



Actions to take in a Financial Crisis

Wyoming Housing Network's mission is to help people meet their housing goals. Right now, our communities are in a time of crisis. We offer Foreclosure Prevention Services and Financial Capabilities Counselling free. We are here to help. We ask during this time, if possible, please complete steps one thru three before contacting us so that we can most effectively help you with your situation.

Four Steps to take control and have a plan.

1. Create a Budget: Prioritizing needs that must be met first.
2. Make a list of all your creditors including their name, contact information, and account number and payment information.
3. Plan to contact different service providers and creditors to see if they have assistance or deferral plans in place. Many will work with you.
4. Research other assistance that might be available in the community to take some of the strain off your finances.

Step One: Create a budget

When your income changes and you have more bills than money having a budget in place becomes critical. Taking care of your basic needs is your top priority. Food, Shelter, Transportation, etc. These should be the first items you budget for.

This might require hard decisions and looking at your budget to see where you can make temporary cuts (such as memberships, streaming services, eating out) etc. It will also be critical in deciding the best course of action for any relief money that you might receive from the Coronavirus Relief Legislation.

Just because relief is coming and drastic measures, such as eviction and foreclosure are on hold, does not mean that you can stop paying your bills.

This is a good article to help you plan:

- Consumer Finance:
 - <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/protect-yourself-financially-from-impact-of-coronavirus/>

Crisis Budget	
Food	You and your family must eat. In our resource section there is a statewide list of food pantries. Also, do an internet search for ways to stretch a food budget, find coupons, and plan inexpensive meals.
Shelter	There is a federal hold on evictions in public housing and foreclosures for at least 60 days. However, this money will come due. If you can make these payments, they should still be a priority You cannot just stop making our mortgage or rent payment. Work with your landlord or mortgage company. See step two for a page to get you started.
Transportation	Car payment may be deferrable depending on who your loan is through. Contact your lender directly.
Phone	Communication is key for job interviews etc. Can you lower your plan costs by changing plans? Call your service provider directly to see if they are deferring payments etc.
Medications	Prescriptions and other health supplies are essential. Do not sacrifice your health during this stressful time. Read http://www.news.sanofi.us/What-to-Do-When-You-Cant-Afford-Your-Chronic-Disease-Medication or https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-to-do-when-you-cant-afford-your-medication-1942844
Insurance	Life still happens, accidents etc. Do not let your insurance lapse. Call your provider for assistance or possibly less coverage for the short term to keep yourself protected.
Utilities	The Wyoming Public Service Commission has ordered utilities companies to Not Shut off Service during the COVID-19 Crisis. Your utilities cannot be shut off. However, contacting your provider in advance will give you more opportunities to take advantage of assistance they may have.
Clothing	If you have clothing to wear and can make do for a few months this should be an expense that can be moved to a secondary priority or put on hold all together.
Estimate Bills	If your bills vary month to month. You can look at the last few months of payments and use an average if you need to.
Other bills	
<p>If you cannot pay all your bills prioritize by essential services. One technique is a rotation of paying each one as additional funds allow and making your way down the list with a single payment. This is after prioritizing essential needs and consequences of defaulting. Another is to divide any additional income by the number of bills and pay that amount to each. Here are a couple resources for processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dave Ramsey Article: https://www.daveramsey.com/blog/what-to-do-when-you-cant-pay-your-bills • CPFB - https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/behind-bills-three-steps-help-you-make-tough-choices-tight-moments/ <p>Personal and Credit Card Loans should not take precedence over shelter and food. The Fair Credit Collection Practices Act protects you from harassment or unethical debt collection practices. You cannot be threatened, subjected to violence or obscene language, they cannot contact you outside of the hours of 8 am and 9 pm, they cannot misrepresent who they are and they cannot contact your work if told verbally or in writing that is not allowed. For more information On Fair Credit Collection visit the FTC HERE.</p> <p>BEWARE OF SCAMS: Predatory lenders and Scammers will try to take advantage of this time of crisis. Always verify information and double check credibility of credit offers or bailout offers you get. The Federal Trade Commission has tips to protect yourself from possible coronavirus-related scams. The FTC and the Food and Drug Administration have also cautioned consumers to be on the look-out for sellers of unapproved and misbranded products, claiming they can treat or prevent coronavirus.</p> <p>Learn more about how to prevent, recognize, and report fraud and scams.</p>	
<p>Be careful of taking on more to credit to solve your problems. High interest loans, payday loans, other options may compound your problems long-term. https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/payday-loans/ Please follow our steps and work with creditors before taking high interest or payday loans.</p>	

Emergency Budget

Income (Label the column with the month or week)							
Paycheck							
Unemployment							
Savings Withdrawal							
Other							
Total Income							
High Priority Budget Items							
Food							
Shelter (Mortgage or Rent)							
Transportation							
Phone							
Medications							
Utilities							
Insurance							
Total							
Remaining (Income Minus Total)							
*If remaining balance is negative reach out to creditors, landlord and check 211.org resource listed in additional resources section for help in these areas. Plan several months or weeks out so that you now if you need to save from previous columns to pay upcoming bills.							
Other expenses: (Label the column with the month or week)							
Clothing							
Total							
Balance (Remaining funds minus other expense total)							
*If balance is negative go back and create a plan month by month to pay what you can when you can.							



Step 2: Create a list of all creditors and their contact information.

You will need this in order to effectively take advantage of relief programs and negotiate with lenders.

DO SOMETHING!!! Call your financial institutions to see how they can help.

HOMEOWNERS CANNOT JUST STOP PAYING THEIR MORTGAGE!! There are many types of Mortgage Loan products and agreements out there. Each one has specific requirements. You need to proactively work with your lender if you are going to miss payments. As of right now Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are ordering lenders to offer homeowners flexibility. The CARES act has requirements for 6 and potentially up to 12-month forbearance depending on the situation. It is important to understand that those payments do not just go away. The forbearance means that you do not make payments and will not be charged fees or penalties for those payments for a specific period of time. **This will not automatically happen because you miss payments. You must talk with your loan servicer.** If you are working with your lender there are other loss mitigation measures that can happen (such as a loan modification etc.) at the end of the forbearance to keep you in your home. These options can vary depending on the type of loan you have and the lender you work with. If you are missing payments and do not contact your lender to initiate the forbearance, your payments could come due at one time when the CAREs Act expires, and foreclosure processes may begin. Be aware that the steps and process for foreclosure can be time consuming and labor intensive. Keeping up with your mortgage should be a priority. About 70% of all loans fall under FHA, VA, or the GSEs which are covered in the CARES ACT. The other 30% of conventional mortgages not included in the CARES act will require individual negotiations with mortgage servicers.

RENT: Just because you cannot be evicted does not mean you do not have to pay those rent payments at some point. Work with your landlord. There may be rental assistance programs available in your area. Do your research! Do everything you can to continue to make mortgage and rent payments. **You need to contact your servicer. Reach out before you have missed a payment.**

Specific Examples of Lenders with programs (this is not exhaustive just the ones our clients have worked with)

Ally Bank- You can call or go online. There is relief for Ally's auto loan and home loan customers in the form of payment deferrals for up to 120 day.

Bank of America- Aiding qualifying consumers and small business clients facing hardships, including forbearance with certain fees. The CEO has agreed to donated \$100 million to support communities impacted by the outbreak.

Chase- recommending that customers reach out to the bank if they need assistance as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

Fifth Third Bank- There are fee waiver programs. They ensure consumers and small business owners with deposit accounts won't be charged feed for up to 90 days. Foreclosure actions on residential properties and repossessions of vehicles will also cease for the next 60 days.

Wells Fargo- People can call 1-800-869-3557 if they need financial assistance and want to discuss options.

Chrysler Financial and Toyota Finance- Offering deferral options on auto loan.

First Interstate Bank has information on their home page.

WCDA - Each insurer has their own guidelines so the best thing our borrowers can do is contact WCDA Servicing Department to discuss available options. We encourage borrowers to check WCDA's website, Facebook, and Twitter for any updates during this very unprecedented time. **Email is WCDACOV19@wyomingcda.com request for forbearance should be sent to this address. Please make sure to list property address or loan number in the email to us.**



Step 3: Reach out to Creditors to see if they have assistance or deferment plans you can take advantage of to reduce the pressure and stress of the situation.

1. Be prepared to explain your specific hardship.
 - a. For example, layoff due to slow economy caused by COVID-19 Shutdown.
2. Let them know you have done a budget but need their assistance. Ask specifically for what kind of help they may be able to offer.
 - a. For example: Some auto lenders are deferring payments for a few months, adding those payments to the end of the loan. You still must pay them but not right now. The length of your loan is extended.
3. Be patient. We have found wait times and response times are longer due to high demands.
4. Be kind. These are unique times, and everyone is under additional stress. A little kindness goes a long way to making a conversation more tolerable and productive.
5. Do not commit to a payment plan you are not sure you can meet. You can always thank the lender for their information and help and let them know you will be in contact as you continue to work on things.

Our services:

Our foreclosure counselor can help you should you fall behind in mortgage payments. If possible, please complete steps one thru three before you call us for assistance so we can better meet your needs.

Foreclosure Prevention Contact:

foreclosurehelp@whninc.org

307.233.8511

877.549.1402

At the time this was created many lenders do not have details for what is happening next. We will continue to update our website, Facebook page (follow us here <https://www.facebook.com/whninc/>) with information.



Step 4: Research additional sources for relief and aid. Here is a quick list of resources we have put together. This list is not exhaustive so check these links regularly.

Wyoming 211	Statewide source for all kinds of resources and referrals for services food/shelter/transportation. This is a great place to start looking for relief and assistance around the state.	https://wy211.communityos.org/covid19-faqs
Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies	List of statewide local Pantries	http://wyomingfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/Partnering-Agencies-List-2019.pdf
WY Workforce Main Page	Resources for Unemployment and other upcoming aid.	http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/
WY Governors Response Page	Links to resources in the state.	https://governor.wyo.gov/
USDA Rural Development COVID-19	Available Resources	www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus
WY Department of Health	COVID-19 Response site	https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus/
WCDA	Wyoming Community Development Authority. Main Page has COVID related updates.	https://www.wyomingcda.com/
HUD	Communications, guidelines, and resources	https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus
NCSHA	Summary of Federal Coronavirus Relief Legislation and what is included.	Relief Legislation
United Way	Not all communities have this, and the funds are sometimes restricted to the counties they serve.	https://www.unitedway.org/find-your-united-way/#
Ready.gov	Disaster Preparedness related to the Pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.ready.gov/pandemic
HOPE Inside Disaster	Help resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.hopeinsidecovid19.org/recovery#scroll-Get-Connected
WY Housing Network	This is our info!	info@whninc.org www.whninc.org 307.472.5843 or 877.549.1402 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/whninc/
Consumer Action	Resources for consumers sorted by category of need.	https://www.consumer-action.org/alerts/articles/resources-for-consumers-impacted-by-the-covid-19-outbreak

We hope that these resources will help you weather the crisis you are facing. We want you to know that you are not in this alone. Wyoming Housing Network is committed to providing resources and education to help you during this time. Visit www.whninc.org to learn more about our services.