



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 17, 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE REGULATORS REGARDING COVID-19

In order to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus, governments at all levels have taken actions and imposed restrictions that may impact mortgage applicants, existing mortgage borrowers, and the mortgage industry itself.

If you've applied for a mortgage, please be aware that there may be delays in the process. Some lenders may be operating with reduced staff, or may have directed staff to work from home. There may be delays in obtaining appraisals, inspections, or other services essential to processing your loan application. Stay in communication with your lender, but keep in mind that your lender is most likely doing its best to approve your application as quickly as possible. Please be patient. If you are buying a home and are concerned about missing the closing date specified in your contract, let your lender know, and contact your real estate agent as well. Remember that your seller may be just as concerned about selling the home as you are about buying it, and may agree to extend the contract.

If you are a mortgage borrower whose income has been reduced due to actions taken in response to COVID-19, and you are concerned about your ability to make timely payments, contact your mortgage servicer as soon as possible. While many people find this difficult, keep in mind that your servicer can't offer help without communication. Assistance, such as forbearance plans which could allow you to postpone payments, may be available. The Federal Housing Administration and the Federal Housing Finance Agency have reminded servicers that assistance should be made available whenever possible. (Consumers should be aware that state regulators generally are not authorized to require your lender or servicer to offer specific relief, and should not interpret this information as an order.)

The American Association of Residential Mortgage Regulators (AARMR) encourages mortgage lenders and servicers to take steps, whenever feasible, to mitigate the impact to consumers of actions taken in response to COVID-19. For lenders, this might include steps such as waiving rate lock extension fees if an application is delayed for reasons beyond an applicant's control, or refraining from closing an application due to incompleteness if an applicant is having difficulty gathering required documents. For servicers, this might include waiving certain late charges (if permitted), offering forbearance plans or other deferment options, and generally ensuring that all staff are aware of available options and are proactive in assisting borrowers with potential delinquent payments. (Consumers should be aware that state regulators generally are not authorized to require your lender or servicer to offer specific relief, and should not interpret these recommendations as an order.)

AARMR encourages member agencies to consider the impact of COVID-19 in their dealings with brokers, lenders, servicers, and mortgage loan originators. Licensees have been particularly concerned about state laws and regulations which would impact the ability of employees to work remotely; AARMR strongly encourages you to offer guidance on this topic if you have not already done so. Member agencies may wish to consider offering licensees, when reasonable, extended deadlines for responses to agency requests, whether for licensing, examination, or other purposes. Travel restrictions are likely to mean that more examinations will be conducted remotely; licensees may be dealing with an increase in requests to submit documents to regulators. An increase in remote work by a licensee's staff could impact a licensee's ability to retrieve documents, as well as the scheduling of meetings and conference calls. AARMR encourages member agencies to work cooperatively with licensees whenever possible.

Applicants for licensure should be aware that, while AARMR's member agencies are taking steps to ensure that operations continue with as little interruption as possible, application turnaround times at some agencies could be impacted, and agencies ask for your understanding.

Consumers or licensed mortgage brokers, lenders, or servicers who wish to contact their state mortgage regulators may find links to AARMR member agencies' websites [here](#).