

MONEY

**Another chance for home loan help ; Some who lost homes can seek foreclosure review**

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More than 2 million homeowners hit by a **foreclosure** in 2009 or 2010 can demand reviews of their cases and they'll receive letters explaining their rights, banking regulators said Thursday.

The letters are intended to help identify homeowners who believe they were harmed financially because of improper **foreclosure** practices by mortgage servicers, said Julie Williams, chief counsel of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, at a congressional hearing Thursday.

The number of affected homeowners includes those who completed a **foreclosure** in 2009 or 2010 or who had one in process then, the OCC said.

The review is one of the more significant requirements that banking regulators announced in April after a probe of **foreclosure** practices at 14 major companies found that they sometimes violated **foreclosure** laws and rules even though loans were generally seriously delinquent.

The servicers, including giant Bank of America, must submit plans to revamp **foreclosure** processes by Wednesday. The look-back is part of that. Once the OCC approves a plan, a company has 120 days to complete reviews, said Bryan Hubbard, OCC spokesman.

The requirements could also change based on the outcome of settlement talks that the Department of Justice and state attorneys general are having with servicers to address alleged **foreclosure** abuses, officials say. Justice spokeswoman Jessica Smith said negotiations are progressing but that no settlement is expected before the filing deadline.

In addition to getting letters, homeowners will be notified of their rights through local and national advertising campaigns, Williams said.

Mortgage servicers, meanwhile, will hire independent auditors to conduct the reviews. They'll decide whether homeowners should be financially compensated if, for example, foreclosures were unlawful or fees were unjust.

They'll also look for borrowers at high risk of poor **foreclosure** practices, including people denied loan modifications, Williams said.

Servicers were to submit new plans a month ago. The DOJ asked for a 30-day extension to see if a settlement could be reached before plans were due.

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