



CENTRAL BANK
of BELIZE

PRESS RELEASE

Implementation of the Moneylenders (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2017

The Moneylenders (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2017 (MLA), was passed in Parliament with an effective implementation date of 1 April 2017. The MLA transfers oversight responsibilities for moneylenders from the Ministry of Finance to the Central Bank of Belize (Central Bank). The MLA modernizes the regulatory regime for moneylenders and designates the Central Bank as Registrar, with regulatory, supervisory and enforcement powers consistent with international standards. The change in oversight body provides for additional focus on prudential regulation, consumer protection, monitoring and the implementation of measures to identify and mitigate Anti-Money Laundering/Combating Financing of Terrorism risks in the sector.

The MLA governs businesses that extend credit subject to interest or finance charges and includes pawnbroking, which is lending of money on the security of a pledge. Moneylending business **does not** include registered building societies, insurance companies, banks and financial institutions, credit unions nor persons licensed by the International Financial Services Commission.

During the transition period, up to 31 March 2017, the Ministry of Finance will maintain oversight responsibilities of moneylenders. Moneylenders' licenses for the 2017 financial year, which were approved by the Ministry of Finance prior to the date when the Governor General signed the MLA, remain in effect. All new applications for approval to operate as a moneylender are to be submitted to the Central Bank on the requisite forms and will be processed in accordance with the amended legislative framework, when the Central Bank assumes its role as Registrar on 1 April 2017.

As the future Registrar, the Central Bank, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance will host a sensitization session to discuss requirements of the MLA. Moneylenders will be informed of the date for this session in due course.

In the interim, the Central Bank encourages moneylenders to familiarize themselves with the MLA and advises the general public that it is an offence to offer moneylending services without the approval of the Registrar. Those persons wishing to clarify any matter in regards to the legal obligations of moneylenders may contact:

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