

**2009 NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE HOUSING AGENCIES
COMMUNICATIONS
CREATIVE MEDIA
FORECLOSURE FAST FACTS**

http://www.state.nj.us/dca/hmfa/foreclosureprevention_resources.pdf

Entry Description

Like the rest of the nation, the State of New Jersey is facing the immediate challenge of providing its citizens with effective tools to deal with the threat of foreclosure in an uncertain economic environment. But it is not enough to create new programs and hope they will succeed, especially in light of the challenges being faced by families in fear of foreclosure. For these programs to be effective, they require an accessible vehicle that can easily transmit important state, county, municipal and social service contacts to an economically stressed public.

In response, HMFA created the Foreclosure Fast Facts, a compact statewide foreclosure prevention resource designed to function as a public information guide for those who may be struggling with the possibility of foreclosure and other related issues. The brochure provides valuable information sources for homeowners and renters including programs for homeowners in foreclosure, homeowners who may have been victims of predatory lending and renters facing eviction. This resource is available simply by accessing the HMFA website at nj-hmfa.com.

Highlighted is the Office of the Courts Foreclosure Mediation Program. The program is designed to assist homeowners facing foreclosure by providing them with access to housing counselors and court trained mediators. The program also provides attorneys to income eligible homeowners. The Fast Facts includes a comprehensive list of HUD certified housing counselors who have received extensive training in foreclosure prevention and asset preservation. The agencies are listed by county and all 21 counties in New Jersey are served. Also highlighted is the Mortgage Assistance Program (MAP) designed to provide funding to eligible homeowners facing foreclosure to help bring their mortgages current or to refinance or renegotiate the terms of their mortgage.

Of course, the foreclosure crisis in New Jersey and across the country is not the only financial issue facing our citizens. Due to sky rocketing unemployment, many people are struggling to stay afloat while earning significantly less income and perhaps crippled with an upwardly adjusting variable rate mortgage. These households need to have access to resources that are available but of which they may have no knowledge. For example, a hotline and web address for Home Heating Assistance is provided, as well as information regarding programs designed to help eligible individuals and families with their utility payments.

In addition to addressing the material issues related to foreclosure, the emotional impact of the loss of home and income can be significant not just to the adults but to every member of the family. The Foreclosure Fast Facts lists such resources as the Youth Toll-

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Free Helpline, which allows young people between 10 and 24 years of age to call and talk to a qualified counselor. All calls are confidential and anonymous.

Contacts for a variety of other social services are also included, such as the Women's Referral Central Hotline, the hotline for Veterans in need and the hotline for Homelessness Prevention. The Fast Facts provides the number for social service agencies in every county throughout the state where one can access services such as Medicaid, Food Stamps, Child Support, emergency assistance and employment support. A link to HMFA's Housing Resource Center (HRC) is also provided. This award winning website allows individuals who need to find a new home the ability to search thousands of affordable units. It is free and anonymous and updated on a biweekly basis.

The Foreclosure Fast Facts was designed in-house by HMFA's Senior Graphic Designer, saving the expense of contracting with an outside graphic design firm. It is printed on recycled paper using environmentally-friendly inks. Since its debut, over 10,000 copies have been printed and distributed throughout New Jersey at town hall meetings, at workshops, through the offices of local, state and federal elected officials and through the faith based community. This, of course, does not include the printing done by other agencies and individuals, who can easily access the website, download the brochure and print their own copies as needed.

Simply put, the Foreclosure Fast Facts brochure is the most comprehensive and accessible foreclosure prevention resource guide in the State of New Jersey, linking residents to hotlines, websites and services statewide. It serves as a no-nonsense roadmap, directing New Jersey's citizens toward tangible help and relief.