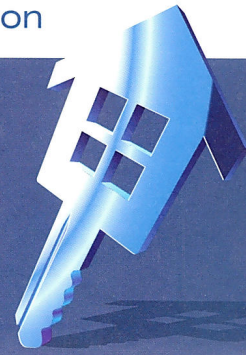


A note to Homeowners



Facing foreclosure? Scammers are targeting people having trouble paying their mortgages. Some claim to be able to “rescue” homeowners from foreclosures, while others promise loan modifications – for a fee. The **Federal Trade Commission**, the nation’s consumer protection agency, wants you to know how to avoid scams that could make your housing situation go from bad to worse.

Don’t Get Hit by a Pitch.

“We can stop your foreclosure!”

“97% success rate!”

“Guaranteed to save your home!”

These kinds of claims are the tell-tale signs of a foreclosure rip-off. Steer clear of anyone who offers an easy out.

Don’t Pay for a Promise.

Don’t pay any business, organization, or person who promises to prevent foreclosure or get you a new mortgage. These so-called “foreclosure rescue companies” claim they can help save your home, but they’re out to make a quick buck. Some may request hefty fees in advance – and then stop returning your calls. Others may string you along before disclosing their charges. Cut off all dealings if someone insists on a fee.

Send Payments Directly.

Some scammers offer to handle financial arrangements for you, but then just pocket your payment. Send your mortgage payments **ONLY** to your mortgage servicer.

Don’t Pay for a Second Opinion.

Have you applied for a loan modification and been turned down? Never pay for a “second opinion.”

Imitations = Frustrations.

Some con artists use names, phone numbers, and websites to make it look like they’re part of the government. If you want to contact a government agency, type the web address directly into your browser and look up any address you aren’t sure about. Use phone numbers listed on agency websites or in other reliable sources, like the Blue Pages in your phone directory. Don’t click on links or open any attachments in unexpected emails.

Talk to a HUD-Certified Counseling Agency – For Free.

If you’re having trouble paying your mortgage or you’ve already gotten a delinquency notice, free help is a phone call away. Call **1-888-995-HOPE** for free personalized advice from housing counseling agencies certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This national hotline – open 24/7 – is operated by the Homeownership Preservation Foundation, a nonprofit member of the HOPE NOW Alliance of mortgage industry members and HUD-certified counseling agencies. For free guidance online, visit www.hopenow.com. For free information on the President’s plan to help homeowners, visit www.makinghomeaffordable.gov.

