COVID-19 (Coronavirus): If you have a Mortgage on your Home

Introduction

The pandemic might affect your ability to pay your mortgage. You might have less work. You might be quarantined and unable to work. You might lose your job or work fewer hours.

Can anyone help me?

Contact the Washington Homeownership Resource Center [www.homeownership-wa.org](http://www.homeownership-wa.org) at 877-894-4663. They can put you in touch with a housing counselor.

Contact your loan servicer (the company listed on your monthly statement). They can offer forbearance to help you. Let them know you are going to miss a payment. Ask about a forbearance plan, or ask about any borrower relief available to those affected by the pandemic. Forbearance usually requires the submission of a complete Request for Mortgage Assistance Application (RMA). Your servicer can tell you what you must do to apply.

How does a forbearance work?

Forbearance lowers your monthly mortgage payment, or suspends it (stops it temporarily), during the forbearance period.

What happens after the forbearance period ends?

You must then repay the amount that was lowered or suspended. You can do this a few ways:

- You can **reinstate** the mortgage (make a one-time payment for the full amount due of any missed payments)

- You can set up a **repayment plan** and add a specific amount to your payments each month until the entire amount is repaid (read [Repayment Plan](#))
What relief programs are available to borrowers missing payments related to pandemic?

Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, the VA, Department of Agriculture (Rural Housing services) and HUD have all suspended (paused) residential foreclosures until at least May 17, 2020. This suspension applies to foreclosures currently in process. This does not mean they have suspended the requirement to make payments.

The suspension of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, VA, Rural Housing, and HUD residential foreclosures applies to about 70% of mortgages. If you don’t already know, contact your loan servicer to find out if it applies to your mortgage.

Most pandemic-related default issues will start with missed payments in April 2020. It is too early to tell what relief programs will be created. Please keep checking back in with this fact sheet for updates on available programs by specific lender or loan servicer.

- These programs will not automatically suspend a foreclosure on your home! You still have to contact them to ask for help.

My mortgage isn’t backed by one of those agencies. Do I have any options?

Maybe. Here are some banks and companies who can help if you contact them to ask for help:

- **Ally** will defer your mortgage payment for up to 120 days without late fees or finance charges. Learn more about what they can do to help at [www.ally.com/coronavirus-response/?CP=EML400001705](http://www.ally.com/coronavirus-response/?CP=EML400001705)

- **Bank of America** will defer payments, with payments added to the end of the loan, for mortgages and home equity lines of credit upon request. They will pause foreclosure sales, evictions and repossession. Learn more at [https://about.bankofamerica.com/promo/assistance/latest-updates-from-bank-of-america-coronavirus](https://about.bankofamerica.com/promo/assistance/latest-updates-from-bank-of-america-coronavirus).
• **Citi** offers hardship programs through their service provider, Cenlar FSB, if you have a mortgage with them. Contact them at 1-855-839-6253, Monday–to Friday, 8:30am– to 8pm ET and Saturday, 8:30am– to 5pm ET.

• **JPMorgan Chase** can help if you have a mortgage with them. Learn more at [www.chase.com/digital/resources/coronavirus/mortgage](http://www.chase.com/digital/resources/coronavirus/mortgage).


• **Wells Fargo** can waive fees, defer payments, and pause foreclosure sales and evictions. Learn more at [update.wf.com/coronavirus/home-lending/?_ga=2.164943487.171806384.1585775134-494630111.1585775134](http://update.wf.com/coronavirus/home-lending/?_ga=2.164943487.171806384.1585775134-494630111.1585775134).

### How can I lessen the impact?

If you lost a job or otherwise lost income because of the pandemic, make sure you keep documentation of the events so you can qualify with any future relief programs. (Examples include letters, emails, texts from employers, or medical records concerning the need to isolate and/or stay home.)

**Scammers emerge in times of crisis.** If you receive an offer for relief, get a second opinion before signing anything or paying money. Contact your loan servicer, a housing counselor, or lawyer to help figure out if it is a genuine offer or a scam. (Read [Foreclosure Rescue Scams](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/beware-of-foreclosure-rescue-scams-help-is-fr))

There may be relief on the way for borrowers affected by the pandemic. Use caution when deciding to take out a high-interest short-term loan to make ends meet, especially until you know more about the long-term hardship you may experience.

It is generally good for homeowners to prioritize payments on your home mortgage over unsecured debts, such as credit cards. Check with your other creditors about debt relief options they can provide to free up money to let you make your mortgage...
payment on time. For example, utility companies may let you make lower payments during the pandemic. Credit card companies might also develop options to help you.

Keep a log (written record) of any contact you have with your loan servicer (and other creditors). Put names of people you talk to, dates and times of contact, and what they tell you to do.

Where can I learn more?

Visit nationalfairhousing.org/covid-19/.

This publication provides general information concerning your rights and responsibilities. It is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice.

© 2020 Northwest Justice Project — 1-888-201-1014

(Permission for copying and distribution granted to the Alliance for Equal Justice and to individuals for non-commercial purposes only.)