



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senator David Valesky Welcomes DFS Mobile Command Center to CNY

DAVID J. VALESKY November 21, 2013

| ISSUE: **CONSUMER PROTECTION, HOUSING, FORECLOSURE, PREDATORY LENDING, VICTIMS**

Department of Financial Services' Assistance Available for Homeowners during Mobile Command Center Visits to Syracuse on Thursday and Liverpool on Friday

State Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) today announced that the Department of Financial Services' (DFS) Mobile Command Center (MCC) will be in Central New York this week to help provide foreclosure prevention assistance to struggling homeowners.

Department representatives will be available to meet homeowners in the MCC at two locations:

- Thursday, Nov. 21 -- Onondaga County Library - Mundy Branch, 1204 S. Geddes St., Syracuse
- Friday, Nov. 22 -- Salina Town Hall, 201 School Rd., Liverpool

DFS personnel will be available each day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"This is a great opportunity for homeowners in Central New York to ask questions and get assistance to keep them in their homes. I am pleased that the Mobile Command Center will be here in CNY, and I urge anyone with a problem, big or small, to take advantage and speak to DFS professionals," Senator Valesky said.

The state's foreclosure prevention program enables homeowners to have confidential meetings with DFS representatives who assess where homeowners are in the pre-foreclosure or foreclosure process. Depending on individuals' specific situations, the specialists may offer homeowners assistance in such areas as:

- Applying for mortgage modifications or providing help to homeowners who have already sought mortgage modifications.
- Interceding on behalf of homeowners with their mortgage lenders or servicers.
- Assisting homeowners in communicating with mortgage lenders or servicers.
- Accepting complaints from homeowners who believe they were victimized by mortgage lending abuses, so complaints can be investigated by the Department.

U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved housing counselors will also be available to offer assistance to homeowners. Homeowners unable to meet personally with DFS representatives are urged to call the Department's toll-free foreclosure hotline, 1-800-342-3736, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Homeowners may also file complaints using the Department website, www.dfs.ny.gov.

DFS also urged homeowners to be cautious of mortgage rescue scams, which may be marketed by private businesses. For example, homeowners should:

- Be wary of anyone asking for an upfront fee in exchange for getting a loan modification, saving a home from default or stopping a foreclosure or tax sale. New York law prohibits the collection of such fees in most cases. Also, many not-for-profit housing counselors will help homeowners negotiate with lenders for free.
- Be wary of anyone who says they can save a home if a homeowner signs or transfers the deed to his or her house over to them so the homeowner can catch up on mortgage payments or refinance a loan. A homeowner should never submit mortgage payments to anyone other than the homeowner's mortgage company without its approval.