



DELAWARE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY NEWS RELEASE

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DELAWARE REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

Governor Ruth Ann Minner today signed a proclamation officially declaring June as “Delaware Homeownership Month”. To help celebrate the First State’s ongoing commitment to homeownership, Governor Minner also announced the kick-off of a national and state agency collaborative effort for a toll-free foreclosure prevention hotline—1-888-995-HOPE. NeighborWorks America®, Homeownership Preservation Foundation, and Delaware’s State Housing Authority, Bank Commissioner’s Office and Attorney General’s Office, have combined efforts to provide a resource to help families in danger of losing their homes. The hotline offers free, around-the-clock foreclosure prevention services and counseling to consumers.

"Housing is an integral part of the Livable Delaware strategy and making sure Delawareans have access to safe, decent and affordable housing is a priority," said Governor Minner. “Everyone benefits when we can leverage resources by combining our efforts. While Delaware’s homeownership rate is consistently high, we hope this partnership will help to ensure that families who purchase homes will remain owners.”

“Working with our Attorney General, Carl Danberg and Bank Commissioner, Robert Glen, we will spread the word and make sure everyone in Delaware knows how important it is to act early and call the hotline,” said DSHA Director Sandy Johnson. “Over the next six months this partnership will use radio and newspaper ads to promote the hotline and also host workshops in foreclosure hotspots across the State.”

According to Robert Glen, Delaware State Bank Commissioner, a recent mortgage industry survey found in over 50% of foreclosure cases, the borrower never contacted their lender. Nearly two-thirds of delinquent borrowers are unaware of workout options. (Freddie Mac/Roper Survey, 12/12/05). Furthermore, a 2004 study by Freddie Mac concluded that repayment plans could lower the probability of home loss by 80 percent among all borrowers and 68% among low-to-moderate income borrowers. The Delaware State Housing Authority has teamed up with the Attorney General’s Office and Office of the State Bank Commissioner to make sure Delaware residents understand they may have options if they act quickly.

“Our 888-995-HOPE has offered free, confidential advice and counseling to over 50,000 homeowners nationwide,” said Sharon Sayles Belton, a member of the Board of Directors of the Homeownership Preservation Foundation. “We are pleased to be working with the State of Delaware to promote the phone number to residents of America’s First State.”

The Homeownership Preservation Foundation makes its toll-free 888-995-HOPE hotline available to homeowners in Delaware and throughout the United States. The Foundation will refer Delaware callers needing face-to-face counseling to their local NeighborWorks® America organization. This collaboration combines the expertise gained through a national call center with community-based services to offer distressed Delaware borrowers the best counseling available.

NeighborWorks® America, a national non profit organization created by Congress to provide financial support and technical assistance and training for community based revitalization efforts will assist the campaign in many ways, including a brochure, “Tips for Preventing Foreclosure”, which the State partnership has adopted and is now in print. NeighborWorks® America is represented by Christopher Helmers, of the Mid-Atlantic District, and two of our housing counseling agencies, Interfaith Housing Delaware and NCALL Research, are NeighborWorks® America Organizations. Over the next 6 months, NeighborWorks® America Organizations and the remaining members of the Federation of

Housing Counselors will join the state team in workshops across Delaware promoting education on issues from mortgage default counseling to home maintenance to budgeting.

DSHA recently released \$80 million more in low-interest mortgage money for first-time homebuyers. This brings the total issued under Governor Minner's administration to more than \$531 million, and has assisted approximately 2700 families in achieving the American Dream.

For more information on DSHA's homeownership programs, call 1-888-363-8808, or visit our website at <http://www2.state.de.us/dsha>.

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