

PRESS RELEASE | March 23, 2020

HOUSING AGENCY URGES NORTH DAKOTANS TO TALK TO YOUR MORTGAGE SERVICER OR LANDLORD FIRST; DON'T BECOME A VICTIM OF A FINANCIAL SCAM

BISMARCK, N.D. — North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA) is encouraging households facing financial difficulties because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) to notify their mortgage loan servicer or landlord if they are unable to make their mortgage or rent payment.

“Our loan servicing department has fielded multiple calls and emails from individuals and families who are facing financial difficulties because of virus-related shutdowns,” said Dave Flohr, NDHFA interim executive director. “We want our borrowers to keep calling us. Now is the time to talk to the people you can trust.”

Scams, especially financial scams, increase during times of crisis. Many offer false claims of assistance. While some offers of assistance are legitimate, many are not.

Red flags include:

- Guarantees that a business can stop a foreclosure or eviction, regardless of circumstances.
- Asking for payment before any services are performed.
- Instructions to make mortgage or rent payment to someone else, not to your loan servicer or landlord.
- Asking you to sign incomplete or blank paperwork or pressuring you to sign a document you have not had time to read thoroughly.

“North Dakota Housing Finance Agency holds the mortgages of more than 10,000 North Dakota families; many are first-time homebuyers,” said Flohr. “When our borrowers receive a counseling or refinance offer, we encourage them to talk to our staff first. We can help them determine if an offer is in their best interest.”

NDHFA also administers government programs that provide affordable rental housing for thousands of lower income individuals and families. These units are typically occupied by low-wage workers, and elderly and disabled households.

Households who are not NDHFA customers should contact their loan servicer or landlord directly. Mortgage loan servicers provide their contact information on monthly statements or in a payment coupon book. Contact information for landlords is typically provided on a lease. Some property management companies post their contact information at building entrances as well.

A self-supporting state agency, NDHFA is dedicated to making housing affordable for all North Dakotans. The Industrial Commission of North Dakota, consisting of Governor Doug Burgum as chairman, Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring and Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem, oversees the agency.

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