 percent of Americans will need to be vaccinated to bring the COVID-19 pandemic under control.

Sources: *San Francisco Chronicle, Los Angeles Times*

## **Health Check-Up: Omicron variant spreading worldwide; where to schedule your booster appointment**

The World Health Organization (WHO) identified the newest COVID-19 [variant of concern](#) first identified in South Africa as the [Omicron variant](#). As of Wednesday morning, the Omicron (oh-mih-krahn) variant has shown up in [24 countries](#) throughout Africa, Europe, Asia, North America and Australia. So far, the variant might be more easily transmissible than the original strain of the virus, but there is no indication yet that it causes more severe disease. The key distinction of this variant is that it has more mutations on the spike protein than the Delta variant (32 as opposed to 18), which might make it spread more easily. The spike protein is what the virus uses to [latch onto our cells](#). Symptoms seem to be [the same](#) as those for other COVID-19 strains, including exhaustion, fever or chills, scratchy or sore throat, coughing, shortness of breath, muscle or body aches, headache, gastro-intestinal issues, loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose. It will be a few weeks before scientists know whether it evades some protection conferred by vaccination, whether it invades cells more efficiently, and whether monoclonal antibody treatments will work against it. A group of [researchers from California institutions](#) such as Stanford, U.C. Berkeley, U.C. San Francisco, U.C. Davis, the Gladstone Institute and the Innovative Genomics Institute are joining a national effort to find answers about the new variant. Compared to the Delta variant that spread widely before researchers knew about it, research on the Omicron variant is happening incredibly fast. This strain was first identified on Nov. 4 by a junior scientist with the South African Lancet Laboratories noticed a genetic anomaly in a single, positive COVID-19 test. Researchers in Botswana found it, too. Then a Dutch health agency found it in a test from Nov. 19. South African researchers quickly analyzed samples from 100 patients and contacted health authorities. U.S. researchers are getting a head start on studying the variant before it shows up here. The best protections against Omicron are the same as protections against other strains, including wearing masks, maintaining social distancing and getting vaccinated.

California's vaccination website, [myturn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov), is offering appointments for children aged 5-11 as well as people 12 and up. Vaccinations are also available at walk-in clinics, pediatricians' offices and pharmacies. Some counties have their own vaccine scheduling or information websites, such as [L.A. County's scheduling site](#), [San Francisco's](#)

[scheduling site](#), [San Diego County's information site](#), [Orange County's information site](#),  
and [Sacramento County's information site](#).

Sources: *CDC, CNN, San Francisco Chronicle, USA Today, Mercury News, MyTurn.gov, L.A. County Dept. of Public Health, SF.gov, San Diego County, Orange County, Sacramento County Dept. of Public Health*



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