

5 Options When You've Fallen Behind on the House Payment

What you can still do, and why the first few months matter most

Falling behind happens to good people: a job change, a medical bill, a divorce, a loss in the family. The months right after the first missed payment are when you have the most choices and the lowest costs. Here are the five paths most homeowners end up taking.

1 Catch up with a repayment plan

If the hardship was short, ask the company that services your loan for a repayment plan: the missed amount spread over several months on top of your regular payment. Ask for the terms in writing.

2 Pause or reduce payments for a while

Many loans allow a forbearance: lower or paused payments for a few months while you get back on your feet. Ask how the skipped amount gets paid back before you agree.

3 Change the loan itself

A loan modification changes the terms (rate, length, or balance) so the payment fits your income. It takes paperwork: income, expenses, and a hardship letter. Send everything they ask for, keep copies, and get the word "complete" in writing.

4 Sell on your own terms

If the payment no longer fits your life, selling while you still have time and equity protects that equity. You can list with an agent, or sell directly as-is if speed and simplicity matter more than top price.

5 Get free, independent advice

A HUD-approved housing counselor can review your situation at no cost and help you talk to your loan servicer: 1-800-569-4287. For legal questions, talk to an attorney.

What Helps Right Now

Simple steps that keep the most doors open

THIS WEEK

- **Open every letter about the loan.** The dates and amounts in them decide which options are still open.
- **Call your loan servicer before they call you.** Ask what options they offer and what they need from you.
- **Write down your real numbers.** Monthly income, monthly bills, how many payments you've missed, and roughly what the house is worth.
- **Keep a log.** Date, who you spoke to, and what they said. Ask for anything important in writing.

THREE THINGS PEOPLE GET WRONG

- **"I'll wait until I can pay it all."** Every month adds late fees and costs, and fewer options. Talking early costs nothing.
- **"Selling means I lose everything."** Selling before things go further is often how owners keep their equity and their credit options.
- **"Someone will fix this for a fee."** Be careful with anyone who asks for money up front to save your home. In California it is illegal to charge upfront fees for help getting a loan modification.

HOW TO PICK A PATH

The hardship is over	A repayment plan or forbearance is usually the simplest route.
Income dropped for good	A loan modification, if the new payment truly fits your budget.
The house no longer fits your life	Selling while you have time and equity.
You're not sure	Talk to a housing counselor, and get a free value on the house so you know where you stand.

Want someone to walk through your options with you?

Call or text (661) 271-6299

We'll go over where you stand and what each choice could look like. Free, private, and no obligation.