



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Contact: Katie Muehlenkamp, Assessor-Recorder's Office
415-554-7434

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

**Assessor-Recorder Ting and Community Advocates Announce
Outreach Prevention Program for Homeowners At Risk of
Foreclosure in San Francisco**

*Program will be language accessible to enable Chinese and Spanish-speaking
homeowners to benefit as well*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - In an effort to stem the increasing number of foreclosures in the city, Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting joined with local housing and legal counseling agencies today to announce a new outreach program to help homeowners at risk of losing their homes to foreclosure.

Assessor-Recorder Ting will be sending letters to homeowners shortly after a Notice of Default has been publicly recorded with the city indicating non-payment of their mortgage loan. The letter informs homeowners of several resources available to help them remain in their home and avoid foreclosure. The letter provides contact information for housing counseling agencies and a legal assistance center and urges homeowners to seek help as soon as possible.

"I am pleased to be working with local counseling agencies to implement this outreach program. As foreclosures continue to rise in San Francisco, it is imperative that the city and the community work together to find practical solutions to this problem," Ting said. "I want homeowners who are having trouble paying their mortgage to know that there is help available to them."

In addition to English, the letters will also be translated into Spanish and Chinese, commonly spoken languages in San Francisco, in an effort to reach homeowners whose primary language is not English. These homeowners are often the victims of predatory lending practices and therefore are particularly at risk of losing their homes to foreclosure.

"Unfortunately, less than 50 percent of all homeowners in default contact their lenders," said Ed Donaldson, Housing Counseling Director at the San Francisco Housing Development Corporation, one of the agencies mentioned in the letter. "They avoid opening their mail and answering their phone. The best thing a homeowner can do if they expect to save their house is



to contact their lender and a HUD-approved counseling agency sooner rather than later. We're here to help them do that," Donaldson said.

Jane Duong, Home Ownership Program Manager at the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA), another agency mentioned in the letter, explained "At MEDA, the lead agency of the city-wide anti-predatory lending campaign, we provide counseling in English and Spanish and can assist homeowners in understanding and navigating their options for avoiding foreclosure.

"We also know that with a public filing of the Notice of Default, many homeowners may be targets of foreclosure rescue scams. We hope that with this letter, homeowners will be able to avoid these predatory practices and access legal services if they have been victims of foreclosure rescue scams," Duong said.

San Francisco has seen a dramatic increase in the number of mortgage defaults and foreclosures in the past couple of years. Since January 1, 2008 to today, there were approximately 430 Notices of Default recorded in San Francisco. The number of Notices of Default recorded rose approximately 68 percent between 2006 and 2007 (calendar year); the number of Trustee Deeds Upon Sale, documents recorded once a foreclosure has occurred, have jumped approximately 253 percent from 2006 to 2007.

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