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**56% of employers say COVID benefits are discouraging people from accepting work**  
*United Chamber Advocacy Network employer survey finds 80% of local businesses are hiring  
but are having difficulty filling open positions*

An informal survey of 162 local employers conducted by UCAN – the United Chamber Advocacy Network, found that as the economy surges back to life, employers have plenty of jobs available but are having extreme difficulty filling them, with over half saying that prospective employees are choosing to accept state and federal COVID relief rather than accept a job.

“At a recent job fair, we heard from our members that they were having a tough time filling open positions,” said Marni Sanders, CEO of the Yuba Sutter Chamber of Commerce. “So, working with our partner chambers through UCAN, we decided to dig deeper and broader and find out why.”

“What we found in the survey echoes what we were hearing from our members.....in effect, the state and federal governments are competing with local businesses for people.”

“Reopening California’s economy and rebuilding small businesses is the top priority for the UCAN chambers in 2021,” said Dave Butler, the coalition’s policy advocate, “and the inability to fill open positions is a huge barrier to local business owners’ ability to build back.”

The results of the UCAN Employer Workforce Survey can be found at [www.amgroup.us/ucan](http://www.amgroup.us/ucan). A few topline from the survey are featured below:

- 50% said they reduced their workforce since COVID began
- 78% said they were hiring to expand their business or to fill old jobs
- Of those, 78% said they were having difficulty hiring employees
- And of that group, 56% said prospective employees were satisfied with current public COVID benefits

“The results of the UCAN Employer Workforce Survey closely mirrored much of what I’ve heard throughout the North State,” responded James Gallagher (R-Nicholaus), whose 3rd Assembly District includes Yuba City. “Many businesses have been simply unable to compete with government benefits.” Gallagher continued, “We’re already seeing the impact these staffing shortages are having on local businesses as more and more have had to close their doors permanently despite COVID levels being at their lowest. The longer this concerning trend continues, the more damaging the economic fallout will be long term.”

Frank Maita, a member of the Elk Grove Chamber Board of Directors said, “It’s bad enough that this situation is harming business growth now, but what really concerns me is the long-term harm this might have on young people if they don’t value hard work and individual responsibility. That’s really the scary part.”

Said one respondent, a business owner from Cameron Park, “It breaks my heart that people would rather be paid by unemployment over getting out and making a difference and challenging themselves.”

The following page includes several state and federal benefits that may be discouraging people from coming back to work. Also included are links that provide program details.

**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**

Combination state and federal  
Up to \$450/week  
Authorized through October, 2021

[https://www.edd.ca.gov/about\\_edd/coronavirus-2019/pandemic-unemployment-assistance.htm](https://www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019/pandemic-unemployment-assistance.htm)

**Monthly Food Assistance**

State CalFresh  
Up to \$204/month

<https://www.getcalfresh.org/?source=edd>

**Economic Impact Payment**

Federal COVID Relief Act, March 2021

One time payment in March, 2021 to individuals earning less than \$80,000 and couples earning less than \$160,000  
\$1400 per person; \$1400 per dependent

<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/third-economic-impact-payment>

**COVID Rent Relief**

Federal Funds subsidize landlord and tenant  
State law governs evictions, etc.

25% rent subsidy to eligible renters through 6.30.21  
80% subsidy to eligible landlords for rent April 2020 through March 2021

Evictions prohibited through July 1, 2021  
Collection via small claims prohibited until July 1, 2025

**Utility Relief**

Combination state/federal funds

Unpaid utilities compensated at 100% of cost for a period of 12 mos

[https://housing.ca.gov/covid\\_rr/program\\_overview.html](https://housing.ca.gov/covid_rr/program_overview.html)

[SB 91](#)

*UCAN - the United Chamber Advocacy Network, includes seven local chambers of commerce, representing over 5,000 employees in four northern California counties.*

**UCAN - United Chamber Advocacy Network**

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El Dorado County, El Dorado Hills, Elk Grove, Folsom, Rancho Cordova, Roseville, Yuba-Sutter Chambers of Commerce