

# CONSUMER ADVISORY

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By Attorney General Tom Miller

## Beware of “Foreclosure Rescue Scams”

**A better bet: Call the free Iowa Mortgage Help Hotline at 877-622-4866.**

Scam-artists are trying to take advantage of Iowans who are caught up in the nationwide foreclosure crisis. Mortgage foreclosure “rescue” schemes ask you to pay hundreds of dollars *up-front* for so-called assistance or “rescue” from foreclosure – but they just take your money and do nothing to help. The scam puts you deeper into a financial hole, does nothing to save your home, and diverts you from getting real help.

Example: a Des Moines family was conned into giving \$795 to a company that claimed it would set up arrangements to help them avoid foreclosure -- but the con-artists made no such arrangements, and then they asked for even more money!

**Warning signs of “rescue scams”:** Beware if someone *contacts you*, claims they can help, *and asks you to pay an up-front fee*. They might contact you by phone, mail, e-mail, or even come to your door, because information about people facing foreclosure is included in public court records. Beware if someone claims to have a “special relationship” with your lender or “servicer” (they don’t!) Beware if they tell you not to talk to your lender or servicer directly (that’s just what you should be doing!) Beware if they ask for payment “up-front” (it’s illegal in Iowa to charge an up-front fee!) *No legitimate company will ask you to pay hundreds of dollars in advance.*

**Get help you can trust, if you are facing foreclosure or having trouble making payments: Call the Iowa Mortgage Help Hotline at 877-622-4866.** The Hotline is sponsored by the AG’s Office and the Iowa Finance Authority. It offers *free*, confidential help from trained counselors. This free call could save your home.

Don’t delay. Don’t feel overwhelmed or ashamed. The earlier you get true assistance, and the earlier you are in contact with your lender, the more likely you can save your home. Call the free Iowa Mortgage Help Hotline at 877-622-4866.

**If you have been cheated by a “rescue scam,” contact the Iowa AG’s Office.**

For most Iowans, our homes are our most important possession. If you are facing difficulty making payments, or facing the threat of foreclosure, take steps now to save your home – and don’t fall for “mortgage rescue” schemes that will only make the situation worse!

**For more information or to file a complaint, contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Div., 1305 E. Walnut, Des Moines, IA 50319. Call 515-281-5926, or toll-free at 888-777-4590. The web site is [www.iowaAttorneyGeneral.org](http://www.iowaAttorneyGeneral.org).**