DEEP ROOTS
REI
INVESTING IN HOMES, ROOTED IN INTEGRITY.

FORECLOSURE

Understanding Your Options

A free guide to help you understand the Maryland foreclosure process, protect your home and equity, and find the best path forward for your family.

You have options. We're here to help you find the right one.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Matthew & Marisa Larkin

If you're reading this guide, you may be falling behind on payments, or you may have already received a notice from your lender, and the weight of it can feel like more than you can carry. We want you to know: **you are not alone, and you have options.** Reaching out early, even just to ask questions, keeps more of them open.



We started Deep Roots REI because we kept seeing Baltimore families lose their homes (and their equity), not because their situations couldn't be solved, but because they didn't know where to turn, or felt too embarrassed to ask. Foreclosure is one of the most misunderstood processes in real estate, and the lenders aren't the ones who will walk you through your options.

So we built something simple: when you call our number, you talk directly to us. Not a call center. Not a salesperson. Just someone from Baltimore who will listen, answer your questions, and help your family think through the best next step, whether that's keeping the home, selling it, or working with your lender to stop the sale. No pressure. No judgment. Just honest help.

Talk to us directly: 443-216-9475

CHAPTER 01

What Is Foreclosure?

Foreclosure is the legal process a lender uses to take back and sell a home when a borrower has fallen behind on mortgage payments. In Maryland, foreclosure is primarily a court-supervised (judicial) process, handled through the Circuit Court in the county where the property sits. That's actually good news: it means there are formal protections, deadlines, and opportunities to act at every stage.

Key Facts About Foreclosure in Maryland

- ✓ **Notice First, Then Filing:** Before your lender can file in court, they must send a written Notice of Intent to Foreclose at least 45 days in advance. If you haven't received one, the formal clock hasn't started.
- ✓ **Court Oversight:** The Circuit Court for Baltimore City or Baltimore County reviews the filing, the loss mitigation efforts, and ultimately ratifies any sale. Nothing happens overnight.
- ✓ **Timeline:** A typical Maryland foreclosure runs about 5–9 months from the first missed payment to the auction. That's time you can use to negotiate, refinance, or sell on your own terms.
- ✓ **Mediation Right:** Maryland gives owner-occupants the right to request foreclosure mediation. An administrative law judge sits down with you and the lender to look for alternatives before a sale can be scheduled.
- ✓ **You Can Still Sell:** Up until the day of the auction, you have the right to sell your home and pay off the loan from the proceeds. A cash sale can often close in 14–30 days, fast enough to resolve a foreclosure before it's finalized.

> **The most important thing to remember:** Foreclosure does NOT have to mean losing your home and your equity. At every stage, you have options, and the earlier you act, the more of those options stay open.

CHAPTER 02

The Foreclosure Timeline

How it works in Maryland

DAY 1–30

Missed Payment & Default

After one missed payment, the loan is in default. Late fees begin to accrue. This is the best time to call your servicer. They may offer a repayment plan, forbearance, or loan modification before things escalate.

DAY 45+

Notice of Intent to Foreclose (NOI)

Your lender must mail a Notice of Intent to Foreclose by certified and first-class mail at least 45 days before they can file in court. The notice includes a loss mitigation application and a list of housing counselors. Open it the day it arrives. Every date inside matters.

DAY 90–120

Order to Docket Filed in Circuit Court

After 90+ days of default and the NOI period has run, the lender files an Order to Docket in the Circuit Court. You'll be served with the complaint, a Final Loss Mitigation Affidavit (or preliminary), and instructions for requesting mediation.

DAY 120–180

Loss Mitigation & Mediation

You have 25 days from the Final Loss Mitigation Affidavit to file a Request for Foreclosure Mediation and pay the $50 filing fee. Mediation is conducted by an administrative law judge. It's your formal chance to negotiate with the lender.

DAY 150–270

Foreclosure Sale & Ratification

If no resolution is reached, the lender schedules an auction (no sooner than 45 days after a Notice of Sale is sent to you). After the sale, the court reviews and "ratifies" it, usually 30–45 days later. You can still sell or reinstate up until the auction.

Earlier conversations open more options. Call or text: 443-216-9475

Option 01: Keep the Home

Strategies to bring the loan current and stay in the home

Keeping the home is often the first goal, and in many cases, it's possible. The earlier you act, the more of these tools are available to you. Here are the most common paths Maryland homeowners use to stop foreclosure and stay put:

Reinstatement

Pay all past-due amounts (missed payments, late fees, attorney costs) in a lump sum to bring the loan fully current. Under Maryland law, you generally have the right to reinstate any time up to one business day before the foreclosure sale.

Loan Modification

The lender permanently changes your loan terms (lower interest rate, extended term, or capitalized arrears) to make payments affordable. This is the most common outcome of foreclosure mediation. A HUD-approved counselor can help you apply.

Forbearance or Repayment Plan

A short-term arrangement where the lender pauses or reduces payments, then spreads the missed amount over future payments. Best for temporary hardships: job loss, medical emergency, disability that's resolving.

Refinance

If you have equity and your credit will support it, refinancing into a new loan can pay off the defaulted mortgage and reset your payments. Time-sensitive: refinancing gets harder once a foreclosure is filed in court.

Bankruptcy (Chapter 13)

Filing Chapter 13 immediately stops a scheduled foreclosure sale and lets you repay arrears over 3–5 years. This is a major decision, so always consult a Maryland bankruptcy attorney before filing.

Not sure which option fits? Call or text: 443-216-9475

Option 02: Sell & Move Forward

If keeping the home isn't realistic, selling before the auction is almost always better than letting foreclosure run its course. You protect your equity, your credit, and your ability to rent or buy again. But not all sales are created equal, and time is the biggest factor.

Traditional Sale vs. Working With Us

	Traditional Sale (With an Agent)	Working With Deep Roots REI
Timeline	3–6 months after listing	Close in as few as 14–30 days
Repairs Needed	Yes, buyers expect move-in ready	None, we buy as-is
Showings	Multiple open houses and walkthroughs	One visit from us
Agent Commissions	5–6% of sale price	None ($0 in commissions)
Closing Costs	Seller typically pays 1–3%	We cover all closing costs
Certainty	Deals can fall through due to financing	Cash offer, no financing contingencies
Beats the Auction?	Often not, too slow if sale is near	Yes, we can close before sale date

Why Selling Before the Auction Makes Sense

- ✓ Protects your remaining equity: a foreclosure auction often sells the home for less than market value
- ✓ Avoids a foreclosure on your credit report (a foreclosure stays for 7 years; a sale does not)
- ✓ Stops the accumulation of late fees, attorney fees, and court costs added to your loan balance
- ✓ Gives you control over the closing date so you can plan your move
- ✓ A cash sale eliminates financing fallout and can close fast enough to stop the auction

Option 03: Negotiate with the Lender

If you can't afford to reinstate but want to avoid a forced sale, there are several ways to negotiate directly with your lender. Each has trade-offs, but all of them are better than letting the auction happen.

Short Sale

If your home is worth less than what you owe, the lender may agree to accept the sale proceeds as full payoff, even if it's short of the balance. This requires lender approval, documentation of hardship, and a buyer who can close. We've completed short sales in Baltimore in as little as 60 days.

Deed in Lieu of Foreclosure

You voluntarily transfer the home's deed to the lender in exchange for cancellation of the remaining debt. It's faster and less damaging to credit than a completed foreclosure, but you walk away with nothing. Only makes sense if there's no equity to preserve.

Foreclosure Mediation

Maryland law gives owner-occupants the right to mediation with their servicer through the Office of Administrative Hearings. The judge can't force a modification, but mediation often produces one, and it pauses the foreclosure while it's underway. The $50 filing fee is well worth it.

Negotiate Junior Liens & Back Taxes

Second mortgages, HOA liens, and unpaid Baltimore City or Baltimore County property taxes can be negotiated, settled, or paid through sale proceeds. Don't assume a lien makes the home unsellable. We work through this every week.

Important Note: We are not attorneys and do not provide legal advice. We work alongside your attorney (or can connect you with one) and your housing counselor to help navigate the real estate side of foreclosure. Always consult a licensed Maryland attorney for legal questions.

MYTH VS. REALITY

Common Myths About Foreclosure

MYTH: "Once I get a notice, it's already too late."

REALITY: The Notice of Intent to Foreclose is the beginning of the formal process, not the end. From NOI to auction usually takes 5–9 months in Maryland. There's time to reinstate, sell, modify, or mediate. The most costly choice is doing nothing.

MYTH: "If I can't pay, I'll lose all my equity."

REALITY: Foreclosure auctions in Baltimore frequently sell homes for far less than market value. Selling before the auction, even at a discount to a cash buyer, usually nets you more than letting the sale go through. The equity is yours to protect.

MYTH: "The bank wants my house."

REALITY: Banks are not in the business of owning homes. They lose money on every foreclosure. Most servicers will work with homeowners who reach out early, through modifications, payment plans, short sales, or deed-in-lieu agreements.

MYTH: "I can't sell my house once foreclosure starts."

REALITY: You absolutely can. Up until the auction (and sometimes even between the auction and the court's ratification), you have the right to sell, pay off the loan, and keep any remaining equity. A cash buyer like Deep Roots REI can often close fast enough to stop the sale.

MYTH: "I have to fix up the house before I can sell it."

REALITY: Deep Roots REI buys properties in any condition. No repairs, cleaning, or staging required. We've bought homes in Baltimore with code violations, deferred maintenance, structural issues, and active occupancy, and closed in under 30 days.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Your Rights as a Maryland Homeowner

Maryland law gives homeowners facing foreclosure significant protections. Understanding these rights can prevent costly mistakes and give you leverage in negotiations with your lender.

- ✓ **Right to a 45-Day Notice:** Your lender must send a Notice of Intent to Foreclose at least 45 days before filing in court, by both certified and first-class mail. The notice must include a loss mitigation application and a list of HUD-approved counselors.
- ✓ **Right to Loss Mitigation Review:** Before the lender can move forward, they must review you for alternatives to foreclosure (including modification, short sale, and deed-in-lieu) and certify that review to the court.
- ✓ **Right to Mediation:** As an owner-occupant, you have 25 days from receipt of the Final Loss Mitigation Affidavit to request foreclosure mediation. The $50 filing fee is small compared to what mediation can save you.
- ✓ **Right to Reinstate:** Under Maryland law, you can generally reinstate your loan by paying the past-due amount any time up to one business day before the foreclosure sale.
- ✓ **Right to Sell:** Up until the auction, you have the right to sell the home, pay off the loan, and keep any remaining equity. The lender cannot stop a legitimate sale that satisfies the loan.
- ✓ **Right to Surplus Funds:** If the foreclosure sale brings in more than what's owed (mortgage + costs), the surplus belongs to you. Don't let it sit unclaimed: file a motion with the Circuit Court to receive it.
- ✓ **Right to Notice of Sale:** You must be served with notice of the scheduled sale at least 30 days before the auction. Watch your mail carefully once the foreclosure is filed.

Questions about your rights? Call or text us: 443-216-9475

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Foreclosure FAQ

Q: How long does foreclosure take in Maryland?

From the first missed payment to the auction usually takes 5–9 months. The Notice of Intent to Foreclose itself buys you 45 days before any court filing can happen.

Q: Can I stop the foreclosure once it's been filed?

Yes, in several ways. You can reinstate, modify, refinance, request mediation, sell the home, or in some cases file Chapter 13 bankruptcy. The key is acting before the sale date.

Q: Do I need an attorney?

We strongly recommend it, especially once the lender has filed in court. Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (mvlslaw.org) offers free help for those who qualify. We can recommend trusted local attorneys, too.

Q: Can I sell my home if I'm already behind on payments?

Absolutely, and it's often the best move. As long as the sale satisfies the loan payoff (or the lender approves a short sale), you can close at any point before the auction. A cash sale can close in as few as 14 days.

Q: What happens to my second mortgage or HOA lien?

Those debts don't disappear in foreclosure. Junior liens and HOA dues typically need to be paid or negotiated at closing. We handle this routinely as part of any sale we do.

Q: Will I owe money to the lender after the foreclosure?

Maryland allows lenders to seek a deficiency judgment for the unpaid loan balance after a foreclosure sale, though it's not always pursued. Selling before the auction usually pays the loan in full and eliminates this risk.

Q: What about my credit?

A completed foreclosure stays on your credit for 7 years and can drop your score 100+ points. A pre-foreclosure sale (short sale or cash sale) is far less damaging, often only 50–80 points and shorter on your report.

Q: How does Deep Roots REI make money?

We purchase properties at a fair price, then invest our own money to renovate and resell them. Our profit comes from the renovation and resale, not from fees or commissions charged to you. You pay nothing out of pocket.

OUR TRACK RECORD

A Family We Helped Right Here in Baltimore

The Situation

A Baltimore County homeowner lost his job during a long medical issue and fell six months behind on his mortgage. By the time he called us, he had received the Notice of Intent to Foreclose, ignored two letters from the lender's attorney, and an Order to Docket had been filed in Circuit Court. The auction was scheduled for six weeks out.

The Challenge

The owner had real equity in the home (about $80,000) but no way to bring the loan current. He was terrified of losing everything at auction, where the property would likely sell for far less than market value. He'd been trying to qualify for a loan modification on his own for four months with no progress.

How We Helped

Matthew and Marisa sat down with him at his kitchen table, walked through every option, and connected him with a Maryland foreclosure attorney through Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service. With the auction approaching fast, he decided selling was the right call. Deep Roots REI made a fair cash offer the same week: as-is, with no repairs, no cleaning, and no commissions.

The Result

We closed in 22 days, three weeks before the scheduled auction. The mortgage was paid in full at closing, the second lien was negotiated and settled, and the homeowner walked away with $68,000 in his pocket and zero foreclosure on his credit. He moved in with family for six months, then qualified to rent a place of his own. No auction. No judgment. A clean start.

Ready to talk? Call or text Matthew & Marisa: 443-216-9475

HOW WE CAN HELP

Three Ways We Can Help

1

Buy Your Home Directly and Fast

We make fair, no-obligation cash offers on Baltimore-area homes in any condition. No repairs, no commissions, no closing costs to you. We can close in as few as 14 days, fast enough to stop most scheduled foreclosure sales. This is the fastest way to protect your equity and walk away with cash in hand.

2

Guide You Through Your Options

Even if you're not ready to sell, we're happy to walk you through the foreclosure process, explain your options, and connect you with HUD-approved housing counselors, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service, or your servicer's loss mitigation department. There's no cost and no obligation, just honest guidance from people who've helped Baltimore families through this.

3

Connect You with Resources

We maintain relationships with foreclosure attorneys, HUD-approved counselors, title companies, and bankruptcy specialists throughout the Baltimore area. Whatever your situation, we can help you find the right professional. See our Local Resources page for direct contact information.

Ready to talk? Call or text 443-216-9475

OUR PROCESS

How It Works

Our process is designed to be simple, transparent, and stress-free. Here's exactly what to expect when you work with Deep Roots REI:

Step 1

5 minutes

Call or Text Us

Reach out at 443-216-9475 or through deeprootsrei.com. Tell us what's going on: how far behind you are, whether you've gotten any notices, what you'd ideally want to do. We'll listen, answer your questions, and explain your options. No pressure, no obligation.

Step 2

24–48 hours

We Research & Visit the Property

We'll research the title, your loan balance, any liens, and comparable values. Then we'll schedule a brief visit to see the home's condition. This is a quick walkthrough, not a formal inspection.

Step 3

Within 48 hours

Receive a Fair Cash Offer

Based on our research and visit, we'll present a written, no-obligation cash offer. We'll walk you through exactly how we arrived at the number: no hidden fees, no surprises.

Step 4

14–30 days

Close on Your Timeline

If you accept, we coordinate with your attorney, the title company, and your lender (for payoff). We cover all closing costs. You choose the closing date, and we can move fast enough to beat a scheduled auction when needed.

LOCAL RESOURCES

Baltimore Foreclosure Resources

These are trusted local and state resources that can help you navigate foreclosure. Many of these services are free. We encourage you to reach out to any of them if you need assistance.

Maryland HOPE Hotline

Phone: 1-877-462-7555 | dhcd.maryland.gov
Free statewide hotline connecting Maryland homeowners with HUD-approved housing counselors and legal services. Call this first.

Maryland Office of Financial Regulation

Phone: (410) 230-6077 | labor.maryland.gov/finance
Investigates complaints against mortgage servicers and lenders. Useful if you believe your servicer is violating Maryland's loss mitigation requirements.

Circuit Court for Baltimore City

111 N. Calvert Street, Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 333-3733
Handles foreclosure filings for properties inside Baltimore City limits.

Circuit Court for Baltimore County

County Courts Building, 401 Bosley Avenue, Towson, MD 21204
Phone: (410) 887-2601
Handles foreclosure filings for properties in Baltimore County.

Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service

201 N. Charles Street, Suite 1400, Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410) 539-6800 | mvlslaw.org
Free legal help for income-qualified Marylanders, including foreclosure defense.

Baltimore County Foreclosure Prevention Program

Phone: (410) 887-2453 | baltimorecountymd.gov
County-funded foreclosure counseling and prevention for Baltimore County homeowners.

211 Maryland / HUD-Approved Counseling

Dial 2-1-1 or visit 211md.org
Free referrals to HUD-approved housing counselors, emergency rental and utility assistance, and other community resources.

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You Have Options. Let Us Help.

We're not a corporation. We're your neighbors: a husband-and-wife team who cares about Baltimore families and wants to help you find the best path forward.

443-216-9475

deeprootsrei.com

Call, text, or visit us online, anytime

Locally Owned | Serving Baltimore Since 2024

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