

CALIFORNIA CORONAVIRUS WEEKLY RECAP

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

December 23, 2020

Welcome to the 41st issue of the California Coronavirus Weekly Recap newsletter. We wish you and yours a safe and happy holiday season. Before we get started with this week's news, we want to remind you that C.A.R. offices in Los Angeles and Sacramento will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24-25 and Dec. 31 - Jan. 1, in observance of the Christmas and New Year's holiday. The Legal Hotline also will be closed during this time.

Both offices will resume their regular business hours Monday, Jan. 4, at 8:30 a.m., and the Legal Hotline will reopen at 9 a.m.

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The Economy & Your Finances: New \$900 billion relief package passes Congress, but President Trump may not sign

On Monday, Congress passed a new \$900 billion relief bill into law. Yesterday evening, President Trump stated [his opposition](#) to the bill and indicated he might not sign it. If passed, the bill will, among other provisions:

- Provide an **additional \$300 a week in federal unemployment benefits** for individuals receiving PUA or traditional unemployment compensation for 11 weeks, beginning December 27, 2020, and ending March 13, 2021, in California.
- Provide a **one-time direct payment of \$600 for individuals making up to \$75,000** and \$1,200 for couples making up to \$150,000, as well as an extra \$600 per eligible child dependent under age 17.
- Allow certain eligible businesses to receive a **second PPP loan of up to \$2 million**. To qualify for a “PPP second draw,” businesses, independent contractors and other self-employed persons must have 300 or fewer employees, have used or will use the full amount of their first PPP loan, and be able to demonstrate at least a 25 percent reduction in gross receipts in any quarter of 2020 compared to the same quarter in 2019.
- Create a **simplified forgiveness process for PPP loans up to \$150,000**.
- Provide **\$25 billion to states and local governments for rental assistance** and allows landlords to apply for the funds directly.

California’s economic resurgence is [losing momentum](#), with 327,600 Californians dropping out of the workforce altogether in November. Employers added 57,100 jobs in November, a dramatic decrease from the 145,600 added in October. California’s unemployment rate of 8.2 percent still exceeds the national average of 6.7 percent. Meanwhile, the [backlog](#) of California’s unemployment claims has risen in the past few weeks.

The Market & Industry: Housing market ends year on a strong note

The California housing market is closing out the year the [strongest it's been in 2020](#). In November, single-family home sales [crossed the 500,000 benchmark](#) for the first time since 2009. And with pending sales above 2019 levels by double digits in November, December is likely to be a strong month as well. Buyer demand remains unseasonably strong, although in the past week the market has finally started cooling for the holidays.

Mortgage rates fell to another [record low](#) last week, the 15th record low of the year. Mortgage applications last week were up 26 percent from a year prior, and [refinance demand](#) was up 105 percent.

New research shows that [fewer investors have been flipping homes](#) during the pandemic. In California, the share of investor buyers was the [lowest since 2001](#). But for those who have successfully flipped homes this year, profits have risen — the gross profit on a typical home flip reached its highest amount since at least 2000.

According to a survey from Homes.com, [45 percent](#) of consumers would move if given the chance to work remotely on a permanent basis. Twenty-three percent of real estate professionals surveyed said they were fielding requests for housing near public transportation or highways. And of consumers who moved in the past 12 months, one out of three said they did not intend to do so before the start of the pandemic.

Sources: C.A.R. Research & Economics, C.A.R., CNN, CNBC, REALTOR® Magazine, Homes.com

Around the State: California is experiencing its deadliest surge yet

We are in the [deadliest stretch](#) of the pandemic for Californians thus far. More than 1,500 people lost their lives to COVID-19 last week, representing 7 percent of all deaths statewide since the start of the pandemic. The situation has become so dire that Governor Newsom has activated California's "[mass fatality](#)" program and ordered thousands of extra body bags.

ICU capacity dropped to [0 percent](#) in Southern California and the San Joaquin Valley last week, and [stay-at-home orders](#) are likely to be extended in both regions. The statewide average hovers at [1.4 percent](#). Los Angeles County, the epicenter of California's outbreak, surpassed [600,000 cases](#) only eight days after reaching 500,000, and the share of tests coming back positive has averaged 16 percent. Some hospitals are stretched so thin, they are preparing for the possibility of having to [ration care](#) — which means patients deemed less likely to survive would not receive the same standard of care. [Temporary field hospitals](#) are opening across the state in an effort to accommodate the overflow of non-ICU patients. As of 9:01 a.m. this morning, cases in California numbered 1,964,400 and deaths had reached 23,305.

Health officials cite [Thanksgiving holiday travel](#) as one of the reasons cases are surging in spite of California's new stay-at-home order. They are [pleading](#) with Californians to cancel any in-person gatherings they have scheduled for Christmas and New Years to avoid further hospital inundation.

Source: KTLA, NBC News, Los Angeles Times, Official California State Government Website, NPR, The Press Democrat, ABC 7 News

Health Check-Up: Moderna vaccine rollout begins

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the [Moderna vaccine](#) for emergency use last week, and the first shipments have rolled out for distribution. The Moderna vaccine could pose

fewer challenges for widespread distribution than Pfizer's vaccine, as it does not require being stored at ultra-cold temperatures the way the Pfizer vaccine does.

A new, [more contagious COVID strain](#) is spreading through the United Kingdom. The new strain is thought to be up to 70 percent more transmissible than the original strain, though there's no evidence it causes a higher death rate. Countries around the globe have [shut their borders](#) to the U.K. in response, causing travel delays and raising the possibility of food shortages.

A growing number of children in California are catching the rare and potentially deadly disease [MIS-C](#), a multisystem inflammatory syndrome that affects children exposed to the coronavirus. Like the coronavirus, MIS-C has disproportionately affected Black and Latinx children. Experts have linked the rise in MIS-C cases directly to the surge in coronavirus cases, which has California hospitals bracing for additional MIS-C patients in the coming weeks.

Sources: The Hill, CNBC, Reuters, Los Angeles Times



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