


OFFICE OF THE NEW YORK STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL LETITIA JAMES


NEW YORK AG'S OFFICE & HOUSING CASES



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INTRODUCTION

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TYPES OF HOUSING CASES

- ❖ Deed Thefts
- ❖ Enforcement of state and federal anti-discrimination housing laws (includes instances of income discrimination)
- ❖ Illegal or Fraudulent Business Activities



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Deed Thefts

- ❖ Deed thefts occurs when someone steals the title to someone else's home without the homeowner knowing or consenting.
- ❖ Scammers can commit deed theft by forgery; scammer will forge homeowner's signature and records the deed with the Office of City Registrar or County Clerk; or
- ❖ By fraud. Homeowners will sign a deed without realizing what they're signing. Homeowners can be misled by scammers to believe they are receiving help to modify or refinance a loan but the homeowner is in actuality, signing over the deed to the property.
- ❖ Scammers will often look for properties that appear "distressed." So abandoned properties, homes that are in foreclosure or has tax and/or utility liens on it.
- ❖ If someone believes they are the victim of deed theft, it's important to file a Complaint with law enforcement immediately (either the OAG or County DA's Office).
- ❖ Link for submitting deed theft complaints:
<https://formsnym.ag.ny.gov/OAGOnlineSubmissionForm/faces/OAGDTBHome> can also email deedtheft@ag.ny.gov



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ENFORCEMENT OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS

- ❖ The federal Fair Housing Act and the New York State Human Rights Law (in addition to other local laws) prohibit discrimination by housing providers (includes owners, real estate agents, managing agents, building superintendents, cooperative and condominium boards) and lenders (banks and mortgage companies).
- ❖ The Fair Housing Act makes it illegal to discriminate on the basis of a person's race, familial status (presence of children under the age of 18), color, nation origin, religion, disability (physical or mental), or sex.
- ❖ The New York State Human Rights law covers all the above categories but also protects discrimination based on creed, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, military status, or lawful source of income (public or housing assistance, social security, supplemental security income, pension, child support, alimony, foster car subsidies, annuities or unemployment benefits).
- ❖ If a person believes they are the victim of housing discrimination, the OAG's Civil Rights Bureau investigates and prosecutes discriminatory policies, and patterns or practices of discrimination.
- ❖ Link for submitting discrimination complaints: <https://pcf.ag.ny.gov/form/CIVIL>



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Other Types of Cases

- ❖ Executive Law 63(12) empowers the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute acts of repeated fraudulent or illegal business practices. The Office can seek broad remedies under this statute including injunctions, restitutions or damages
- ❖ General Business Law § 349 prohibits unfair, deceptive, or abusive acts or practices in the conduct of any business, trade or commerce or in the furnishing of any service in the state.
- ❖ Example:
 - ❖ Tenants Counsel Network (TCN) Case: TCN advertised itself as a for-profit law firm with a specialization in New York Housing laws. They solicited to tenants facing eviction in New York City and offered legal services from “experienced attorneys.” The tenants who retained TCN as legal counsel faced a number of issues including a lack of communication in the lead up to court dates and numerous missed court dates. OAG investigated after receiving multiple complaints from tenants, advocates and the legal community and reached an agreement to close and dissolve the TCN law firm and refund \$172,257 to the former clients. (<https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/2026/attorney-general-james-shuts-down-predatory-law-firm-targeted-new-york-city>)



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RESOURCES

- ❖ Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP)
 - ❖ 1-855-HOME-456
 - ❖ Homeownerhelpny.org

- ❖ OAG Nassau Regional Office
 - ❖ Main Line: (516) 248-3302
 - ❖ Consumer Frauds: (516) 248-3301, (516) 248-3300
 - ❖ Address: 200 Old Country Road, Suite 240, Mineola NY 11501
 - ❖ Office Hours: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Mon-Fri

- ❖ OAG Suffolk Regional Office
 - ❖ Main Line: (631) 231-2424
 - ❖ Consumer Frauds: (631) 231-2401
 - ❖ Address: 300 Motor Parkway, Suite 230, Hauppauge NY 11788
 - ❖ Office Hours: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Mon-Fri

