

Policy-related | Fiscal | Performance | Q&A | Other

Number: WIN - 0038

Date: April 18, 2013

Expiration Date: N/A

TO: Workforce Development System Partners

FROM: Amy L. Smith, Director of Policy, Program Administration & Technical Assistance

SUBJECT: Mortgage Relief for Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants and Unemployed Workers

Purpose:

This notice is intended to alert the WorkSource System of a national partnership among the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Treasury and Labor (DOL) to expand awareness of mortgage relief for UI claimants and unemployed workers, and to lay out the actions required to implement the partnership.

Action Required:

Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) and their contractors, as well as Employment Security Regional Directors, should distribute this notice broadly throughout the system to ensure that WorkSource System staff are aware of and share information about these mortgage relief programs that could help UI claimants and unemployed workers avoid losing their homes.

Content:

The (FHA) and the Making Home Affordable (MHA) programs are helping families modify their mortgages and avoid foreclosure. In addition, two federal programs – FHA's special unemployment forbearance and MHA's Home Affordable Unemployment Program (UP) – allow qualifying homeowners to *reduce or suspend* mortgage payments for 12 months or more. Lastly, the Administration's Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) provides aid for homeowners in states hit hardest by the economic crisis. Although Washington is not a "Hardest Hit" state, Oregon is.

Many unemployed individuals have never heard of these programs or do not know they are eligible for relief. WDCs are encouraged to identify opportunities to promote these programs to those who may benefit. Suggested strategies to promote awareness of these important programs through the workforce system are listed below. Further details and relevant Web links to all three programs are found in the "Frequently Asked Questions" section of this notice.

Below are suggested strategies to promote awareness of these important programs through the workforce system:

- Web sites: Provide pop-ups or links to information on MHA programs, www.MakingHomeAffordable.gov, and **888-995-HOPE (4673)** from workforce system Websites;
- Provide recorded messages with information referring homeowners to **888-995-HOPE (4673)**;
- Mailings: Send targeted mailings regarding mortgage forbearance options from state workforce agencies;
- WorkSource Centers and affiliates:
 - Ask the homeownership status of UI claimants and other customers, and connect eligible homeowners with HUD-approved housing experts at **888-995-HOPE (4673)**;
 - Display posters on MHA's UP in prominent places;
 - Distribute brochures and fact sheets on MHA's UP to customers and UI claimants;
 - Reorder brochures and posters as needed at no cost through www.MHASTorefront.com; and
 - Facilitate WorkSource participation in MHA/HOPE Now events that include participation from HUD and Treasury.

NOTE: The Department of Treasury will be mailing a toolkit of resources to WorkSource Centers in April.

Resources:

There are several resources currently available to assist the workforce development system in providing information on mortgage relief programs for unemployed jobseekers and others whom may benefit. These include:

- DOL's [CareerOneStop Reemployment Portal](#) includes information on MHA programs, as well as information on other housing resources.
- [Training and Employment Notice 12-09](#) describes the partnership between DOL and the HOPE NOW alliance, including telephone hotline and Web site information;
- [Information on MHA and its UP programs:](#)
 - [Making Home Affordable](#)
 - [HOPE Hotline](#)
 - [MHA Unemployment Resources](#)
 - [Webinar Training on MHA's UP](#)
 - [Hardest Hit Fund](#)
 - [FHA Loss Mitigation Services - HUD](#)
 - [FHA's "Save Your Home, Tips to Avoid Foreclosure" Brochure](#)
- [Webinar on Resources for Unemployed Homeowners](#). WDC and WorkSource staff are invited – and strongly encouraged to attend – a webinar specifically designed to support this joint effort. This webinar will be presented jointly by DOL, Treasury and HUD, and will cover the related mortgage-assistance programs; informational Web sites; downloadable fact sheets, presentations, “hold” messages, web banners, and more. Join the webinar to find out more about what resources are available and how to access them. The first of these webinars is scheduled for Thursday, April 25 from 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. ET. Register today at www.HMPadmin.com/DOL.

References:

- [TEN 30-12](#) - Mortgage Relief for Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants and Unemployed Workers at American Job Centers (AJCs)
- [Letter to Governors on Foreclosure Prevention Efforts](#)

Website:

<http://wpc.wa.gov/adm/policy>

Direct Inquiries To:

Workforce & Career Development Division

WCDDpolicy@esd.wa.gov

(360) 725-9500

Attachments:

Attachment A – Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions – Attachment A

Question: What is the Making Home Affordable program?

Answer: The Making Home Affordable program is a critical part of the Obama Administration's broad strategy to help homeowners obtain mortgage relief and avoid foreclosure. Eligible borrowers can lower their monthly mortgage payments and get into more stable loans at today's low rates. It also provides options to help unemployed homeowners temporarily reduce or suspend mortgage payments for at least 12 months. And for those homeowners for whom ownership is no longer affordable or desirable, the program can provide a way out while avoiding the burden of foreclosure.

Question: What is the Homeowner's HOPE Hotline?

Answer: The Homeowner's HOPE Hotline at 888-995-HOPE (4673) is a free, comprehensive assistance and housing counseling service that helps homeowners obtain the information and advice they need to work toward a mortgage relief solution. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and in over 160 languages.

Question: What is Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP)?

Answer: HAMP is an MHA program that may lower monthly mortgage payments in order to make them more affordable and sustainable for the long-term. The program is available to homeowners who struggling to make their mortgage payments. Additional details are available at <http://www.makinghomeaffordable.gov/programs/lower-payments/Pages/hamp.aspx>.

Question: What is Home Affordable Unemployment Program (UP)?

Answer: UP is an MHA program that provides assistance to unemployed homeowners. Homeowners qualified for UP benefit from a temporary reduction in, or suspension of, their monthly mortgage payments for at least 12 months.

Question: Who is eligible for Home Affordable Unemployment Program (UP)?

Answer: Homeowners are eligible to apply if they qualify for unemployment benefits; obtained their mortgage on or before January 1, 2009; and owe no more than \$729,750 on their homes. Additional information is available at <http://www.makinghomeaffordable.gov/programs/unemployed-help/Pages/up.aspx>.

Question: Which mortgage servicers offer Home Affordable Unemployment Program (UP)?

Answer: There are more than 100 HAMP-participating servicers that offer UP to eligible unemployed homeowners. Homeowners may determine whether their mortgage company is participating in UP by visiting <http://www.makinghomeaffordable.gov/get-started/contact-mortgage> or by calling 888-995-HOPE (4673).

Question: What is the FHA's Loss Mitigation Program?

Answer: FHA's loss mitigation program can assist eligible borrowers with FHA-insured loans obtain mortgage relief and avoid foreclosure. Home retention options allow FHA borrowers to resolve their delinquency. FHA also provides help for unemployed FHA borrowers who can take advantage of forbearance to reduce mortgage payments for up to 12 months while they seek employment. Where homeownership is no longer affordable, FHA offers homeownership disposition programs as alternatives to foreclosure. Additional information is available at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/sfh/nsc/lossmit.

Question: Who can take advantage of FHA's Loss Mitigation Program?

Answer: Only FHA borrowers are eligible for FHA loss mitigation including forbearance. FHA borrowers who are having trouble making their mortgage payment should contact their servicers. For further information, FHA borrowers may call HUD's National Servicing Center at 877-622-8525. Please refer to FHA's Save Your Home brochure.
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=fha_saveyourhome.pdf.

Question: What is the Hardest Hit Fund (HHF)?

Answer: The Administration established the Hardest Hit Fund in February 2010 to provide targeted mortgage assistance to families in states hit hard by the economic and housing downturn. The Hardest Hit Fund is managed by 19 state housing finance agencies with funding from Treasury. The following housing finance agencies administer HHF funds: Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington, DC. For more information about HHF, visit <http://www.treasury.gov/initiatives/financial-stability/TARP-Programs/housing/hhf/Pages/default.aspx>.

Question: How can the Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) help the unemployed?

Answer: The Hardest Hit Fund helps responsible homeowners who have lost their jobs by paying their mortgage while they search for new employment. It also assists financially distressed homeowners who have incurred late payments and associated arrearages by reinstating their mortgages and/or permanently modifying them in order to prevent foreclosure. Each participating state offers its own locally tailored version of these programs; please visit your state's Hardest Hit Fund Web site in order to learn more about how to access benefits. The following Treasury HHF page contains links to all 19 programs: <http://www.treasury.gov/initiatives/financial-stability/TARP-Programs/housing/Pages/Program-Documents.aspx>.