



Being scammed out of your hard earned money can be financially and emotionally devastating. If you are a victim of lending or mortgage fraud, you could be dealing with damaged credit and financial or asset loss, as well as a painful array of emotions including anger, fear, and frustration.

It may be difficult to achieve full financial recovery or to avoid foreclosure; however, it is critical that you report the crime as quickly as possible. Reporting any financial fraud helps law enforcement, regulators, and government agencies to put a stop to the fraud, prevent the victimization of more consumers, and pursue the criminals committing the fraud.

Very often offenders will dispose of your money immediately after taking it. You may never get your money back. Just remember, recovery is about more than lost money. It's about protecting your financial health's future and finding ways for you to recover emotionally from the crime.

We recommend taking these steps to reclaim power and help you move forward.

■ AAPL Code of Ethics Violation

Private real estate lenders and service providers associated with AAPL must follow [AAPL's Code of Ethics](#). If you believe any member has violated the Code you can [file a complaint](#) to be reviewed by AAPL's Ethics Advisory Committee.

■ Recovery Checklist

☐ STEP 1 - Create a Lending Fraud File

Start by collecting all relevant documentation concerning the fraud in a secure location.

The file should include:

- a contact sheet of the perpetrator's name, mail and email addresses, telephone numbers and website address as well as any of the scammer's claimed regulatory registration numbers;
- a timeline of events, which may span many years;
- the police report, if any;
- your most recent credit report from all three credit reporting agencies;
- any evidence of the fraud or deception (*example*: if they used the AAPL Logo and were served a cease & desist notice by AAPL);
- logs of any phone conversations, with dates, names and phone numbers of any representatives you spoke with, and notes on what information they have you; and
- any other relevant documentation concerning the fraud.



□ STEP 2 - Know Your Rights

You have rights imparted by federal, and in some cases, state law. Learn about your rights to better protect yourself.

- For federal victim rights, the U.S. Department of Justice provides information on victim rights and financial fraud at www.justice.gov/usao-wdwa/victim-witness/victim-info/financial-fraud.
- For state victim rights, check with your state Attorney General, whose contact information can be found at www.naag.org.

□ STEP 3 - Report the Scam to Law Enforcement

Reporting the lending scam to law enforcement is important to begin the recovery process, ensure the responsible parties are investigated, and prevent further damage to other individuals.

- **Local Law Enforcement** - Contact any law enforcement office to file a police report.
- **District Attorney** - Contact your local District Attorney's Office.
- **Attorney General** - Contact your Attorney General's Consumer Protection unit and the prosecution unit to report the scam. Find contact information at www.naag.org.

□ STEP 4 - Treat it as Identity Theft

Because scammers can have information pertaining to your identity, including your Social Security number, you also will need to place a fraud alert and review your credit reports as precautionary measures, for up to 2-years:

- Contact one of the three credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, or TransUnion.)
- Tell the agency you are a victim of identity theft and request that a fraud alert be placed on your credit report. (The initial fraud alert will last for 90-days.)
- Ask the agency to report your request to the other two credit reporting agencies. And,
- Order your free credit report. (By creating a fraud alert, you are entitled to one free copy from each credit reporting agency within 12 months of placing the alert, regardless of previous requests.)

CREDIT REPORTING AGENCIES

All consumers are entitled to receive one free credit report every 12 months from each of the following agencies:

EQUIFAX

(800) 685-1111
www.equifax.com

EXPERIAN

(888) 397-3742
www.experian.com

TRANSUNION

(800) 680-7289
www.transunion.com



□ STEP 5 - Report Fraud to Appropriate Agencies & Organizations

You may benefit from reporting the scam to as many agencies or organizations that apply. As an example, if the scam was lending fraud, you can report to the state agencies responsible for that type of crime, the Federal Trade Commission, and the American Association of Private Lenders. If the scam was committed by an attorney or someone claiming to be an attorney, you would also contact the state bar association.

Any Lending Fraud

- ➔ **Federal Trade Commission Complaint Assistant**
(877) FTC-HELP
www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov

Mortgage Fraud

- ➔ **Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of the Inspector General**
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410
(800) 347-3735
Fax: (202) 708-4829
hotline@hudoig.gov

Mortgage Loan Modification Fraud

- ➔ **PreventLoanScams.org**
A national clearinghouse for loan modification fraud
<https://complaint.preventloanscams.org>

State Agencies for All Types of Fraud

- ➔ Look up the agency to report to at www.preventloanscams.org/states.

I Report to the Federal Trade Commission

To file a report with the FTC, contact the FTC's Complaint Assistant. Lodging a complaint will also enter the scam into the Consumer Sentinel Network so that law enforcement can stop ongoing attempts and track these types of crimes. *This process will not initiate a criminal investigation of your case.*

- ➔ **Federal Trade Commission Complaint Assistant**
(877) FTC-HELP
www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov



☐ STEP 6- Contact a Housing Counselor (Mortgage Related)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides housing counselors for individuals buying a home, refinancing a home, or attempting to avoid foreclosure. Find a local counselor at www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm or call the Housing Counselor Referral line at (800) 569-4287

☐ STEP 7- Consider Civil Remedies

Sometimes the best potential for recovery of lost assets is through civil suits. In some cases, civil lawsuits were used to remove liens from victims' homes and provided victims with good title to their homes. Civil attorneys who work for victims of financial fraud can analyze the particular facts and circumstances of your case and counsel you on the available remedies. The National Crime Victim Bar Association can provide referrals to attorneys who litigate on behalf of victims of crime and offer initial consultations at no cost or obligation.

➔ National Crime Victim Bar Association

2000 M Street, NW, Suite 480

Washington, DC 20036

(202) 467-8716 or (844) LAW-HELP / (844) 529-4357

Referral line is open from 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (ET), Monday -Friday.

Questions can be emailed to victimbar@ncvc.org

☐ STEP 8- Follow Up

Review the steps you've taken and follow up after 30 days with any law enforcement agencies or organizations that serve victims. Remember to keep an eye on your credit report and update your fraud alert. Criminals know that data is profitable; they can sell various types of information from \$30-\$1,300 and that could happen within 12 days or over 12 months.

I PREVENTION TIPS

Unfortunately, once you have been a victim of a scam or fraud, you may be targeted more frequently than others. Because your information or identity could be compromised, beware of schemes that require you to pay in advance for loan modifications and deals that guarantee results or claim to be "no money down."

To learn more, visit the Loan Modification Scam Alert Campaign website at www.loanscamalert.org, the Prevent Loan Scams Campaign website at www.preventloanscams.org, follow AAPL on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [LinkedIn](#) for regular #FraudAlerts.

Additional protection tips can be found at www.stopfraud.gov.