



U.S. Department of Justice

Executive Office for United States Trustees

Office of Research and Planning

Washington, D.C.

DON'T GET "LOCKED OUT" OF YOUR HOME **BY A BANKRUPTCY SCAM OPERATOR**

Are you having trouble making your home mortgage payments? Are you facing foreclosure on your home? Get all the facts before you pay someone to help you work out your mortgage problems.

"Bankruptcy foreclosure scams" target people whose home mortgages are in trouble. Scam operators advertise over the Internet and in local publications, distribute flyers, or contact people whose homes are listed in the foreclosure notices. Sometimes they direct their appeals to specific religious or ethnic groups.

These scam operators may promise to take care of your problems with your mortgage lender or to obtain refinancing for you. Sometimes they also ask you to pay your mortgage payments directly to the scam operator. They may even ask you to hand over your property deed to the operator, and then make payments to the operator in order to stay in your home.

But instead of contacting your lender or refinancing your loan, the scam operator pockets all the money you paid, and then files a bankruptcy case in your name--sometimes without your knowledge.

A bankruptcy filing often stops a home foreclosure, but only temporarily. If a bankruptcy is filed in your name but you don't participate in the case, the judge will dismiss the case and the foreclosure proceedings will continue.

If this happens, you will lose the money you paid to the scam operator--AND YOU COULD LOSE YOUR HOME. You will also have a bankruptcy listed on your credit record for years afterward.

[more]

Proceed with care if an individual or company:

- Calls itself a "mortgage consultant," "foreclosure service," or similar name.
- Contacts or advertises to people whose homes are listed for foreclosure.
- Collects a fee before it provides services to you.
- Tells you to make your home mortgage payments directly to the individual or company.
- Tells you to transfer your property deed or title to the individual or company.

If you can't pay your mortgage, call your mortgage lender or contact a lawyer for help. Your state or local bar association may be able to help you find low-cost legal help.

If you think an individual or company is running a mortgage foreclosure scam, contact the local office of the United States Trustee. The United States Trustee is a Justice Department official who monitors the bankruptcy system. Look for your local United States Trustee's telephone number in your telephone directory or on our web site at www.usdoj.gov/ust.

Press Contact:

Public Information Officer
Executive Office for United States Trustees
(202) 305-7411

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