



## Broward County Foreclosure Prevention Panel Issues Final Report

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Early intervention, creation of a Foreclosure Court or other dispute resolution platform, an extensive consumer education campaign, expansion of required notifications to borrowers paying foreclosures, a countywide Model Ordinance for residential properties in foreclosure, and counseling for homeowners in foreclosure are among the recommendations included in a report from the Broward County Foreclosure Prevention Blue Ribbon panel.

The 17-member panel was chaired by Broward County Mayor Lois Wexler. "We wanted to be as cost neutral as possible and refocus dollars that are already there. My intent is to move forward and meet quarterly to continue this effort," said Mayor Wexler. "I'm going to stay involved with the initiative and make sure that we monitor the progress of the recommendations."

The report cites data from Integrated Realty Information Systems that shows the 1,127 foreclosure notices (lis pendens) were filed in 2005, more than doubling to 2,736 in 2006 and increasing sevenfold in 2007 to 14,079. In the first five months of 2008, the 13,944 foreclosure notice filings have almost equaled the 14,079 filed for all of 2007.

"I'm happy to see the panel recommended a court registry to collect rents. In the case of my daughter, she was given 20 days after Christmas Day to move out of the home she was renting," said Commissioner Kristin Jacobs. "Tenants of rental properties should be informed that they're living in a home that is in foreclosure."

"Most of the time people are told to contact the lender and the majority of the time they don't know who the lender is," said Panel coordinator Suzanne Weiss. "Mortgages are bought and sold and many times they don't know who the lender is." Ms. Weiss is an associate director of real estate sales for Neighborhood Housing Services. The non-profit organization assists individuals facing foreclosure. "This report has built into it the real stories of those who speak with us on the telephone each day."

With the Broward League of Cities taking the lead, the Foreclosure Prevention Panel recommends the adoption of a county-wide Model Ordinance for residential properties in foreclosure. Cities and communities in the unincorporated areas would be encouraged to adopt the ordinance which will include language regarding fees and assessments for a foreclosed property, streamlined notification process, an emergency property management plan, aesthetic property maintenance, board-up properties and other impacts that foreclosed properties create within a community.

In response to a request from Legal Aid Services of Broward County, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners approved the formation of the Panel to deal with the mounting foreclosure situation in Broward County. The Panel first convened in March and developed 23 recommendations, which were approved by the Panel on June 18 and presented to the Commission. The Commission officially accepted the report on Tuesday, June 24, 2008.

"Every member on the panel can be very proud," said Broward Commissioner Suzanne Gunzburger. "You gave us a report that gives us a working plan for the future. On behalf of those in foreclosure, I thank you."

To review the full report please visit [www.broward.org](http://www.broward.org)

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