



Office of the  
Comptroller of the Currency

# SAFE MONEY

GUARDING AGAINST FINANCIAL FRAUDS & SCAMS


## MORTGAGE FRAUD

**Mortgage fraud** targets homeowners, often through misleading terms, deceit, fraudulent applications, or misrepresentations made in the origination or funding of a mortgage loan.

This type of fraud targets individuals looking for home loans or financial assistance. Fraudsters may offer misleading or deceptive loan terms, demand upfront fees, or promise help with a foreclosure in exchange for payment, but never deliver on these promises.

*SAFE MONEY is a series of informational sheets developed by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) to help consumers recognize and avoid common financial frauds and scams.*

## RED FLAGS

-  **Upfront fees** in exchange for promises to modify or refinance a mortgage.
-  **Unsolicited offers** to avoid foreclosure or to secure a loan at rates too good to be true.
-  **Pressure to sign immediately** without time to read or review documents.
-  **Incorrect details on mortgage loan applications** that aim to steal equity from property.
-  **Requests for personal or financial data**, such as bank account details or Social Security numbers, without a legitimate reason.





## FRAUD METHODS

- Predatory Lending:** Lenders offer loans with high fees, abusive terms, or hidden charges.
- Loan Modification Scams:** False promises to modify loans or reduce mortgage payments.
- Foreclosure Rescue Scams:** Scammers charge upfront fees with false promises to save the home from foreclosure.

## AVOID FRAUD

### Work With Trusted Lenders

- Only work with lenders that are accredited and registered with the government.

### Never Pay Upfront Fees

- Legitimate loan modification programs don't require payment in advance.

### Get It in Writing

- Don't sign anything until you fully understand the terms and have had time to review the documents.

### Seek HUD-Approved Options

- If facing foreclosure, contact a [Department of Housing and Urban Development-approved housing counseling agency](#) for assistance.

### Monitor Credit Reports

- Obtain free credit reports from [AnnualCreditReport.com](#). Regularly review for any unauthorized inquiries or accounts, suspicious activities, or errors.

## REPORT FRAUD

Taking prompt and comprehensive actions when faced with mortgage fraud can help mitigate any potential damage and ensure that fraudsters are reported to the proper authorities.

Stay vigilant and always verify the authenticity of communications from unknown sources.

### Notify Relevant Agencies

- Report suspicious activity to relevant federal agencies and to your [State Consumer Protection Office](#).
- Determine [which agency regulates your bank](#) and file a complaint.

### Report to the Federal Trade Commission

- Visit the FTC's [IdentityTheft.gov](#) to report fraud; or call 877-438-4338.

### Contact the Internet Crime Complaint Center

- Submit a complaint to the [IC3](#), a division of the FBI.

### Inform Your Mortgage Lender

- Notify your current mortgage lender or the financial institution involved in the mortgage loan transaction about the fraudulent activity.



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## Promoting a Safe, Sound, and Fair Federal Banking System



The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency's (OCC) mission is to ensure that national banks and federal savings associations operate in a safe and sound manner, provide fair access to financial services, treat customers fairly, and comply with applicable laws and regulations.