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**KEEP YOUR HOME CALIFORNIA CHANGES PROGRAM CRITERIA TO
HELP UNEMPLOYED HOMEOWNERS**

Expands Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program to 18 months

SACRAMENTO – Keep Your Home California announced changes that will help more low-and moderate-income homeowners qualify for as much as \$54,000 from the free mortgage-assistance program. The changes affect the Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program, the most popular of the four Keep Your Home California programs.

The state-managed program has expanded the Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program from 12 months to 18 months, providing much-needed financial help while homeowners look for work. The maximum amount of assistance for which homeowners can qualify was also increased to \$54,000.

“California’s economy continues to improve, but we’re far from a complete recovery and there are many homeowners who are still struggling,” said Tia Boatman Patterson, Executive Director of the California Housing Finance Agency, which oversees Keep Your Home California. “We’re always looking at ways to improve the program and we are confident these changes will help more homeowners get much-needed help.”

Despite an improving economy, there is continued evidence of financial struggles for many Californians. Almost 17,000 homes were in the first phase of the foreclosure process in the state during the third quarter, according to DataQuick.

With the expansion of the Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program, homeowners eligible for jobless benefits from the Employment Development Department could receive as much as \$3,000 per month for a maximum of 18 months – or a total of \$54,000. Previously, the limit was 12 months and \$36,000. The Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program is designed to allow out-of-work homeowners to focus on finding a job rather than worry about their mortgage payment.



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There were 1.36 million people in the state unemployed in October, the equivalent of everyone in San Diego, according to the state Employment Development Department. More than one of every three unemployed people has been without work for at least 27 weeks, considered long-term unemployment.

Homeowners currently enrolled in the Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program can have their eligibility extended to 18 months, while those who were previously part of the program may also be eligible if they still meet requirements. Homeowners are encouraged to contact Keep Your Home California for more information.

“Keep Your Home California has helped over 47,000 homeowners, but there are many others who could benefit from the free program,” Boatman Patterson said. “We would like to encourage all California homeowners who are having a difficult time making their mortgage payments due to a hardship to contact Keep Your Home California. We may be able to help you.”

Keep Your Home California was established in 2011 after the state received almost \$2 billion from the U.S. Treasury’s Hardest Hit Fund. Over 47,000 homeowners have received a total of \$863 million from the program. Keep Your Home California has three other programs in addition to the Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program:

- **Principal Reduction Program:** Homeowners who owe more than their home is worth can cut their mortgage principal as much as \$100,000 while saving hundreds of dollars every month. Homeowners approved for the program enjoyed an average savings of almost 20 percent on their monthly payments, from \$1,523 to \$1,229.
- **Mortgage Reinstatement Assistance Program:** Homeowners who are behind two months or more on their payments could receive as much as \$25,000 to help them “catch up” on their past-due mortgage payments. Homeowners must have recovered from their financial hardship and be able to make their mortgage payments going forward in order to be eligible for the program.
- **Transition Assistance Program:** Homeowners who have reached an agreement for a deed-in-lieu of foreclosure or short sale with their mortgage servicer could receive up to \$5,000 in relocation assistance.



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In order to qualify for Keep Your Home California, homeowners must meet program eligibility requirements, including having suffered a financial hardship – such as a job loss, cut in pay, a divorce, death or extraordinary medical benefits – and meet county-by-county income requirements (a complete income limit list is available at <http://keepyourhomecalifornia.org/income-limits/>)

Also, a homeowner's mortgage servicer – the company that collects the monthly payment – must participate in the program. Homeowners can visit <http://keepyourhomecalifornia.org/participating-servicers/> to see if their mortgage servicer is on the list and which programs they offer. More than 200 mortgage servicers, including Bank of America, Wells Fargo and Chase participate in Keep Your Home California.

Homeowners seeking more information about the program should call 888-954-KEEP (5337) between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays or visit www.KeepYourHomeCalifornia.org. Representatives can answer questions and take applications in virtually any language through a translation service and there is never a fee for any Keep Your Home California services. A Spanish-language version of the website is also available at www.ConservaTuCasaCalifornia.org.

