

Stimulus Funds Earmarked to Fight Foreclosure Fraud

Pinellas County's Department of Justice and Consumer Services announces the receipt of a \$100,000 federal grant to fight foreclosure fraud. The grant was provided through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act.

"When the real estate market was booming," says Tim Burns, director of the Department of Justice and Consumer Services, "con artists were preying on people shopping for mortgages. Today, as we've seen such a dramatic increase in foreclosure cases, these same opportunists are seeking to illegally profit from people desperate to save their homes."



The grant will be earmarked specifically to fight foreclosure fraud in Pinellas County. A *Foreclosure Fraud Prevention Team* has been formed initially comprising the Department of Justice and Consumer Services as project coordinator, along with Pinellas County Community Development, St. Petersburg Neighborhood Housing Services, Tampa Bay Community Development Corporation, Gulfcoast Legal Services, the Pinellas-Pasco Area Agency on Aging and the Community Law Program.

Programs funded by the grant will alert homeowners to the dangers of foreclosure rescue scams and will offer direct assistance referrals for victims of foreclosure fraud to help prevent additional financial loss or even the possible loss of their homes.

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