



We Can Help Foreclosure Prevention Counseling



Additional foreclosure prevention resources

Illinois Foreclosure Prevention Network website
(<http://keepyourhomeillinois.org>)

Cook County Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program

(<http://cookcountyforeclosurehelp.org>)
Established by the Circuit Court of Cook County, the goal is to give homeowners who have received a summons to appear in court will have access to housing counseling and legal assistance at no charge. Open Communities is participating in this program as an Outreach Agency, through The Chicago Community Trust (<http://www.cct.org/>).

Don't be a victim of loan scams!

Avoid their deceiving schemes by speaking to a trusted HUD-approved counselor such as Open Communities. With HUD you have the power to stop them.
(www.hud.gov/preventloanscams)
Or call 1-888-995-HOPE (4673)

About Open Communities

Open Communities is certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide one-on-one and group housing counseling services to prevent foreclosure, mortgage scams and lending discrimination. Our multi-lingual counselors are fluent in Polish, Russian and Spanish.

If you're living in Chicago's northern suburbs and struggling to afford your mortgage, we can:

- Educate you about your available options and fair lending rights
- Review your loan documents and help you create a customized household budget
- Negotiate with lenders on your behalf to prevent you from losing your home
- Refer you to legal and financial resources.

All our services are confidential and free of charge. Appointments are held in our Winnetka office; we also offer Evanston residents appointments in our office in the Evanston Civic Center.



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Formerly known as the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs





We are your advocates

We understand that experiencing foreclosure on top of other life hardships can be frightening and overwhelming, to say the least. We are here to empower and navigate homeowners in trying to keep their homes through advocating for them and assisting them in the process of applying for a loan modification.

Documentation we need BEFORE we can meet with you

1. Most recent mortgage statement
2. Checking account statements for last 2 months
3. Two years of filed taxes
4. Pay stubs for the last 2 months for all income holders in the property
5. Proof of any other income (benefit award letters for child support, alimony, SSI, disability, rental income, cash payments for work)
6. Hardship letter (What happened that caused you to fall behind)
7. Most recent utility bill
8. Copy of credit report (can be obtained via www.annualcreditreport.com)
9. Property bill taxes if they are not escrowed
10. Homeowners Insurance with proof of payment
11. Any communication with lender/servicer (letters, court papers, etc.)
12. Financial Form (to be obtained from Open Communities) Download the form on our website at http://open-communities.org/Programs/Foreclosure_Prevention/
13. Original loan documents (these can be obtained by contacting your lender)
 - HUD-1A Settlement Statement
 - Good Faith Estimate
 - 1003 Loan Application
 - Truth in Lending Statement

The next steps

Important note: Please be sure to make copies of these documents because we will keep these on file

Once you have all of the necessary documents, you may send them to our office via USPS, email, or drop them off. When we confirm that we have all of the necessary items, we will call you to schedule your appointment.

Open Communities is a leading voice for housing, economic and social justice in north suburban Chicago, working to promote inclusive communities that are welcoming to all.

Inclusive and diverse communities are healthy, robust, and just. Our communities are richer when those who work in and contribute to the northern suburbs also live here.

Founded in 1972 by north suburban residents and congregations, we are a nonprofit, membership-based organization dedicated to fostering economically and culturally diverse communities. We educate, advocate and organize in the name of social justice, working collaboratively with current and prospective residents, local groups and municipalities.

We offer

Services:

- Fair Housing Discrimination Investigation & Education
- Foreclosure Prevention Counseling
- Homesharing
- Landlord/Tenant Advice
- Immigrant Leadership Development

Advocacy & Organizing:

- Affordable Housing Advocacy
- Community Organizing

All of our services are confidential and provided free of charge. Donations are welcome.

The foreclosure crisis

The foreclosure crisis is one of the nation's most pressing housing issues, and it's been particularly hard on recent immigrants, people of color, people with disabilities, female-headed households, and lower income families who became north suburban homeowners in the last two decades.

People may face foreclosure for many reasons: loss of employment, reduction of work hours, death, divorce, medical bills, and many others. Foreclosure can occur when payments become three or more months late, depending on the mortgage terms.

More than 14,500 homes were foreclosed in Chicago's northern suburbs between 2005 and 2013.

A variety of factors have contributed to the high rate of foreclosures:

- Scam Lending – Scam or “predatory” lenders and servicers pressure or deceive borrowers into taking on debt that's beyond their ability to repay. It is an abuse of subprime lending, which is a legitimate form of extending mortgages to borrowers with lower incomes and credit scores. Predatory lending is illegal in Illinois.
- Loss of Income: Since 2007, the nation's economy has suffered. Millions lost their jobs, and the most vulnerable have been workers in seasonal or construction jobs.
- Skyrocketing Living Expenses: With disproportionate increases in health care and other basic services, homeowners have had difficulty paying their mortgages and taxes.

Renters are affected too

It has been estimated that 40 percent of families who live in foreclosed buildings are renters.

If you are a renter and you are concerned that you might be evicted, please contact Open Communities' Landlord/Tenant Dispute Resolution staff at (847) 501-5760, ext. 402 with any questions about your rights.