



FHFA ENCOURAGES VIGILANCE AGAINST FRAUD

CORONAVIRUS-RELATED FRAUD PREVENTION TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR BORROWERS, RENTERS, AND THE MORTGAGE INDUSTRY

FOR MORTGAGE BORROWERS AND RENTERS

Be aware that fraud schemes related to coronavirus (or COVID-19) may try to steal your sensitive personal information, money, or home. Assistance to homeowners and renters is available through the CARES Act and other programs; however, scammers are increasing attempts to harm homeowners, mortgage borrowers, and renters through housing scams, relief scams, and mortgage fraud.

Watch out for:

- Fraudulent calls, emails, and text messages from scammers posing as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, banks or mortgage companies, non-profits, or government officials offering lower interest rates, foreclosure relief, delayed payment terms, or other loan modifications;
- Fraudulent offers for mortgage or rental assistance that require up-front payments such as cash, check, or wire transfer payments – no legitimate relief program requires up-front payments;
- “Spoofed” phone numbers and emails – where fraudsters provide false information to make their communications appear to be from a legitimate source. For example, your caller ID could show that a call is from your bank or Freddie Mac, but that may not be the case.
- Individuals who attempt to purchase your home by offering false information about the consequences of loan forbearance. The CARES Act works to keep you in your home, not get you out of it!
- Unsolicited offers for mortgage or rental-related assistance. Stop and verify whether the contact is legitimate, and always conduct your own independent research concerning any assistance. You can help protect yourself and your family by asking questions, carefully reading any materials provided, and contacting trusted resources when in doubt; and
- Unsolicited contact from persons reporting to be affiliated with your bank or mortgage company, landlord, or management company. Request the person’s name and contact information. Then, contact your financial institution or landlord via a trusted channel, such as a phone number on a recent bill or statement, to verify whether the contact is legitimate.

Borrowers should report possible mortgage fraud to FHFA’s Office of Inspector General [online](#) or at 800-793-7724.

For More Information and Assistance:

You can find additional coronavirus-related fraud-prevention resources as well as mortgage help online and by telephone at:

- [FHFA – Mortgage Help for Homeowners Impacted by the Coronavirus](#);
- [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau – Guide to Coronavirus Mortgage Relief Options](#);
- [Fannie Mae – Beware of Scams](#) or 1-800-2FANNIE;
- [Freddie Mac](#) or 1-800-FREDDIE (select option 2); and
- If you have additional questions, contact your mortgage servicer (*listed on a recent mortgage statement*) for assistance.



FOR INDIVIDUALS WORKING IN THE MORTGAGE INDUSTRY

Be Alert:

FHFA encourages individuals working in the mortgage industry to be alert to possible fraud schemes such as:

- Appraisal fraud by individuals misusing flexible appraisal alternatives;
- Application fraud by individuals exploiting borrower employment verification flexibility;
- Forbearance and foreclosure-rescue related fraud;
- Fraud related to property inspection and maintenance for delinquent properties; and
- Possible misappropriation of escrow funds.

Report Possible Fraud:

In addition to regulatory and contractual reporting requirements, individuals involved in the mortgage industry should report possible mortgage fraud to FHFA's Office of Inspector General [online](#) or at 800-793-7724.

The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) has issued information for financial institutions about COVID-19:

- [FinCEN Encourages Financial Institutions to Communicate Concerns Related to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and to Remain Alert to Related Illicit Financial Activity](#); and
- [FinCEN Provides Further Information to Financial Institutions in Response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#).

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have posted additional fraud-prevention resources for individuals in the mortgage industry that are available online from:

- [Fannie Mae – Mortgage Fraud Prevention](#)
- [Freddie Mac – Client Resource Center](#)

