

RCW 61.34.120 Distressed home purchaser—Prohibited practices.

A distressed home purchaser shall not:

(1) Enter into, or attempt to enter into, a distressed home conveyance with a distressed homeowner unless the distressed home purchaser verifies and can demonstrate that the distressed homeowner has a reasonable ability to pay for the subsequent conveyance of an interest back to the distressed homeowner. In the case of a lease with an option to purchase, payment ability also includes the reasonable ability to make the lease payments and purchase the property within the term of the option to purchase. An evaluation of a distressed homeowner's reasonable ability to pay includes debt to income ratios, fair market value of the distressed home, and the distressed homeowner's payment and credit history. There is a rebuttable presumption that the distressed home purchaser has not verified a distressed homeowner's reasonable ability to pay if the distressed home purchaser has not obtained documentation of assets, liabilities, and income, other than an undocumented statement, of the distressed homeowner;

(2) Fail to either:

(a) Ensure that title to the distressed home has been reconveyed to the distressed homeowner; or

(b) Make payment to the distressed homeowner so that the distressed homeowner has received consideration in an amount of at least eighty-two percent of the fair market value of the property as of the date of the eviction or voluntary relinquishment of possession of the distressed home by the distressed homeowner. For the purposes of this subsection (2)(b), the following applies:

(i) There is a rebuttable presumption that an appraisal by a person licensed or certified by an agency of the federal government or this state to appraise real estate constitutes the fair market value of the distressed home;

(ii) "Consideration" means any payment or thing of value provided to the distressed homeowner, including unpaid rent owed by the distressed homeowner before the date of eviction or voluntary relinquishment of the distressed home, reasonable costs paid to independent third parties necessary to complete the distressed home conveyance transaction, the payment of money to satisfy a debt or legal obligation of the distressed homeowner, or the reasonable cost of repairs for damage to the distressed home caused by the distressed homeowner. "Consideration" does not include amounts imputed as a down payment or fee to the distressed home purchaser or a person acting in participation with the distressed home purchaser;

(3) Enter into repurchase or lease terms as part of the distressed home conveyance that are unfair or commercially unreasonable, or engage in any other unfair or deceptive acts or practices;

(4) Represent, directly or indirectly, that (a) the distressed home purchaser is acting as an advisor or consultant, (b) the distressed home purchaser is acting on behalf of or in the interests of the distressed homeowner, or (c) the distressed home purchaser is assisting the distressed homeowner to save the distressed home, buy time, or use other substantially similar language;

(5) Misrepresent the distressed home purchaser's status as to licensure or certification;

(6) Perform any of the following until after the time during which the distressed homeowner may cancel the transaction has expired:

(a) Accept from any distressed homeowner an execution of, or induce any distressed homeowner to execute, any instrument of conveyance of any interest in the distressed home;

(b) Record with the county auditor any document, including any instrument of conveyance, signed by the distressed homeowner; or

(c) Transfer or encumber or purport to transfer or encumber any interest in the distressed home;

(7) Fail to reconvey title to the distressed home when the terms of the distressed home conveyance contract have been fulfilled;

(8) Enter into a distressed home conveyance where any party to the transaction is represented by a power of attorney;

(9) Fail to extinguish or assume all liens encumbering the distressed home immediately following the conveyance of the distressed home;

(10) Fail to close a distressed home conveyance in person before an independent third party who is authorized to conduct real estate closings within the state. [2008 c 278 § 10.]