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April 21, 2020 - DCA Launches Online Foreclosure Intention Filing System for Residential Properties

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, April 21, 2020

CONTACT:

DCA:
Tammori Petty
Gina Trish
Lisa Ryan
(609) 292-6055

Provides Database that Details Extent to which Homes in New Jersey Are at Foreclosure Risk

TRENTON, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) this month launched an online foreclosure intention filing system for residential mortgage lenders to electronically submit to DCA copies of Notices of Intention to Foreclose on residential properties, as well as descriptive information for each property served with such a notice. The filing system is designed to populate a database that details the extent to which residential properties in the State are at immediate risk of foreclosure.

"Centralizing data on potential mortgage foreclosures throughout the state helps us refine the focus of our existing foreclosure prevention programs and informs the development of new ones so we can better succeed in keeping families in their homes," said Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner. "We need this valuable information now more than ever as New Jersey faces an unprecedented economic crisis as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Knowing which homes in the state are at risk of foreclosure will help us reach those families quicker with assistance."

A Notice of Intention to Foreclose is the first indicator that a homeowner is struggling to keep up with mortgage payments. State law requires that all residential mortgage lenders give homeowners at least 30 days prior notice by registered or certified mail before starting any foreclosure or other legal action to take possession of property. Attempts to reverse the foreclosure process generally have the best chance for success in this window of time, i.e. after the mortgage lender has sent the Notice of Intention to Foreclose and before the lender has filed the foreclosure complaint. At this stage of the process, the amount of fees and missed payments are usually still manageable and foreclosure intervention programs have the greatest likelihood of keeping families in their homes.

The foreclosure intention filing system will enable DCA to coordinate with the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), which is one of its affiliated agencies, to more effectively connect homeowners with the housing counseling offered under NJHMFA's Foreclosure Mediation Assistance Program. For foreclosure prevention resources, including information about the Foreclosure Mediation Assistance Program, you can visit **https://www.nj.gov/dca/hmfa/foreclosure/facts/**.

The filing system was created pursuant to Public Law 2019, Chapter 134. Under this law, all Notices of Intention to Foreclose must be filed electronically with DCA beginning April 1, 2020, as opposed to filing in hard copy. Through the new system, mortgage lenders, mortgage loan servicers, and their designees are able to submit Notices of Intention to Foreclose along with information for each property, including street address, county, zip code, municipality, block and lot numbers, and current owner(s) of record.

The database is confidential and not subject to public access or the common law concerning access to public records. It can be used on a read-only basis by DCA, county clerks, county registers of deeds and mortgages, county sheriffs, the Administrative Office of the Courts, other State agencies designated by DCA, and municipalities for those records within their jurisdiction. Authorized users of the database are required by law to maintain confidentiality of the records.

Additional information about the foreclosure intention filing system can be found at **https://www.nj.gov/dca/foreclosure.html** on the DCA website.

DCA offers a wide range of programs and services, including affordable housing production, fire safety, building safety, community planning and development, local government management and finance, and disaster recovery.

For more information about DCA, visit **https://nj.gov/dca/** or follow the Department on social media:

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Department of Community Affairs
PO Box 800
Trenton, NJ 08625-0800