



HAF ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted by California Housing Finance Agency

California - HAF AR 2023



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to have a negative impact on families in many aspects of their lives. For many, it triggered financial hardships that made regular housing payments unsustainable.

For California homeowners, help arrived on December 27, 2021, when the California Mortgage Relief Program began providing financial assistance to eligible homeowners who were behind on mortgage or property tax payments because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funded by the state’s \$1 billion allocation from the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act’s Homeowner Assistance Fund and administered by the California Housing Finance Agency through the CalHFA Homeowner Relief Corporation, the California Mortgage Relief Program has used more than \$905M to provide more than 26,000 grants to households. California households have received an average of \$25,000 in assistance.

Eligible homeowners receive assistance in the form of a grant that does not have to be paid back.

The Program uses a data-driven approach in developing targeted outreach strategies, including focused marketing to reach vulnerable homeowners by running paid media campaigns (online and social media marketing, television and radio ads, physical ad placements and direct mail), partnering with local trusted voices and developing marketing material and digital content.

A percentage of the allocated funds are reserved for socially disadvantaged and underserved communities, which are identified through various geographic and loan metrics. The program was carefully designed to be accessible, with efforts taken to reduce barriers within a streamlined application process.



“

It was an unexpected twist when we got behind on our mortgage and we didn’t know which way to turn until we found the California Mortgage Relief Program. Thanks to your generosity, we are able to get our life and home back on track. You changed our lives.”

- Corey

Homeowner, Placer County

RESPONDING TO THE NEED

During the development of the Program, CalHFA sought feedback from the public and conducted extensive outreach to state governmental partners, state legislative staff, and staff of the California Congressional delegation, as well as other key stakeholders in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. To fully assess the needs of struggling populations, it was especially important to hear directly from distressed homeowners, advocates, housing counselors, state and local leaders, the tribal community and other stakeholders. The Program was created using that feedback, but also with the intention to continuously evaluate critical benchmarks and assess market conditions to identify and implement Program modifications that ensure homeownership and equity are preserved.

Several changes to the program in 2023 helped to allow more California homeowners who experienced financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic the opportunity to get the help they needed.

In June 2023, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) updated the Homeowner Assistance Fund Income Limits, which increased the 150% Area Median Income (AMI) level in nearly all California counties from the prior year, allowing more California homeowners an opportunity to apply for funding assistance.

“Since its inception, the California Mortgage Relief Program has been dedicated to helping California’s most vulnerable homeowners overcome the financial challenges brought on by COVID-19. This program has eased a heavy burden for thousands of families who were worried about losing their homes, and any expansions we can provide will allow even more homeowners to protect their single greatest financial asset.”

*Tiena Johnson Hall, Executive Director
California Housing Finance Agency*

In February 2023, the program expanded in four important ways.



Previously awarded homeowners could apply again to the program and if eligible, could receive additional assistance up to a maximum of \$80,000 in total assistance.



Homeowners with a primary residence that included up to 4 units on the property were also now eligible for the program.



Homeowners with partial claims or loan deferrals taken during or after January 2020 became eligible to apply to the program. These homeowners took action during the COVID-19 pandemic to restructure their mortgages in order to push their delinquent amounts into the future and deserve an equal chance to receive assistance on those missed payments.



Reset the delinquency date for households seeking funding, making those who had missed at least two mortgage payments or at least one property tax payment before March 1, 2023, eligible.

CRITICAL COMPONENT: PARTNERSHIP WITH TRUSTED SUPPORT SYSTEMS



The program has also engaged with trusted voices in underserved communities. In addition to working with HUD-certified housing counselors and legal aid groups, the program has partnered with 17 community-based organizations throughout California who provide outreach and application support for the state’s most vulnerable communities. With grassroots and on-the-ground strategies, these organizations help the program engage with harder to reach neighborhoods up and down the state.

What many organizations have found is community members not believing the help is a reality, particularly that they won’t have to pay back the assistance funds.

These valuable local organizations provide direct connections to homeowners in their communities, offering application assistance and answers in language, and serving as a liaison relaying critical updates to complement the Program’s outreach efforts. Additionally, organizations are partnering with the Program on strategically supported community events that bring awareness and education about the program to their communities.

Our primary goal is to keep families in their homes, prevent foreclosures, and assist homeowners on a stable path to financial recovery and we are continually seeking ways to work within the social, Servicer and local community networks to reach homeowners in need of assistance. Administering relief funds to homeowners who experienced COVID hardships helps restore home equity and puts vulnerable families in a stronger position to sustain homeownership.

“When a family is displaced, a whole community is destroyed. They have to go somewhere else to figure out their whole lives again. This program has been working and continues to work. Keeping people in their homes is by far the most power-building thing we can do. And at the Ring of Democracy what we believe in is to build power for our communities. And I don’t know anything else that builds more power than allowing or helping someone stay in their homes. Nothing builds more power than that.”

- Volma Volcey, Executive Director, Ring of Democracy

FINDING ADDITIONAL WAYS FOR BUILDING AWARENESS

The program has made a dedicated effort to use multiple means for engaging with potential homeowners in need of funding assistance. To reach and gain interest from eligible populations most effectively, the Program's outreach and engagement efforts are focused on:



Developing and implementing marketing strategies and messaging that prompt struggling homeowners to take action and seek assistance



Building out a social media program and various platforms



Partnering with local organizations that reflect and serve underrepresented communities across the state, as shared above



Collaborating with Mortgage Servicers



Creating authentic in-language, culturally competent educational materials to drive eligible homeowners with limited English proficiency to participate in the Program



Deploying a paid media program, that uses key strategies to communicate directly with the eligible population:

- Establish an efficient, equitable base of coverage across California
- Create localized bursts of activity, building awareness in key markets
- Ensure balanced, effective reach with in-language and socially disadvantaged audiences
- Use multicultural ad placements and ads focused on high-risk communities



Conducting an earned media strategy that features regular communication with large and local media organizations to gain statewide attention and reach communities identified as having a greater need

FINDING ADDITIONAL WAYS FOR BUILDING AWARENESS CONTINUED



To provide additional insight into the outreach and engagement efforts, one effective way homeowner engagement strategy has been through social media on a variety of platforms, including Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Based on their platform preference we've answered questions, shared program content and engaged with applicants, benefitting any homeowner browsing on social to learn more about the program and verify its legitimacy.

We've also collaborated closely with a few Mortgage Servicers for tremendous impact in reaching homeowners and sharing program updates and complex information in a helpful way. When the program extended assistance to homeowners with partial claims and loan deferrals in February, direct outreach from Mortgage Servicers to their borrowers via hosted webinars and mail campaigns, drove a spike in engagement and application submission.

This year, a new phase of the paid media campaign was launched in early September 2023, aimed at reaching socially disadvantaged homeowners continuing to experience financial hardships, with partial claims or who could benefit from the California Mortgage Relief Program.



**1.1 Billion
Impressions**



**516 Million
Impressions**



**1.8 Million
Organic
Impressions**

FINDING ADDITIONAL WAYS FOR BUILDING AWARENESS CONTINUED

Another powerful method of awareness-building has been engaging with local media across the state, widening the ability to reach potential applicants no matter where they live. We focused outreach on the mainstream media outlets as well as multi-cultural outlets to ensure the non-English speaking communities had access to all the information possible about the program, often provided in their native language since the program supports 180+ languages with interpretation services. To date, top media outlets such as the Los

Angeles Times, The Sacramento Bee, La Opinión, Univision, Black Voice News and The Korea Daily, among many others, have run stories about the program culminating in more than 500 million impressions.

Additional key awareness-building tools for the Program have included ongoing updates through the Program’s newsletter, which has more than 16,000 subscribers, and outreach to local elected officials and groups across the state, from San Diego to Shasta.

528 NEWS STORIES

AAPI Homeowners Apply and Receive COVID-19 Mortgage Relief in Large Numbers, Averaging \$30,000 in Free Assistance

SACRAMENTO, CA – In recognition of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the California Mortgage Relief Program celebrates with the AAPI community and recognizes the countless contributions AAPI have had in helping build our nation. This month, the program took a closer look into how Californians across the state, with a focus on AAPIs, are using the funding available to pay past-due property taxes. In San Mateo County, AAPIs make up 40% of all successful applications in the county, getting \$33,000 on average. San Francisco County also shows 34% of successful applications from AAPI homeowners with average assistance of almost \$35,000. “Many AAPI homeowners hesitate to apply for help. The CA Mortgage Relief Program provides a maximum of \$80,000 in total aid. Help is available for homeowners with partial claims or loan deferrals taken during or after January 2020. Applicants must have missed at least two mortgage payments OR at least one property tax payment prior to the delinquency date (March 1, 2023) and be currently delinquent. Homeowners with a primary residence in need should apply as soon as possible. Interested applicants can visit the program website at CaMortgageRelief.org to review eligibility information and apply through the online portal. A detailed description of the terms for California’s program, as approved by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, can be viewed here. Applicants will need to un-

중앙경제 2023년 5월 26일 금요일

종합 3

아시아 주택 소유주 10% 모기지 구제

임대보다 주택 구매 실패 곳 휴스턴 등 전국에서 4곳뿐

La Opinión > Los Angeles

Angelino se salva de perder su casa gracias al programa de Rescate Hipotecario de California

Si te atrasaste con el pago de la hipoteca con motivo de la pandemia, aún puedes aplicar porque todavía hay fondos para ayudar a los californianos en apuros

ENSURING ASSISTANCE REACHES UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES



NEWS RELEASE

California Mortgage Relief Program
916-834-4274
press@camortgagerelief.org

LATINO HOMEOWNERS HAVE RECEIVED OVER \$200M IN GRANTS THROUGH THE CALIFORNIA MORTGAGE RELIEF PROGRAM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 21, 2023

SACRAMENTO, CA – As California commemorates the impactful contributions of Latino communities during Hispanic Heritage Month, the California Mortgage Relief Program (CMRP) continues to outreach and provide resources to Latino households across the state, helping families keep their homes and retain the generational wealth they have worked so hard to gain.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, illness, lost wages and other COVID-related hardships made it difficult for many Latino families across California to keep up with their housing costs.

Since December 2021, CMRP has provided over \$500 million in financial assistance to more than 23,000 California homeowners to catch up on their mortgage payments and property taxes, or address loan deferrals, partial claims and payments associated with reverse mortgages. The program has also made outreach to socially disadvantaged communities a top priority.

CMRP has contributed nearly 40% of all CMRP funds, over \$200 million dollars, toward repairing and preserving the home equity of Latino households. Helping so many Latino homeowners save their family homes is one of the California Mortgage Relief Program's proudest accomplishments.

"We want to encourage our Latino homeowners to apply for the aid the California Mortgage Relief Program provides," said Rebecca Franklin, President

California leads the nation in terms of diversity in race, ethnicity, language and socioeconomic conditions so homeowners eligible for the Program represent a wide range of demographics. To ensure that the California Mortgage Relief Program meets the performance outcomes identified in U.S. Treasury guidance, and assists the California homeowners with the greatest need, it is using various tools to effectively reach (1) homeowners having incomes equal to or less than 150% of AMI, and (2) homeowners who fit the criteria of socially disadvantaged. These socially disadvantaged homeowners are identified using a combination of information from HUD's Qualified Census Tract data and UCLA's Owner Vulnerability Index. This data informs the development and execution of the outreach strategies outlined in this report, including the partnership with trusted support systems.

Priority is given to the engagement of socially disadvantaged homeowners who meet the eligibility criteria. These strategies and tactics are assessed and adjusted in real time by monitoring incoming application and participation data through the CORD tool, which works together with the intake system.

The California Mortgage Relief Program has ensured all messaging and materials distributed through the Program are culturally competent and have been vetted through focus group testing and gathering stakeholder feedback. These efforts help the program engage with harder-to-reach communities. The Program's website, materials, and paid and social media content are all in the Program's six primary languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Tagalog. In addition, the Program has worked with ethnic media outlets, particularly in the Hispanic, African American, and AAPI communities to spread the word about the Program.

In September, the program announced it had contributed nearly 40% of all program funds, over \$200 million dollars, toward repairing and preserving the home equity of Latino households. Helping so many Latino homeowners save their family homes is one of the California Mortgage Relief Program's proudest accomplishments.

ENSURING ASSISTANCE REACHES UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES CONTINUED

Of note, the program has continued to target households whose income is less than or equal to 100% of their Area Median Income even after the program expanded eligibility requirements to allow those with incomes at or below 150% of their AMI to apply. To date, the average level of AMI of approved applicants is 68%. Of the total awarded funds so far, 49% has been distributed to socially disadvantaged households.

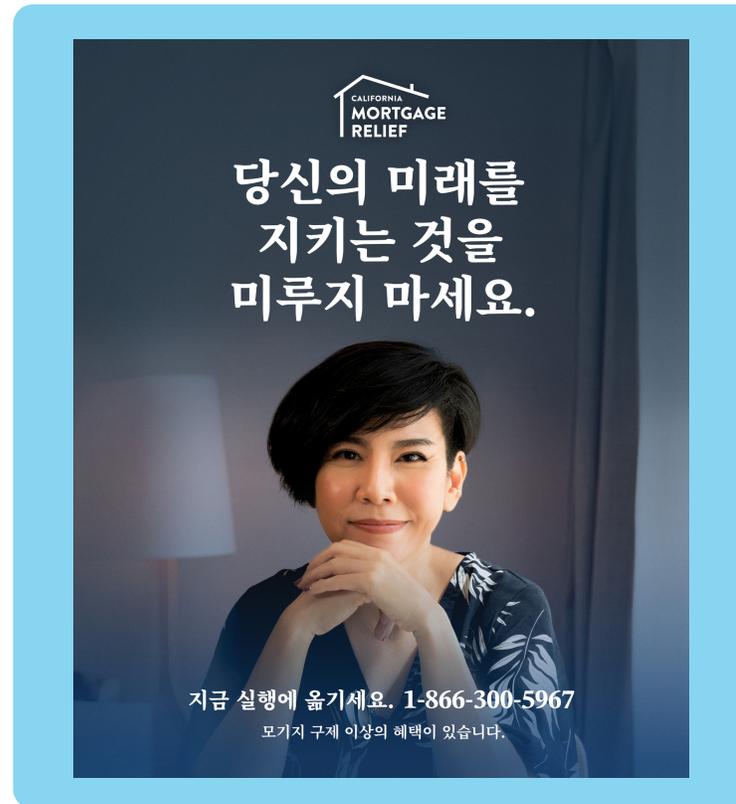
We also focused our outreach efforts on homeowners with partial claims or loan deferrals. The California Mortgage Relief Program partnered with mortgage servicers to directly communicate with their customers who hold partial claims or loan deferrals. This proved highly effective in reaching those who would most benefit from assistance.



Homeowners that received grants are from socially disadvantaged communities



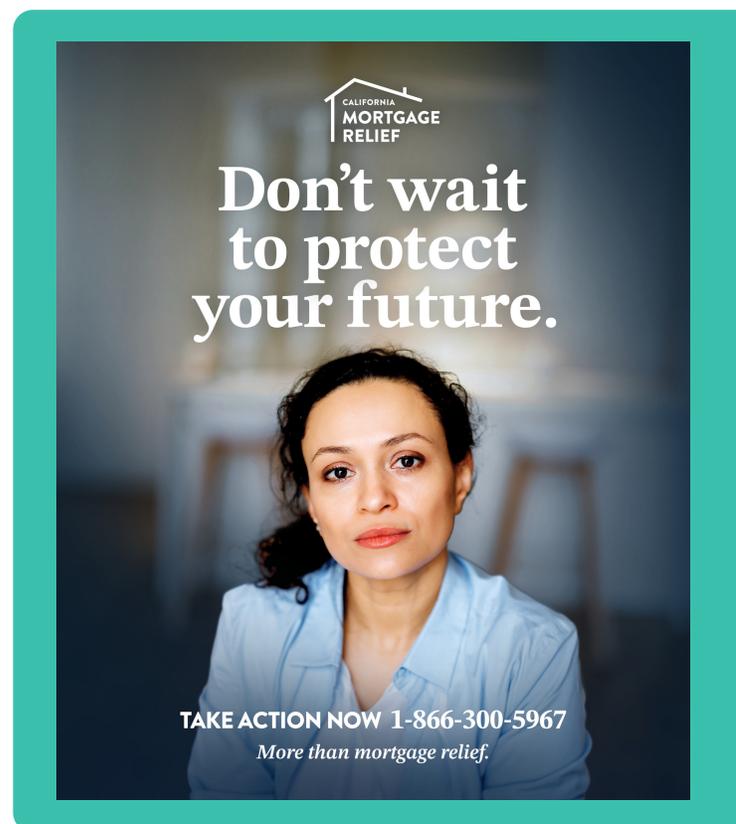
AMI for all households that received grants (below median income)



CALIFORNIA MORTGAGE RELIEF

당신의 미래를 지키는 것을 미루지 마세요.

지금 실행에 옮기세요. 1-866-300-5967
모기지 구제 이상의 혜택이 있습니다.



CALIFORNIA MORTGAGE RELIEF

Don't wait to protect your future.

TAKE ACTION NOW 1-866-300-5967
More than mortgage relief.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

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