



Consumer Credit Counseling Service
of Maryland and Delaware, Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Helping people help themselves through Education, Financial Counseling and Debt Repayment

CCCS of MD & DE OFFERS HELP AND HOPE TO PEOPLE FACING FORECLOSURE

(Wilmington, DE) - It has been a three year ordeal for Carolynn and her family, but with active effort and outside help, they are one step closer to keeping their home. Like many local residents, Carolynn and her husband ended up in serious debt due to economic setbacks in 2008. To resolve their situation, they initially sought credit counseling from Consumer Credit Counseling Service of MD & DE (CCCS), a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency that has served Maryland communities since 1966. When it became clear they might still lose their home, their credit counselor recommended that they obtain HUD-approved mortgage foreclosure prevention counseling from CCCS. Since that time, it's been an uphill battle, but this month they made the final probationary payment on a mortgage modification plan and are awaiting word on whether the mortgage servicer will accept their modification terms.

Mortgage modification is often a complicated and demanding process. Luckily consumers can take advantage of free HUD-approved foreclosure prevention counseling, so they don't have to face it on their own. When clients who are behind on their mortgages first call CCCS, they're given a list of preliminary documentation to gather. Once that's done, they're assigned an appointment and receive counseling at a local office or by phone. During the appointment, their counselor helps them assess where they stand financially and explore all the options (i.e., repayment plans, forbearance, loan modification, short sale, or deed in lieu of foreclosure) that may be available to them.

According to CCCS of MD & DE Housing Program Manager Tom Simonton, "Our role is to provide objective information, so that clients can make an informed decision. We are also the client's advocate. We don't sugar coat the situation -- we offer honest answers. We help them determine if they can afford to stay in their homes."

When clients like Carolynn qualify for loan modification, their CCCS counselor continues to provide advice and support. How important is support? Carolynn notes: "Given it's a very long haul, you need all the encouragement you can get. When we feel down or frustrated, our counselor reminds us, 'You're still in your home -- just keep plugging away.' It's clear he cares and wants things to go well for us. That means a lot."

Loan modification may take anywhere from a few months to years to complete and requires a great deal of resourcefulness, vigilance, and persistence along the way. And loan modification isn't always a good idea: Simonton notes, "It only works if it's sustainable. When people come to us, most of them want to keep their homes. But sometimes that isn't possible. If they don't have enough ongoing income to make regular payments, it's bound to fail. When that's the case, we provide compassion and support. We help them recognize their situation and come up with a strategy for leaving their home with dignity."

The earlier consumers seek housing counseling, the more likely they are to avoid foreclosure. Simonton recommends that homeowners contact their lenders just as soon as they know their payment may be late. Carolyn concludes, "Don't be embarrassed to get help - don't wait. At your counseling session, pay attention to what you're told. And stay in close contact with your counselor throughout the mortgage modification process."

To schedule an appointment for CCCS foreclosure prevention counseling, call **1-866-731-8486** or visit **www.cccs-inc.org** to find out more. CCCS also is presenting free foreclosure prevention workshops for Delaware homeowners who are struggling to make their mortgage. At the workshops, participants will learn about their rights and resources that may help them keep their homes, including the Delaware Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program. Workshops will take place from **6-8 PM** on **Wednesday, September 14**, and **Wednesday, October 12, 2011** at the **Claymont Community Center**. The Center is located at **3301 Green Street, Claymont, DE 19703**. Registration is not required but preferred. Register today by calling **1-800-267-5002** or **1-302-792-1200** or register online at **<http://bit.ly/ForeclosurePrevReg>**.

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Consumer Credit Counseling Service of MD & DE, Inc. (CCCS) is an accredited nonprofit agency that has served the local community since 1966. CCCS is dedicated to helping individuals and families resolve their financial problems. We promote the wise use of credit through education and confidential budget, money management counseling, and housing counseling. MD State License #14-01 / DE State License #07-01.