

Housing Market Indicators

Monthly Update



March 2020

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

NOTE TO READERS: This report is based on data predating the imposition of public health measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, as well as government actions to counter the economic effects of these measures.

National housing market indicators available as of March showed activity in housing markets improved overall. Trends in some of the top indicators for this month include:

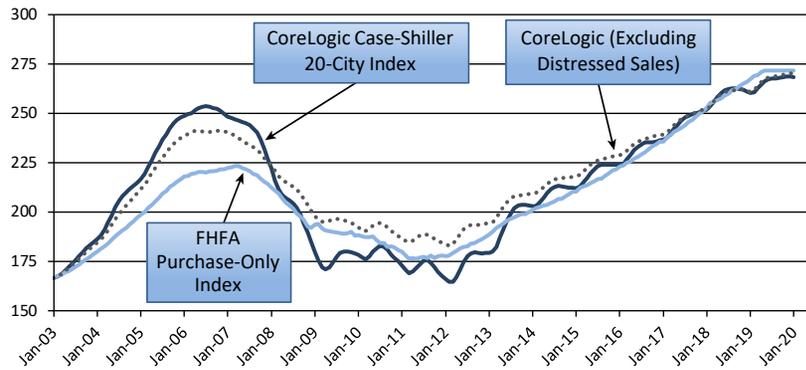
- **Purchases of new homes declined from a near thirteen year high in January.** New single-family home sales dropped 4.4 percent to 765,000 units (SAAR) in February from an upwardly revised pace of 800,000 in January—the highest pace since May 2007. Sales were 14.3 percent higher than one year ago. Purchases were down in the Midwest and West Census regions. Note that monthly data on new home sales tend to be volatile. (Sources: HUD and Census Bureau)
- **Sales of previously owned (existing) homes rose to the highest pace in thirteen years.** The National Association of Realtors® (NAR) reported that February sales of existing homes (including single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums, and cooperatives) were up 6.5 percent to 5.77 million units (SAAR) from a pace of 5.42 million in January and were 7.2 percent higher than a year earlier. Sales were up in all Census regions except the Northeast. Low mortgage rates typically strengthen sales, but the supply of housing is still relatively low.
- **Construction of single-family homes increased to the highest pace since mid-2007.** Single-family housing starts were up 6.7 percent to 1.072 million homes (SAAR) in February from a downwardly revised pace of 1.005 million the previous month. Starts were up in all Census regions except the West and were 35.4 percent higher than a year earlier. Multifamily housing starts (5 or more units in a structure), at 508,000 units (SAAR), fell 17.0 percent from January but were up 44.3 percent from a year earlier. Note that month-to-month changes in the construction of multifamily homes are often volatile. Total housing starts were down 1.5 percent from January but up 39.2 percent year-over-year. (Sources: HUD and Census Bureau)
- **Year-over-year house price increases were fairly steady, with annual gains ranging from 3 to 5 percent.** The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) seasonally adjusted purchase-only house price index for January estimated that home values rose 0.3 percent over the previous month and 5.2 percent over the previous year, down from a 5.4-percent annual gain in December. The FHFA index shows that U.S. home values are 26 percent above their peak, set in April 2007 during the housing bubble, and stand 60 percent above the low point reached in May 2011. Another index tracked in the Monthly Update, the non-seasonally adjusted (NSA) CoreLogic Case-Shiller® 20-City Home Price Index, posted virtually no change (-0.04 percent) in home values in January and year-over-year returns of 3.1 percent, up from an annual gain of 2.8 percent for December. (The FHFA and CoreLogic Case-Shiller® price indices are released with a 2-month lag.)
- **The inventory of existing homes on the market rose, while the supply of new homes fell.** The listed inventory of new homes for sale, at 319,000 units at the end of February, dropped slightly (0.9 percent) from January and was down 6.7 percent year-over-year. That inventory would support 5.0 months of sales at the current sales pace, up from 4.8 months the previous month due to a higher rate of sales in January. Available existing homes for sale, at 1.47 million units in February, were up 5.0 percent from the previous month but down 9.8 percent from one year ago. The listed inventory represents a 3.1-month supply, the same as in January due to a higher level of sales in February; the months' supply was 3.6 months a year earlier. A shortage of homes for sale—especially at the lower end of the market—has been a constraint on purchases for several years.
- **Homeowners' equity increased at a moderate pace in the fourth quarter of 2019.** Homeowners' equity (total property value less mortgage debt outstanding) was up \$51 billion (0.3 percent) in the fourth quarter from a loss of \$7 billion the previous quarter, for a total of more than \$18.7 trillion. The gain for all of 2019 was \$649 billion, an increase of 3.6 percent. Owners' equity reached a peak of \$14.4 trillion during the housing bubble. Home-price growth, the primary driver of gains in equity has been more moderate over the past year. (Source: Federal Reserve)
- **The number of underwater borrowers continued to decline.** As of the fourth quarter of 2019, CoreLogic estimated that the number of underwater borrowers decreased by 96,000 homeowners to 1.9 million, or 3.5 percent of residential properties with a mortgage. One year ago, 2.2 million homeowners (4.2 percent) were reported in negative equity. (Source: CoreLogic)
- **Mortgage rates reached a record low in March.** The 30-year fixed rate mortgage (FRM) reached an average weekly all-time low in March of 3.29 percent the week ending March 5. The previous average weekly all-time low was 3.31 percent the week ending November 21, 2012, during the recovery from the Great Recession. February's weekly low was 3.45 percent for the weeks ending February 6 and 27. One year ago, the 30-year FRM was 4.35 percent. (Source: Freddie Mac)



Housing Market Indicators Monthly Update | March 2020

House Prices Continued to Rise in January

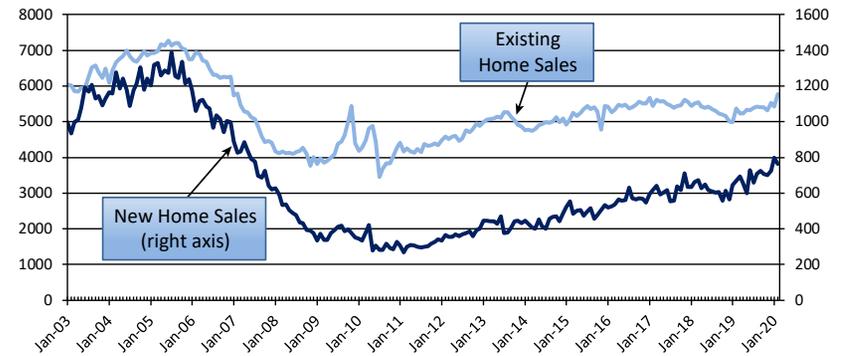
Monthly House Price Trends by Index (\$ Thousands)



Sources: Standard & Poor's, Federal Housing Finance Agency, CoreLogic, and HUD.
See Note 1, Sources and Methodology.

Existing Home Sales Rose, But New Home Sales Fell

Monthly Sales (Thousands)



Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate
Sources: National Association of Realtors®, Census Bureau, and HUD.
See Note 2, Sources and Methodology.

The Months' Supply of Homes for Sale Rose for New Homes but Stayed the Same for Existing Homes

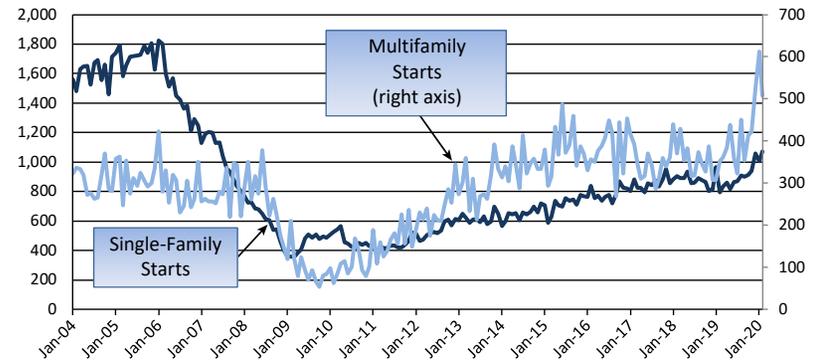
National Months' Supply of New and Existing Homes (Months)



Sources: Census Bureau, National Association of Realtors®, and HUD.

New Construction Rose for Single-Family Homes but Fell for Multifamily Housing

National Housing Starts (Thousands)



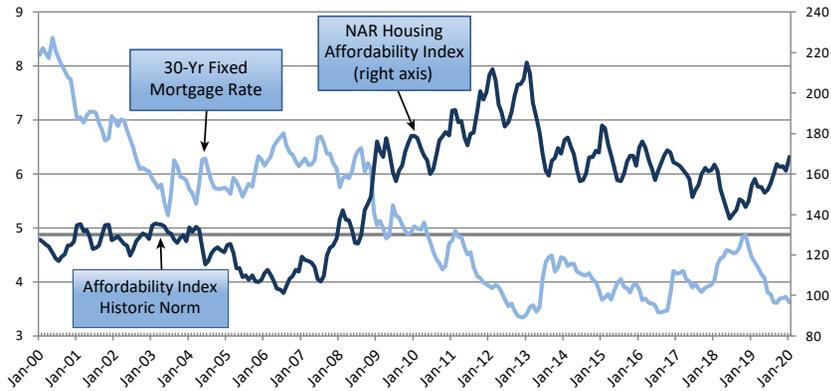
Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate
Sources: Census Bureau and HUD.



Housing Market Indicators Monthly Update | March 2020

Homeownership Affordability Remains Above Historic Norm, Mortgage Rates Continue To Be Low

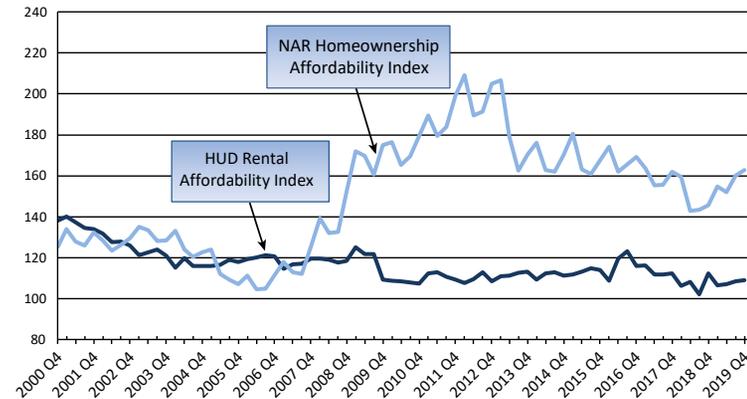
Percentage Rates and Index Values



The historic norm of 130 is the median value of NAR's composite housing affordability index since 1989. Sources: Freddie Mac and National Association of Realtors®.

Rental Affordability Remains a Challenge Due to Rising Rents

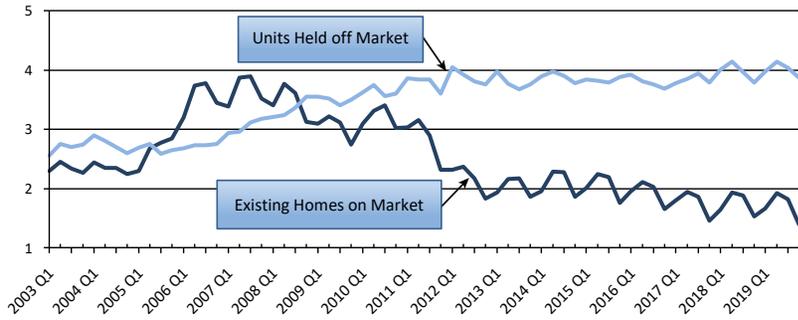
Rental and Homeownership Index Values



Sources: Census Bureau ACS and 2000 Decennial Census, BLS, CPS, HUD, and National Association of Realtors®. See Note 3, Sources and Methodology.

Supply of Existing Homes Fell in the Fourth Quarter, Number of Units Held off the Market Remains High

Existing Homes Available for Sale (End of Period) and Total Vacant Housing Units (Year Round) off Market (Millions)

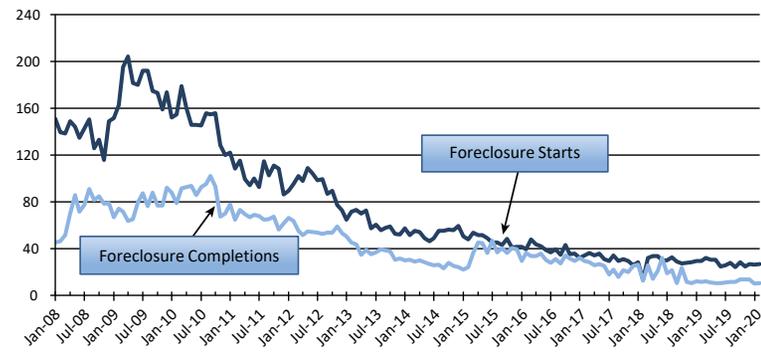


Sources: National Association of Realtors® and Census Bureau.

Foreclosure Filings Have Remained Low

Monthly Foreclosure Actions (Thousands)

(Includes investor, second home, and jumbo properties)



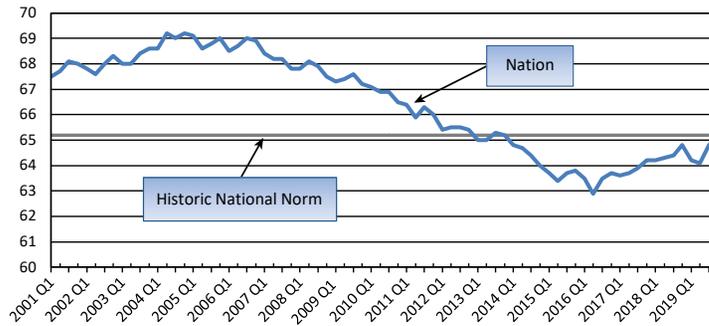
Foreclosure starts are default notices or scheduled foreclosure auctions, depending on the state. Source: ATTOM Data Solutions. See Note 4, Sources and Methodology.



Housing Market Indicators Monthly Update | March 2020

The National Homeownership Rate Rose Again in the Fourth Quarter

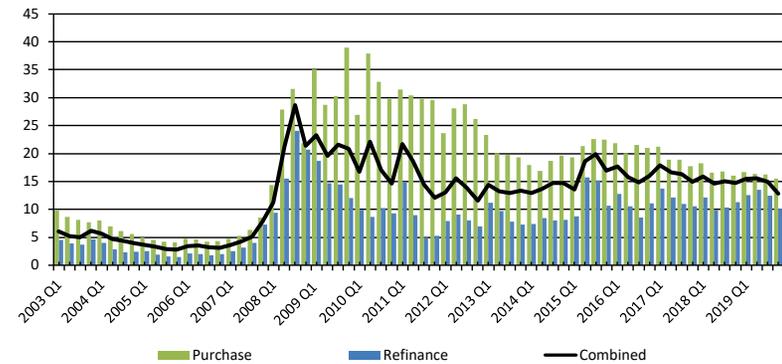
National Homeownership Rate (Percent)



The historic norm of 65.2 percent is the average national homeownership rate since 1965. Sources: Census Bureau and HUD.

FHA Mortgage Lending

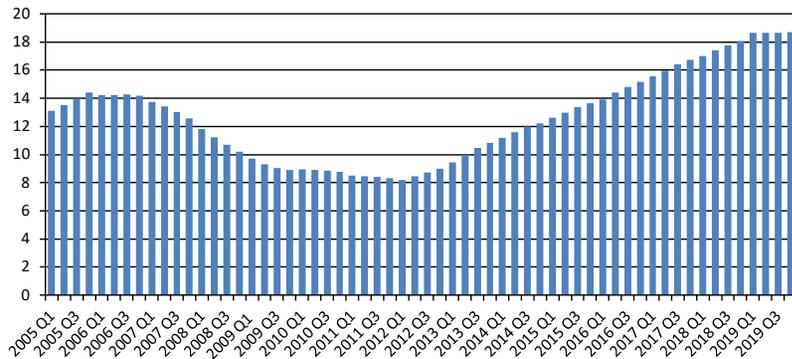
FHA as Share of Quarterly Mortgage Originations by Type (Percent)



Sources: MBA and HUD. See Note 5, Sources and Methodology.

Home Equity Gains Have Slowed Since the First Quarter of 2019

Owners' Equity In Household Real Estate At End Of Period (\$ Trillions)



Source: Federal Reserve Board.



Housing Market Indicators Monthly Update | March 2020

HOUSING MARKET FACT SHEET				
Indicator	This Period	Last Period	Year Ago	Latest Release
Mortgage Rates (30-Yr FRM, percent)	3.50	3.65	4.06	26-Mar-20
Homeownership Affordability (index)	168.4	161.7 (r)	154.2	January-20
Rental Affordability (index)	108.9	108.5 (r)	112.3	4th Q 19
Home Prices (indices)				
CoreLogic Case-Shiller (NSA)	218.6	218.7	212.1	January-19
FHFA (SA)	284.4	283.5 (r)	270.4	January-19
CoreLogic - Excluding Distressed Sales (NSA)	208.6 (s)	208.4 (s,r)	201.2 (s)	January-19
Home Sales				
New (thousands, SAAR)	765	800 (r)	669	February-20
Existing (thousands, SAAR)	5,770	5,420 (r)	5,380	February-20
First-Time Buyers (thousands, SAAR)	2,157 (s)	2,053 (s,r)	1,996 (s)	February-20
Distressed Sales (percent, NSA)	4	3	5	January-19
Housing Supply				
New Homes for Sale (thousands, SA)	319	322 (r)	342	February-20
New Homes for Sale - Months' Supply (months, SA)	5.0	4.8 (r)	6.1	February-20
Existing Homes for Sale (thousands, NSA)	1,470	1,400 (r)	1,630	February-20
Existing Homes - Months' Supply (months)	3.1	3.1	3.6	February-20
Vacant Units Held Off Market (thousands)	3,874	4,041	3,784	4th Q 19
Housing Starts				
Total (thousands, SAAR)	1,599	1,624 (r)	1,149	February-20
Single-Family (thousands, SAAR)	1,072	1,005 (r)	792	February-20
Multifamily (thousands, SAAR)	508	612 (r)	352	February-20
Mortgage Originations (thousands)				
Purchase Originations	1,106.8	1,375.3	1,115.4	4th Q 19
Refinance Originations	1,083.5	779.5	430.8	4th Q 19
FHA Mortgage Originations (thousands)				
Refinance Originations	50.2 (p)	40.9 (r)	16.5	February-20
Purchase Originations	50.3 (p)	50.0 (r)	45.9	February-20
Purchases by First-Time Buyers	40.8 (p)	36.4 (r)	37.9	February-20
Mortgage Delinquency Rates (percent)				
Prime	1.8 (s)	1.7 (s)	1.9	February-20
Subprime	16.4 (s)	16.1 (s)	23.6	February-20
FHA	9.0	9.1	8.8	February-20
Seriously Delinquent Mortgages (thousands)				
Prime	185 (s)	188 (r,s)	189	February-20
Subprime	40 (s)	41 (s)	154	February-20
FHA	328	334	333	February-20
Change in Aggregate Home Equity (\$ billions)	51.2	-7.0 (r)	298.1	4th Q 19
Underwater Borrowers (thousands)	1,878	1,974 (r)	2,209	4th Q 19
National Homeownership Rate (percent)	65.1	64.8	64.8	4th Q 19
Foreclosure Actions (thousands)				
Foreclosure Starts	27.1	26.2 (r)	29.7	February-20
Foreclosure Completions	10.5	10.4 (r)	11.4	February-20
Short Sales	2.3 (p)	2.6 (r)	2.8	January-20
REO Sales	9.7 (p)	12.1 (r)	15.7	January-20

SA = seasonally adjusted, NSA = not SA, p = preliminary, r = revised, b = brackets include units in process, s = see Additional Notes in Sources and Methodology.



Housing Market Indicators Monthly Update | March 2020

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

A. Items in Table

Description	Frequency	Sources	Notes on Methodology
Mortgage Rates (30-Yr FRM)	Weekly	Freddie Mac	Primary Mortgage Market Survey, as reported for 30-Year fixed rate mortgages (FRM).
Homeownership Affordability	Monthly	National Association of Realtors®	NAR's Housing Affordability Index as reported. A value of 100 means that a family with the median income has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home. An index above 100 signifies that a family earning the median income has more than enough income to qualify.
Rental Affordability	Quarterly	HUD	HUD's Rental Affordability Index measures whether a typical renter household has enough income to qualify for a lease on a typical rental home at the national level based on the most recent price and income data. A typical renter household is one that earns median income and a typical rental home is a median-priced rental unit. It is assumed that a renter household can qualify for a lease if the annual rent is not greater than 30 percent of the renter household's annual income. A value of 100 means that a renter household with median income has exactly enough income to qualify for a lease on a median-priced rental home. An index value above 100 signifies that a household earning the median income of renter households has more than enough income to qualify. For more information on HUD's rental affordability index and methodology, see the Second Quarter 2016 issue of HUD's National Housing Market Summary on their U.S. Housing Market Conditions website: http://www.huduser.gov/portal/ushmc/home.html .
Home Prices			
CoreLogic-Case-Shiller (NSA)	Monthly	Standard and Poor's	Case-Shiller 20-metro composite index, January 2000 = 100. Standard and Poor's recommends use of non-seasonally adjusted (NSA) index when making monthly comparisons.
FHFA (SA)	Monthly	Federal Housing Finance Agency	FHFA monthly (purchase-only) index for U.S., January 1991 = 100.
CoreLogic - Excluding Distressed Sales (NSA)	Monthly	CoreLogic	CoreLogic national combined index, distressed sales excluded, January 2000 = 100. (Only available as NSA). Also see additional note in Section C below on the CoreLogic HPI.
Home Sales (SAAR)			
New	Monthly	HUD and Census Bureau	Seasonally adjusted annual rates. A newly constructed house is considered sold when either a sales contract has been signed or a deposit accepted, even if this occurs before construction has actually started.
Existing	Monthly	National Association of Realtors®	Seasonally adjusted annual rates. Existing-home sales—which include single-family, townhomes, condominiums and co-ops—are based on transaction closings. This differs from the U.S. Census Bureau's series on new single-family home sales, which are based on contracts or the acceptance of a deposit.
First-Time Buyers	Monthly	NAR, Census Bureau, and HUD	Sum of seasonally adjusted new and existing home sales (above) multiplied by National Association of Realtors® annual estimate of first-time buyer share of existing home sales.
Distressed Sales (NSA)	Monthly	CoreLogic	Short sales and REO (Real Estate Owned) sales as a percentage of total existing home sales (current month subject to revision).
Housing Starts			
Total (SAAR)	Monthly	HUD and Census Bureau	Housing starts are divided into three components: single-family, multifamily, and two-to-four unit structures. Start of construction occurs when excavation begins for the footings or foundation of a building. As of September 1992, housing starts include units being totally rebuilt on an existing foundation.
Single-Family (SAAR)	Monthly	HUD and Census Bureau	Single-family housing includes fully detached, semi-detached (semi-attached, side-by-side), townhomes and row houses. For attached units, each must be separated from the adjacent unit by a ground-to-roof firewall to be classified as a single-family structure. Also, these units must not share common facilities (i.e., heating/air-conditioning systems, plumbing, attic, or basement). Units built one on top of another and those built side-by-side that do not have a ground-to-roof firewall or have common facilities are not considered single-family units.
Multifamily (SAAR)	Monthly	HUD and Census Bureau	Multifamily housing has five or more units in a structure.
Housing Supply			
New Homes for Sale (SA)	Monthly	HUD and Census Bureau	As reported.
New Homes for Sale - Months' Supply (SA)	Monthly	HUD and Census Bureau	As reported.
Existing Homes for Sale (NSA)	Monthly	National Association of Realtors®	As reported.
Existing Homes - Months' Supply	Monthly	National Association of Realtors®	As reported.
Vacant Units Held Off Market	Quarterly	Census Bureau	As reported in Census CPS/HPS Table 4. Estimates of Housing Inventory, line item "Year-round vacant, held off market for reasons other than occasional use or usually reside elsewhere." Vacant units can be held off the market for a variety of reasons.
Mortgage Originations			
Refinance Originations	Quarterly	Mortgage Bankers Association and HUD	HUD estimate of refinance originations based on MBA estimate of dollar volume of refinance originations.
Purchase Originations	Quarterly	Mortgage Bankers Association and HUD	HUD estimate of home purchase originations based on MBA estimate of dollar volume of home purchase originations.



Housing Market Indicators Monthly Update | March 2020

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

A. Items in Table (continued)

FHA Originations			
Refinance Originations	Monthly	HUD	FHA originations reported as of date of loan closing. Estimate for current month scaled upward due to normal reporting lag and shown as preliminary.
Purchase Originations	Monthly	HUD	
Purchases by First-Time Buyers	Monthly	HUD	
Mortgage Delinquency Rates (NSA)			
Prime	Monthly	Black Knight Financial Services	Total conventional mortgages past due (30+ days) but not in foreclosure, divided by conventional mortgages actively serviced.
Subprime	Monthly	Black Knight Financial Services	Total conventional mortgages past due (30+ days) but not in foreclosure, divided by conventional mortgages actively serviced.
FHA	Monthly	HUD	Total FHA mortgages past due (30+ days) but not in foreclosure, divided by FHA's insurance in force.
Seriously Delinquent Mortgages			
Prime	Monthly	LPS Applied Analytics, MBA, and HUD	Conventional mortgages 90+ days delinquent or in foreclosure, scaled up to market.
Subprime	Monthly	LPS Applied Analytics, MBA, and HUD	Conventional mortgages 90+ days delinquent or in foreclosure, scaled up to market.
FHA	Monthly	HUD	Mortgages 90+ days delinquent or in foreclosure.
Change in Aggregate Home Equity	Quarterly	Federal Reserve Board	Difference in aggregate household owners' equity in real estate as reported in the Federal Reserve Board's Flow of Funds Accounts of the United States for stated time period.
Underwater Borrowers	Quarterly	CoreLogic	As reported.
National Homeownership Rate	Quarterly	Census Bureau	Homeownership in the U.S. as a percentage of all households.
Foreclosure Actions			
Foreclosure Starts	Monthly	ATTOM Data Solutions (Formerly RealtyTrac)	Foreclosure starts are reported counts of notice of default or scheduled foreclosure auction, depending on which action starts the foreclosure process in a state.
Foreclosure Completions	Monthly	ATTOM Data Solutions	Real Estate Owned (REO).
Short sales	Monthly	CoreLogic	Count of Short Sales for the month as reported (current month subject to revision).
REO Sales	Monthly	CoreLogic	Count of REO (Real Estate Owned) Sales for the month as reported (current month subject to revision).

B. Notes on Charts

1. Monthly house price trends, shown as changes in respective house price indices applied to a common base price set equal to the median price of an existing home sold in January 2003, as reported by the National Association of Realtors®. Indices shown: S&P/CoreLogic Case-Shiller 20-metro composite index (NSA), January 2000 = 100, FHFA monthly (purchase-only) index for U.S. (SA), January 1991 = 100, and CoreLogic-Distressed Sales Excluded (Monthly) for U.S. (NSA), January 2000 = 100. Also see additional note below in Section C on the CoreLogic HPI.
2. Reported seasonally adjusted annual rates for new and existing home sales.
3. A comparison of the affordability of renting a home to purchasing a home, added as of the September 2016 release. HUD's Quarterly Rental Affordability Index is compared to NAR's Composite Quarterly Affordability Index. See note above on Rental Affordability.
4. Filings of a notice of default or scheduled foreclosure auction, depending on which action starts the foreclosure process in a state, are reported for foreclosure starts. Foreclosure completions are properties entering REO. Both as reported by ATTOM Data Solutions (formerly RealtyTrac).
5. FHA market shares are FHA purchase and refinance originations divided by HUD estimates of purchase and refinance mortgage originations, as noted in "Mortgage Originations" above. See additional note below on FHA market share.

C. Additional Notes

Beginning in May 2019, NAR replaced its Composite Housing Affordability Index (HAI), which was based on the 30-year fixed rate mortgage and adjustable rate mortgages (ARM), with a Fixed HAI based only on the 30-year fixed rate mortgage.

Black Knight enhanced their database as of December 2017 data, increasing their database coverage by nearly 1 million additional loans through several new contributors and improved coverage of certain types of data. In addition, HUD added filters to make sure all FHA and VA loans were excluded from the data to ensure reporting of only conventional loans. The November 2017 changes in reported data are mainly due to the additional filters.

FHA Market Share data were updated in the July 2017 report based on the most recent HMDA data and revised house price estimates. FHA market share estimates were based on new methodology beginning with the October 2013 report; estimates were revised back through Q1 2011. See the FHA Market Share report on their website for an explanation of the new methodology: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/rmra/oe/rpts/fhamktsh/fhamktqtrly.

The estimate for first-time buyers was 33 percent for 2019, based on the 2019 NAR annual survey of homebuyers released in October 2019. The estimate was the same as their estimate for 2018 with the October 2018 release of the NAR Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers 2018 report. The annual reporting of first-time buyers differs from NAR's monthly Realtors Confidence Index survey because the annual survey, for the most part, represents purchases of homes by owner-occupants and does not include purchases by investors, as in the monthly survey.

CoreLogic's House Price Index (HPI) estimates are based on new methodology beginning with their June 2016 report, which includes data through April 2016. A variety of modeling and other enhancements to their HPI and its forecast, including a 14-percent expansion in the number of transaction pairs, were made.