



California housing market expected to see modest rebound in 2026

Source: MPA Mag

California's housing market is set for a modest recovery in 2026, according to the CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS (C.A.R.), which forecast a 2 percent rise in single-family home sales and a 3.6 percent increase in the median home price. While affordability will still be tough, C.A.R. said better lending conditions and more available homes could help more buyers enter the market.

C.A.R. expects 274,400 single-family homes to be sold in 2026, up from 269,000 in 2025. The median price was forecast to reach a record \$905,000, after rising to \$873,900 in 2025. Although these increases are smaller than the big jumps seen earlier in the decade, they point to a more stable market.

[READ MORE](#)

Identify, develop and connect women in real estate.

Join C.A.R.'s #IamWomanUP initiative. [CLICK HERE.](#)

Mortgage refi demand spikes 58% as interest rates drop sharply

Source: CNBC

Mortgage rates last week dropped to the lowest level since October of last year in anticipation of the Federal Reserve's quarter point cut in the federal funds rate (that was confirmed on Wednesday). That caused a

massive run on refinances, as consumers seek more savings in an uncertain economy. Applications to refinance a home loan jumped 58 percent last week and were 70 percent higher than the same week one year ago, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association's seasonally adjusted index. The refinance share of mortgage activity increased to 59.8 percent of total applications from 48.8 percent the prior week.

The average contract interest rate for 30-year fixed-rate mortgages with conforming loan balances (of \$806,500 or less) decreased to 6.39 percent from 6.49 percent, with points falling to 0.54 from 0.56, including the origination fee, for loans with a 20 percent down payment. Refinance applications were particularly strong for adjustable-rate mortgages, rising to 12.9 percent of total applications – its highest level since 2008. Applications for a mortgage to purchase a home rose 3 percent for the week and were 20 percent higher than the same week one year ago.

[READ MORE](#)

More consumers using rent payments to boost credit score

Source: CNBC

More renters are reporting their rent payment activity to credit bureaus to improve their credit, a new report finds. The share of renters whose rent payments are reported to credit bureaus rose to 13 percent in 2025, up from 11 percent in 2024, according to a new survey by TransUnion, one of the three major credit bureaus. TransUnion surveyed 2,006 renters in early March.

Sharing rent payment activity has been shown to be beneficial for

participants, especially those who are “credit invisible” or do not have any credit history, experts say. Those who have enrolled typically see their credit scores increase. When rent payments are included in credit reports, consumers see an average growth of 60 points to their credit score, according to a 2021 TransUnion report. Rent reporting services can also help younger adults as they are more likely to have short credit histories and to rent.

[READ MORE](#)

Against the odds, Americans are still spending

Source: CNN

Americans still opened their wallets last month, despite persistent fears about the economy, a lowing labor market and higher tariffs. Spending at U.S. retailers rose 0.6 percent in August, the Commerce Department said Tuesday, unchanged from July’s upwardly revised 0.6 percent.

Last month’s figure came in much better than economists’ expectations of a 0.2 percent increase, according to a poll by data firm FactSet. Retail sales are adjusted for seasonal swings but not inflation. Even though employers have fit the brakes on hiring in recent months, U.S. consumers haven’t cut back their spending meaningfully – and they may continue to spend as long as layoffs don’t surge.

[READ MORE](#)

U.S. homebuilder sentiment dips to lowest level since 2022

Source: Reuters

A gauge of U.S. homebuilder sentiment fell unexpectedly in August, slipping back to its lowest level in more than two-and-a-half years, with more than a third of residential construction firms cutting prices and roughly two-thirds of them offering some form of incentive to lure buyers sidelined by still-high mortgage rates and economic uncertainty.

The National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index fell to 32, matching the lowest reading since December 2022, from 33 in July, the Association said on Monday. Economists polled by Reuters had expected the sentiment score to improve to 34. Buyer foot traffic, though, edged up to its highest level since May, though it remains at a low level. On a regional basis, sentiment among builders improved modestly in the West.

[READ MORE](#)

Credit scores fall for 2nd year in a row as more borrowers miss payments

Source: CNBC

The national average credit score – which had been steadily increasing for over a decade – fell for the second year in a row, according to a new report from FICO, developer of one of the scores most widely used by lenders. The average score is now 715, down from 717 in 2024 and 718 in 2023. FICO scores range between 300 and 850.

High interest rates and higher prices have been a drag on many Americans' financial standing. Consumers, overall, are falling deeper into debt, causing an increase in credit card balances and an increase in missed payments, FICO found. That contributed to the average score decline. The resumption of federal student loan delinquency reporting on consumers' credit was another significant contributing factor to declining scores, according to FICO.

[READ MORE](#)