



CALIFORNIA CORONAVIRUS WEEKLY RECAP

A weekly digest to keep you up to speed on the California coronavirus outbreak.

December 9, 2020

Welcome to the 39th issue of the California Coronavirus Weekly Recap newsletter. We hope you all had a safe and happy Thanksgiving. Before we get started with this week's news, we want to remind you that **PUA benefit recipients receiving more than the \$167 minimum weekly benefit amount are being asked by the EDD to provide income verification documents.** The income verification deadline provided by the EDD on each PUA benefit recipient's notice (either through email or paper) is 21 days from the date of each recipient's own notice. Members receiving income verification requests from the EDD have reported having submission deadlines ranging from December 6th through the 19th. PUA benefit recipients should watch out for income verification requests from the EDD because failure to timely provide the required documentation may result in a decrease in their weekly benefit amount or they may have to repay what they were not entitled to receive. [See our Q&A on income verification here.](#)

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The Economy & Your Finances: Job growth slows

[Job growth slowed sharply](#) in November as the mounting surge of coronavirus cases put more pressure on businesses like restaurants and retailers. Employers added only [245,000 jobs](#) in November, far below the 425,000 predicted by Wells Fargo. While the national unemployment rate has continued to shrink — down to 6.7 percent in November from 6.9 percent in October — payroll employment remains 9.8 million below pre-pandemic levels.

In California, [unemployment claims fell](#) to their lowest levels since March, but that trend may reverse with tech companies like PayPal revealing planned job cuts. Meanwhile, Bank of America estimated on Monday that as much as [\\$2 billion](#) of the \$110 billion California has paid in unemployment benefits since the start of the pandemic could be fraudulent. Bank of America has identified 640,000 accounts with suspicious activity as worthy of investigation.

On Sunday, lawmakers got [closer to a deal](#) on a relief bill that would provide around \$300 in extra federal weekly unemployment and reauthorize the Paycheck Protection Program to allow borrowers to take out a second forgivable loan, but the current proposal would not provide for additional \$1,200 stimulus checks. Congress will vote this week on a [one-week stopgap funding bill](#) to give themselves more time to reach a final agreement on a COVID relief package. Democratic leaders are now moving forward with a \$908-billion proposal, a significant reduction from earlier proposals for a package of over \$2 trillion. However yesterday, Senator Majority Leader Mitch McConnell [refused to endorse](#) the bipartisan proposal. Unless another package is passed, [several relief measures will stop at the end of 2020](#), including Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA).

Sources: NPR, NBC News, The Mercury News, Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Reuters, CNBC, Fox Business

The Market & Industry: Pandemic changed buyer preferences

C.A.R.'s [2020 Annual Housing Market Survey](#) revealed the pandemic has changed homebuyers' housing choices. In 2020, more buyers have been looking for bigger properties or properties with more rooms, buyers have been less concerned about commute to the office, and more buyers are purchasing vacation and second homes. The housing market has also become more competitive, with more homes receiving multiple offers — plus over a third of properties sold for above asking price, compared to a quarter in 2019. [Read more about the Annual Market Survey results here.](#)

With [home prices still elevated](#) by about 20 percent across the state and 25 percent in the Central Coast, it remains a seller's market. C.A.R. data confirms that homeowners with under five years in the home who sold in 2020 averaged a 16.5 percent profit on their sale; homeowners with over five years in the home averaged a 100 percent profit.

At the same time, more than [3.3 million homeowners](#) nationwide will owe delinquent payments on their mortgages when forbearance ends — the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) extended its moratorium on Fannie Mae- and Freddie Mac-backed mortgages through January 31, 2021. Redfin Chief Economist Daryl Fairweather anticipates that after forbearance ends, the ensuing foreclosed properties will be swept up by first-time buyers and investors, thus not significantly impacting the housing market.

State lawmakers are exploring expanding California's partial [eviction moratorium](#), which is set to expire at the end of January, through 2021. Advocates for rental property owners and developers are contending for a shorter extension of the moratorium.

Total [iBuyer purchases dropped 83 percent](#) year over year in Q3, according to a report from Zillow, although the total number of purchases did increase from Q2. The report indicates offers from iBuyers are weakening compared to full market value.

Around the State: New regional stay-at-home order announced

Last Thursday, Governor Newsom announced a [new regional stay-at-home order](#) on top of the color-coded tier system that makes up the state's [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#). When one of the state's five regions — Northern California, Bay Area, Greater Sacramento, San Joaquin Valley and Southern California — falls below the threshold of 15 percent ICU bed availability, that region will be subject to the new order. As of yesterday at 10 p.m., the regional stay-at-home order is in effect in Southern California and the San Joaquin Valley, impacting [33 million Californians](#). [Five Bay Area counties](#) have also ordered severe shelter-in-place directives mimicking Governor Newsom's order, in anticipation of reaching the 15 percent ICU capacity threshold soon.

Under the new stay-at-home order, critical infrastructure (**including real estate**) will remain open. Bars, wineries, personal service businesses like hair and nail salons will close, and retail establishments will be reduced to 20 percent capacity. Schools with waivers will be allowed to stay open, and restaurants will be allowed to continue take-out and delivery service only. In addition, all non-essential travel is prohibited statewide.

REALTORS® must continue to comply with state and local health ordinances. The Enforcement Division of the Department of Real Estate has made clear that complaints regarding non-compliance with the [showing protocols](#) have been and will continue to be investigated.

The COVID situation in California is dire, with [cases, hospitalizations and intensive care unit admissions](#) steadily increasing. [Nearly one in 10](#) coronavirus tests are coming back positive — the state's highest positivity rate yet. These numbers are [expected to worsen](#) in the next few weeks, Health officials are concerned about [staffing shortages](#) at California hospitals, many of which are

rapidly approaching ICU capacity. As of yesterday at 10 p.m., cases in California numbered 1,421,089 and deaths had reached 20,273.

Sources: California Department of Public Health, Official California State Government Website, KTLA, The San Francisco Chronicle, SFGate, Los Angeles Times

Health Check-Up: U.K. starts vaccinations

Yesterday, healthcare providers in the United Kingdom began administering the first doses of the [Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine](#). Health officials expect to have 4 million doses available by the end of December. The U.K. was the first Western nation to approve a COVID-19 vaccine.

The Food and Drug Administration concluded in a detailed analysis that the first Covid-19 vaccine [being considered for U.S. distribution](#) “met the prescribed success criteria” in a clinical study, paving the way for the agency to green-light distribution as early as this weekend.

If you have made travel plans you now need to cancel, the *Los Angeles Times* has a guide on [modifying and canceling reservations](#) for short-term rentals, hotels, campsites and airlines.

Sources: CNN, Los Angeles Times, The Wall Street Journal



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