



Entry Form 2018 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Friday, June 15, 2018, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

Following the great recession, when in Fiscal Year 2012-13 the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) did not do a single first mortgage loan, the Agency began to experience extreme growth in its single family lending activities. To put a number to that growth, CalHFA did 50 loans in FY 13-14, 1,053 the next year, 4,725 the next and then 7,259 in FY 2016-17.

CalHFA had already been fairly active on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. With business booming and the Agency receiving a corresponding increase in visibility, however, CalHFA in early 2017 decided to partner with The Sax Agency, an outside marketing company, to update its social media strategy.

We determined that the initial phase of the social media strategy would focus on improved communication and appeal to single family partners such as mortgage lenders, real estate agents and single family homebuyers. Market research confirmed that those groups connected with CalHFA most on Facebook and Instagram, so the social media strategy update focused on those two platforms. For Instagram, this meant starting an entirely new CalHFA page.

The Big Picture

The first order of business was to use uniform, pleasing visuals and interesting, informative content, posted on a regular schedule, to make the CalHFA Facebook and Instagram pages into professional-looking pages that increased page views and spurred engagement.

With those goals in mind, CalHFA and Sax began by creating a social media style guide with several core principles (color, messaging dos and don'ts, etc.) that would guide the look and feel of the posts, while allowing for content flexibility. (See [Media 1](#)) That desire for flexibility requires the CalHFA marketing team and the Sax staff to collaborate closely to produce consistent posts, both pre-planned and ad-hoc posts that sometimes require spontaneity.

The next task was to figure out the types of content to share, so we ran a more detailed analysis of the loan officers, mortgage brokers, real estate agents and prospective single family homebuyers that make up our target audience.

The first big revelation from that analysis was that we should sort that audience into two groups, one made up of the homebuyers, whose interest in the content would only be for the amount of time that they are in the home purchasing phase of their lives. The other group are the folks whose business it is to facilitate the sale of homes to those homebuyers, and therefore would be more permanent members of the online community that CalHFA was looking to serve.

The question now was, could we appeal to both groups at the same time? The answer was to have all posts fall into one of two types.

Post Type 1 displays programmatic and partnership information and is designed for the lenders and real estate agents. Post Type 2 features content that educates and entertains the general public, specifically homebuyers.

The key, however, is that Post Type 2 also appeals to lenders and real estate agents, and it does this in a couple of ways. Those groups are also part of the general public and enjoy being educated and

entertained, but perhaps more importantly these are posts they can share on their pages to help them connect with their own networks of prospective homebuyers.

Campaigns

When the rollout of the social media strategy update began in late April of 2017, CalHFA and Sax had developed four main campaigns — Get to Know CalHFA, Know the Terms, Home Hacks and Homebuyer Tips/Education. The majority of posts would fit into one of those campaigns, while other posts might provide timely information, promote an upcoming event, share program updates or fall into the fun, lifestyle category. (See [Media 2](#))

Get to Know CalHFA posts are dedicated to building trust and telling our audience who we are and what we stand for. For example, the first few posts in this campaign touted how many families we had helped, communicated our mission “To create and finance progressive housing solutions so more Californians have a place to call home” and profiled our dynamic and accomplished Executive Director Tia Boatman Patterson. These posts are designed to appeal to both lenders/real estate agents and homebuyers. (See [Media 3](#))

Know the Terms posts give definitions or explanations of terms that homebuyers will need to know and understand as they get into the home loan process. (See [Media 4](#))

Homebuying tips/education posts are also informational, but they touch on a broader range of topics from how to find a good lender or real estate agent, to things to look for when searching for a home. (See [Media 5](#))

While the audience for those two campaigns is clearly homebuyers, these posts are designed to appeal to lenders and real estate agents who might want to share them with their clients and followers. And while all of our posts have supporting captions, these are often created in such a way that the graphics themselves can stand alone, making them easily shareable.

Home Hacks is the broadest of the campaigns and contains a selection of ideas for decorating homes or improving daily home life. These posts appeal equally to anyone who might visit our page. These are also designed to be enticing for people to share on their own pages. (See [Media 6](#))

Posting details

Each post for this initial effort focusing on single family is used on both Facebook and Instagram, and over the past 13 months we have experimented with frequency of posts, eventually landing on one post from a campaign per day. This is another way of having flexibility as it allows us to add timely posts as needed without overloading our followers with too many posts in the same day.

Since CalHFA is working in partnership with The Sax Agency to develop and review posts, and to managing the frequency and timing of the pre-arranged posts, we use [GAIN](#), a social media publishing workflow tool, to save us time throughout that process. GAIN allows us to share and review posts across the two Agencies and manipulate the automatic postings as needed to provide flexibility.

Results

The main goals of CalHFA's updated social media strategy were to improve the look of our Facebook page and the frequency of posts to keep up with best practices, and to create an inviting space for lenders and real estate agents to interact with CalHFA and each other as well as prospective homebuyers.

Still, there are some statistics that point to the outstanding success of the project. Though most of our posts are designed to keep our audience interacting and engaging on our social media platforms, rather than directing them to our website, we have actually seen a jump in the traffic coming to our website from Facebook. In the first quarter of 2018, for example, CalHFA's website saw a 22 percent jump in traffic from Facebook when compared to the first quarter of 2017, the quarter just before the strategy was implemented.

Additionally, in the first month of implementation (May 2017), our Facebook organic reach was 226 percent higher than our organic reach for the same month 2016, a trend that continued in the following months.

Overall, CalHFA experienced a five percent jump in total Facebook followers in the first year of the updated social media strategy bringing the total to over 6,800 and the newly created Instagram account now has 346 followers.

Media 1: Social Media Design + Post Style Guide



SOCIAL MEDIA DESIGN + POST STYLE GUIDE



PREPARED BY:

The Sax Agency
1055 W. 7th Street
Penthouse suite 43
P. 213.232.1682
F. 310.388.3152
E. kara@thesaxagency.com

www.thesaxagency.com

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INTRODUCTION

The CalHFA Social Media Style Guide is to be used solely as a road map to align the overall look, persona and feel of the brand. It recognizes the fact that the single family and multi-family home areas of business have different objectives, goals, messaging and design agendas. This guide respects the unique individuality of each brand, yet its intent is to ensure an overall cohesiveness and adherence to the guidelines and overall brand objectives set forth in the CalHFA Corporate Style Guide.

Keep in mind that the information presented applies to only web-based content and the specifications do not apply to any printing guidelines. Please refer to the Corporate CalHFA Style Guide for additional information.

The brand rules outlined herein are made to be flexible enough for any designer to be creative, but rigid enough to keep the **CalHFA Brand** easily recognizable and stylistically consistent. Occasionally situations will call for rules to be bent — but never broken. Continuity is key, especially since the **CalHFA Brand** must extend across multiple media platforms.

Submit any updates and additions for approval to Kathy@CalHFA.ca.gov.

OVERALL LOOK AND FEEL

VOICE

The voice of CalHFA is the brand's personality.
The brand's voice is our way of effectively communicating with our audience.

CalHFA's voice is divided into 4 core areas:

CHARACTER/PERSONA

Character/persona should convey the following attributes:

- Friendly, approachable and responsive.
- Use inclusive language (us, we, you)
- Talk like a person, not a machine or a press release
- Honest
- Expressive
- Engaging

TONE

The general vibe of your brand?

- Warm
- Inspiring
- Professional
- Trustworthy
- Informative
- Direct
- Easy to Understand
- Authentic
- Caring

LANGUAGE

The language attributes should be:

- Personal
- Humble
- Honest
- Direct
- Easy to Understand
- Simple
- Jargon Free
- Consistent

PURPOSE

Why are you on social media in the first place?

- Influence
- Engage
- Educate
- Inform
- Persuade
- Build Trust

MESSAGING/CONTENT:

In accordance with the CalHFA Corporate Style Guide, the messaging/content of each post should be in plain, straightforward, gender-neutral language supported by appropriate pictures, charts and other graphics.

The following should be considered in all communications:

- Objective – specifically, what we are trying to accomplish?
- Format and layout
- Establishes a clear call-to-action
- Welcomes a dialogue and not a monologue
- Appropriate and creative visual layout

*IF EVER CALHFA PROGRAMS, TERMS OR ACRONYMS ARE USED THEN THEY MUST BE FULLY DEFINED. PLEASE REFERENCE CALHFA CORPORATE STYLE GUIDE PAGE 52-65








*IF USE OF ANY GENERAL HOUSING GLOSSARY TERMS ARE USED, PLEASE REFERENCE THE CALHFA CORPORATE STYLE GUIDE PAGES 66-111 FOR FULL EXPLANATION.

The messaging should NEVER be:

- Derogatory
- Unprofessional
- Confusing
- Inaccurate
- Misrepresentative of the brand
- Reference CalHFA as “Cal” or any other shorthand derivative

CHARACTER COUNT:

The ideal length for social media:



Icon	Platform/General	Count
	Facebook	Posts with 40 characters or less receive 86% more engagement compared to longer posts. Characters included with images are governed by the 20% rule.
	Twitter	Between 71 and 100 characters. Tweets see 17% higher engagement rate if they are shorter than 100 characters.
	Instagram	Instagram is not a text-based platform there is no rule of thumb to the standard word count; however, it is suggested that brands should keep character count to a minimum.
	LinkedIn	Writing a 16-25 word post works best when marketing to businesses. When marketing to consumers, a 21-25 word post gets the most shares.
	YouTube	Keep videos average length under three (3) minutes.
	Pinterest	Profile name needs to be within 21 characters. Your Pinterest bio should be less than 160 characters. The max length of board description is 500 characters.
	Hashtags	Don't use spaces or special characters, don't start with or only use numbers and be careful with using slang.

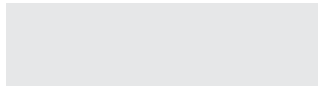

FONTS/TYPE FACE

The CalHFA brand fonts are Arial, Intro Inline and a font named “**Christmas Tree Personal***.” Alternative fonts can be used upon design intent.

TYPEFACE: ARIAL (REGULAR)	FONT	PRIMARY USE	ACCEPTABLE USES	UNACCEPTABLE USES
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	Regular, bold , <i>italics</i> , bold italics	Body	All uses	None
TYPEFACE: INTRO INLINE	FONT	PRIMARY USE	ACCEPTABLE USES	UNACCEPTABLE USES
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z	INLINE	Heading 1	Text Graphic	Body and Heading 2 if 1 is already in use
TYPEFACE: CHRISTMAS TREE PERSONAL	FONT	PRIMARY USE	ACCEPTABLE USES	UNACCEPTABLE USES
<i>abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz</i>	<i>regular</i>	Sight words, accent words	Lowercase only, text graphic	Heading 1 & 2 Body
TYPEFACE: OSWALD (REGULAR)	FONT	PRIMARY USE	ACCEPTABLE USES	UNACCEPTABLE USES
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	Light, regular , demibold	Heading 1 Heading 2	Text Graphic	Body

BRAND COLORS

Brand Colors			
			
YELLOW HEX	YELLOW RGB	BLUE HEX	BLUE RGB
EF8C40	235-156-63	354793	19-84-159

Greys			
			
LIGHT GREY HEX	LIGHT GREY RGB	LIGHT GREY HEX	LIGHT GREY RGB
E4E4E4	288-288-288	354793	19-84-159

***Need to get actual font from CalHFA**

CALHFA LOGOS

The following are different variations of the CalHFA logos based on the CalHFA Corporate Style Guide. Please submit your request for logo usage to: kathy@CalHFA.ca.gov.

<p>LOGO</p> 	<p>LOGO with AGENCY NAME</p> 	<p>LOGO with TAGLINE – TWO COLOR</p> 	<p>LOGO with AGENCY NAME & TAGLINE</p> 
<p>LOGO with AGENCY NAME & TAGLINE STAGGERED</p> 	<p>LOGO with AGENCY NAME STAGGERED</p> 	<p>LOGO with TAGLINE STAGGERED</p> 	<p>LOGO with SPANISH TAGLINE</p> 
<p>LOGO with TAGLINE HORIZONTAL</p> 	<p>LOGO with AGENCY NAME & TAGLINE HORIZONTAL</p> 	<p>MULTIFAMILY LOGO</p> 	

All logo formats shown above are available in the color variations shown below:



DESIGN GUIDELINES

The goal is to give our target audience an engaging experience each time we post on social media. This is done by including visual content in our marketing, e.g., images, infographics, memes and videos. We've outlined the best design strategy that has proven to attract more traffic such as customer engagement, likes and shares.

TEXT VS. IMAGES

Text-only Post. i.e., *Education Series*

Keep it short and simple.

Best use on: Pinterest, Twitter and Instagram.

Most users access their newsfeed through their mobile device, which makes it easier to consume quick snippets of information. Make sure you catch the readers' attention by giving as little information as possible, yet engaging enough to entice the reader to scan the post for more information. See example *Figure A*.

Facebook's 20% Rule

Facebook does not like images with text that takes up more than 20% of entire post/image. This rule ensures that users only see high-quality content. Therefore, text-only posts are not recommended for Facebook.

Upload your post to determine how much text is in your post: https://www.facebook.com/ads/tools/text_overlay

FIGURE A

Sample of a Text-only Post



MAIN GRAPHIC

First image users read/see. Suggested size text graphic at least 1/3 of the page to ensure it's the first thing people see.

SECONDARY INFORMATION

Second visual users read/see. Full text explaining what the infographic/text is. Typically placed directly below the infographic. Suggest no more than 2-3 lines. Do not crowd the infographic. Give it appropriate spacing.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

When possible include supplementary information to give users the context that this post is probably part of a series, which can entice users to follow/like/share.

SEE PAGES 12 FOR FULL DESIGN SPECS ON TEXT-ONLY POSTS.

Text and Image

Use high-resolution images that connect to the audience's need. Use simple-and-straight-to-the-point words to confirm the audience's feeling.

Best used on: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook

As mentioned earlier, Facebook does not take kind to text that consumes more than 20% of the post. This rule should be used throughout all posts, except posts related to the specific Single Family Campaigns such as *Education Series* or *Get to Know CalHFA Series*, in order to optimize posts. In general, your image is the star and your text is the supporting actor - yet they both cannot lack in their performances.

As a rule, use dynamic images to convey your message with text serving to help carry your audience over. A simple tagline, quote or phrase will suffice. Additional text can be placed in the content area of your platform. See example *Figure B*.

Positioning/Placement of text over image

Ensure all text is legible. If image does not provide for proper text placement, add a colored box behind text. It is suggested to use branded colors for the colored box to keep on brand.

- Do not place any text on top of faces.
- Do not place text against edge. It is suggested to leave a minimum 1/8 space between text and edge.

FIGURE B

Sample of Text and Image post



MAIN GRAPHIC
 First image users read/see. Your images should speak to most homebuyers. Ensure it's enticing enough to guide readers to the supporting text.

SUPPORTING TEXT
 Engage the audience by using text that confirms what the audience may have been feeling when they first saw the image. This will encourage more likes.

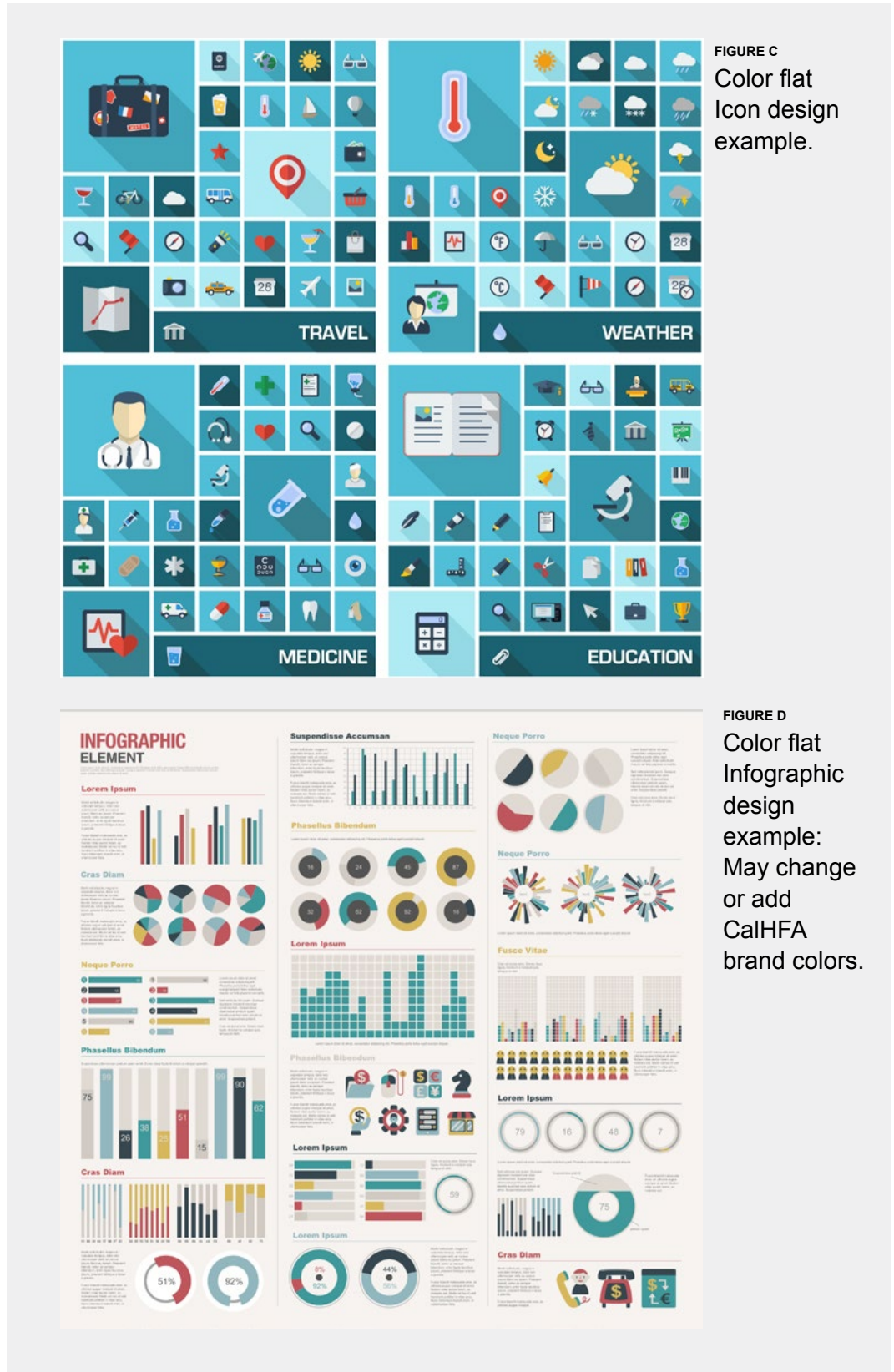
COLORED TEXT BOX
 Example of how Colored Text boxes are used. Suggested method of using (brand) colored text boxes to highlight text.

ICONS AND INFOGRAPHICS

Suggest using a **color flat style** icon design as shown on this page. These icons are typically preferred over the standard one-color flat design.

Although, one-color flat design may work depending on design content. You can add more depth by adding shadows where possible. See Figure C, for an example. To receive a copy of these sample vector files, please send a request to kathy@CalHFA.ca.gov with subject CalHFA - Request Approved Icons.

If design permits, colors may be changed to adhere to CalHFA brand colors.



COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Any content that is created by or on behalf of CalHFA is the intellectual property of CalHFA. Any content that is created on behalf of CalHFA by third-party agencies remains the property of CalHFA, unless otherwise indicated in writing or expressed consent. If there is any doubt that the content provided or posted is not covered under the intellectual property of CalHFA, please contact kathy@CalHFA.ca.gov.

Royalty Free Images

All images or content purchased through a royalty-free hosting site shall be the property of CalHFA and can be used in accordance with all copyright laws.

Types of Images

Images must not appear too generic or seemingly too “made up.” Subjects in image should appear natural and not staged. All images used are subject to approval.

Diversity in Images

Images should include CalHFA’s diverse target markets.

People in Images

Images with people (especially faces) should be Royalty-free. If they are not, the image cannot be used and will be subject to copyright infringement.

Images Found Online

Do not use any images found online without proper approval or express written consent.

FIGURE E

Unacceptable vs. Acceptable Stock Imagery



DO NOT USE

Images that appear too staged or do not represent CalHFA’s target market.



DO NOT USE

Generic avatars in any post or publication. Use real people unless otherwise approved by CalHFA. In this case, an infographic may be used in place of real people.



DO USE

Natural images of people that appear to be aligned with CalHFA’s mission. Try to use images where faces are inconspicuous as much as possible.



DO USE

Images that represent CalHFA’s target market. Try to use images where faces are inconspicuous as much as possible.

DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

HOME TIPS AND EDUCATION SERIES* (SINGLE FAMILY)

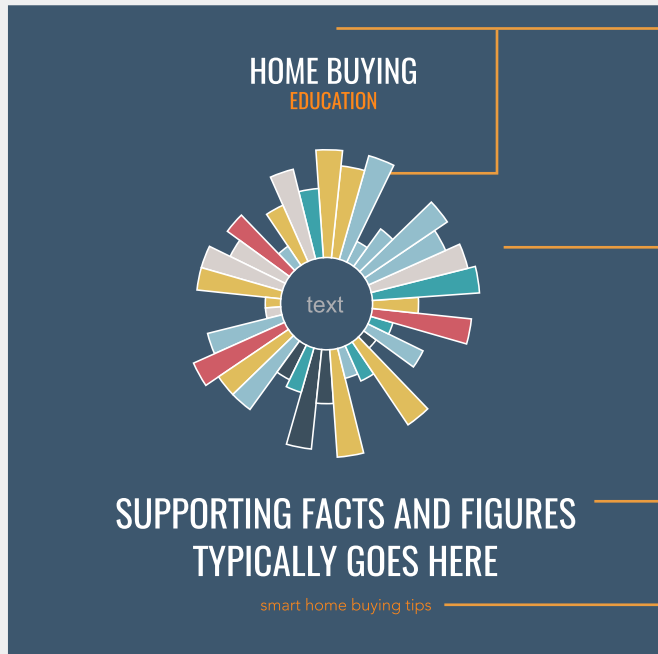


HOME BUYING
EDUCATION

2.5-3

BUY A HOUSE PRICED NO MORE THAN
2.5-3X YOUR ANNUAL SALARY

smart home buying tips



HOME BUYING
EDUCATION

text

SUPPORTING FACTS AND FIGURES
TYPICALLY GOES HERE

smart home buying tips

POST DIMENSIONS

IG, Twitter Typical Post Size:

300x300px @ least 72dpi

***Pinterest Typical Post Size:**

Varies - Vertical layout preferred.

CATEGORY SUBJECT

Font: Oswald **Type:** Regular **Size:** H2

Color: Contrast with background. Typically White, CalHFA Orange or CalHFA Blue.

CATEGORY TITLE

Font: Oswald **Type:** Thin **Size:** H3

Color: Contrast with background. Never the same color as the Category Subject

TEXT INFOGRAPHIC

Font: Oswald or Inline **Type:** Regular or Bold

Positioning : Roughly centered

Size: At least 1/3 of the post

Text Color: Contrast with background. Typically White, CalHFA Orange or CalHFA Blue.

INFOGRAPHIC SHADOW

Add shadow to infographic to give a little more “pop” to the design. To create the shadow, use the same color as the background adding the *Multiply Effect*. Direction of shadow should appear as shown in samples.

SPACING

Give plenty of spacing between object and the edge/ border of the post, and object and the next object. No less than 12pt space between group of objects.

ICON INFOGRAPHIC

Style: Color Flat. See Page 7 for sample of approved icons.

Size: At least 1/3 of the post.

Positioning: Roughly centered.

Color: Enough contrast with background where appropriate.

SECONDARY INFORMATION

Font: Oswald or Inline **Type:** Regular or Bold

Size: H1

Positioning: Directly below the infographic. Space accordingly.

Color: Same as the post’s H2

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any text below the secondary information should be short, simple and catchy - i.e. website, hashtag, tag line, etc.

*DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS FOR PINTEREST VARIES DEPENDING ON CONTENT.

The guidelines presented on this page can be applied to designing a Pinterest post. Designer must differ to his/her own expertise and determine appropriate spacing based on post layout.

YOU MAY USE IMAGES INSTEAD OF ILLUSTRATIONS AS LONG AS BRAND GUIDELINES ARE ADHERED TO. (See page 13 - *Making it Personal* Design Specifications for similar layout.)

GET TO KNOW CALHFA (SINGLE FAMILY)



WELCOMING PEOPLE AND PETS TO THEIR NEW HOME

MAKING IT PERSONAL (SINGLE FAMILY)



POST DIMENSIONS

IG, Twitter Typical Post Size:

300x300px @ least 72dpi

Facebook Typical Post Size:

470x394px preferred, but any size should work.

CALHFA LOGO

Use any approved variation of the logo presented on page XX. Logo must have a transparent background. Ensure it is not obstructing main intent of design or obstructed by neighboring objects. If possible, logo should stand alone and on opposite end/diagonal from other text/information.

IMAGE

Should be Royalty-Free and of high-resolution. Images should be resized with correct aspect ratio. Do not compress, squeeze any images that may compromise the quality and brand standards of CalHFA. Please see page XX for appropriate use of Imagery.

COLORED BOX (SPECIFIC TO GET TO KNOW CALHFA SERIES ONLY)

Colors: CalHFA Orange, CalHFA Blue, White, or Greys.

Opacity: +/- 80%

Positioning: As shown or similar.

ADDED TEXT

Font: Oswald **Type:** Regular or Bold

Size: H1

Positioning: On top of Colored Box with at least a 6pt inset.

Color: Contrast with Colored Box. Typically White, CalHFA Orange or CalHFA Blue.

TEXT OVER IMAGE

Use approved fonts. Alternative cursive fonts can be used so long as it is clean and used sparingly.

Size: Varies

Positioning: As image permits

Color: Contrast with background. Typically White, CalHFA Orange or CalHFA Blue.

SPACING (GENERAL)

Give plenty of spacing between object and the edge/ border of the post, and between group of objects. *The Colored box is the only exception since it must be positioned as shown or similar and appear behind text.*

Media 2: Other



We love this quote from Hazrat Inayat Khan. It doesn't take much to make a great-looking home. It's the people who live there that make it beautiful! #CalHFA #Homebuying



Attention lenders and processors: We know how the paperwork can pile up, so CalHFA has updated our borrower's affidavit form to just a single page! #CalHFA #Lender #LoanProcessing



Which Emoji would you use to describe your home? Today is World Emoji Day and we're joining in on the fun and posting our favorite Emoji, which of course is a house! :-) #CalHFA #WorldEmojiDay



Are you ready for your journey home? #CalHFA #JourneyHome

Media 3: #GetToKnowCalHFA



Employee Spotlight! Executive Director, Tia Boatman Patterson, oversees CalHFA and its many divisions, people, communications, programs and more! Keep up the amazing work Tia! #GetToKnowCalHFA #CalHFA



For more than 40 years, CalHFA has helped low to moderate income Californians have a place to call home by providing financing and programs to those who need assistance. By creating and preserving affordable housing, and assisting Californians in buying their first home, we hope to continue to serve the needs of families across the state. Want to know more about how we can help? Visit www.calhfa.ca.gov today! #CalHFA #GetToKnowCalHFA #AffordableHousing #PlaceToCallHome



CalHFA supports the needs of low to moderate income Californians by providing programs that create homeownership opportunities. We are proud to report that in the past fiscal year (July 2016 through June 2017), we've helped 7,291 families become homeowners! And we are eager to help even more. If you want to be the next family in a new home, find a loan officer by visiting www.calhfa.ca.gov/homebuyer/lenders.htm #CalHFA #GetToKnowCalHFA #LoanOfficer #Homeownership



The money you put down on your home loan can be one of the largest hurdles for many first-time homebuyers. That's why CalHFA offers several options for down payment and closing cost assistance. The MyHome Assistance Program offers a deferred-payment junior loan up to an average of \$12,000 to help with down payment and/or closing costs. Head to our site to see if you qualify. #CalHFA #DownPaymentAssistance #Homebuying #GetToKnowCalHFA

Media 4: #Know the Terms



An adjustable rate mortgage (ARM) offers homebuyers a low interest rate on their loan for an initial period, usually 2-5 years. After this, the interest rate can fluctuate, which will impact the monthly payment. CalHFA does not offer mortgages with adjustable rates. A fixed rate mortgage has a rate that stays the same for the entire life of the loan. #CalHFA #KnowTheTerms #AdjustableRate #FixedRate



PITI stands for Principal, Interest, Taxes and Insurance, the sum of which is your "bottom line" monthly payment. Lenders will sometimes use this amount, instead of simply principal and interest, to qualify you for a loan. #CalHFA #Homebuying #KnowTheTerms #PITI



These two terms often get confused during the homebuying process. To get Pre-Qualified, you'll just give a lender your financial information and they can give you an idea of the size of mortgage you can likely get. Pre-Approval includes a credit check and confirmation of income and the lender will give you a commitment, in writing, for an exact loan amount. Pre-Qualification is a great first step to know the type of house you may be able to afford, but Pre-Approval allows you to move quickly once you find the exact home you want to purchase. #CalHFA #KnowTheTerms #Homebuying



Once you feel you've found the perfect home and you are ready to make an offer, you'll need to include a good faith deposit to show the seller your willingness to purchase. While the amount varies depending on the situation, your lender will be able to assist you with this part of the homebuying process. #CalHFA #GoodFaithDeposit #KnowTheTerms #Homebuying

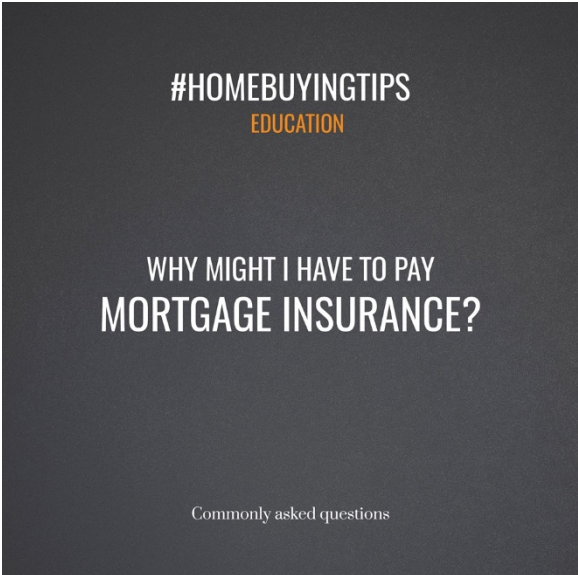
Media 5: #Homebuyingtips



The final walkthrough is one of the most crucial parts of the homebuying process as it is your last attempt to identify issues. You definitely do not want to have to go back and spend money on repairs you may have overlooked. One helpful tip is to bring a phone charger with you to test out the electrical outlets. #CalHFA #HomebuyingTips #HomebuyingEducation #FinalWalkthrough



A common mistake people make when purchasing a home is thinking they should always borrow the full amount available to them. Just because you are pre-approved to borrow a certain amount, doesn't mean you should. Be sure not to over-borrow, and make sure to leave room in your monthly budget for unexpected emergencies. #CalHFA #HomebuyingTips #HomebuyingEducation #MortgageTips



Mortgage insurance protects the lender from potential loss if a buyer defaults on his mortgage loan payment. If you don't make a 20% down payment, your mortgage will most likely include a Mortgage Insurance payment. Once you've paid off 20% of your principal, however, mortgage insurance can sometimes disappear, lowering your payment. It depends on the type of loan you have, and it's a little complicated, so be sure to ask your loan officer about your Mortgage Insurance terms. #CalHFA #MortgageInsurance #LoanOfficer #MortgageBroker #HomebuyerEducation #HomebuyingTips

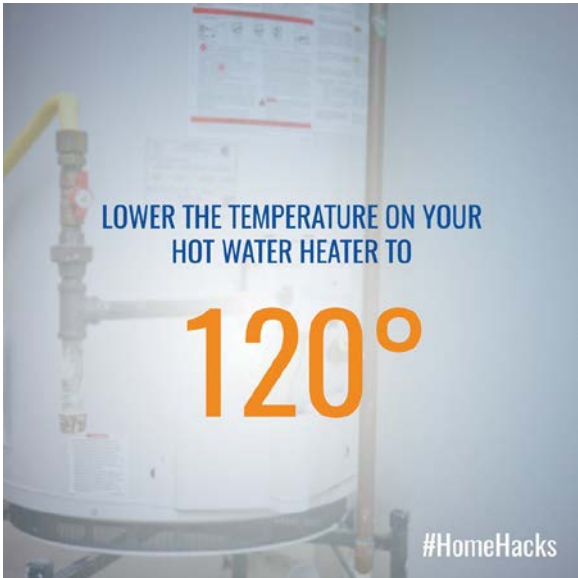


June is Homeownership Month and CalHFA is celebrating by offering homebuying tips. Buy a home priced no more than 2.5-3 times your annual salary. This is a realistic guideline to ensure that you are not overextending yourself on your mortgage. #CalHFA #HomeownershipMonth #TheMoreYouKnow #HomebuyingTips #HomebuyingEducation

Media 6: #HomeHacks



There can be a lot of added stress if you take on too many home improvement projects at once. Tackle one project at a time and the job will get done with a lot less stress. #CalHFA #HomeHacks #PaceYourself #HomeownershipMonth



According to thesimpledollar.com, 120 degrees is the optimum temperature for your hot water heater. Most people do not use water hotter than 120 degrees and thus the energy needed to keep the water above 120 degrees is not used effectively. Lower the temperature and you can save some money on your energy bill! #CalHFA #HomeHacks #WaterHeater



There are lots of ways to keep a well-organized home on the inside, but what about outdoor etiquette? If you have grass or plants, it's easy to forget to water them if you don't have a watering system set up. Surprisingly, more plants are killed from being over-watered than under-watered. Keep your front yard looking great by watering just the right amount. #CalHFA #HomeHacks #Gardening #LawnMaintenance



If you want a space to appear brighter or larger, consider placing a mirror in the room. You can save on energy costs and it allows for more natural lighting to come through. However, never place a mirror directly across from the window as it can bounce the light right back out the window. #CalHFA #HomeHacks #Lighting #HomeownershipMonth