

Planning Office *for* Urban Affairs

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

TO: Parish Pastors
FROM: Lisa Alberghini; Molly Ekerdt
RE: Help for Parishioners and Others Facing Possible Home Foreclosures
DATE: March 17, 2009
CC: Seán Patrick Cardinal O'Malley; Very Rev. Richard M. Erikson; Rev. J. Bryan Hehir

The Planning Office for Urban Affairs, one of the justice ministries of the Archdiocese, is working to help people facing foreclosure who may be at risk of losing their homes. We are sending the attached information for parish staff to be informed about how to help people keep their homes and stabilize communities threatened by foreclosures.

Foreclosures are affecting many individuals and families in all types of communities and at all income levels and people should not feel hesitant about getting assistance. It is very important for people to know that early intervention can save their home, and that anyone having difficulty making mortgage payments should seek help.

Please find with the following materials attached:

1. A sample message for inclusion in your Sunday bulletin (once, or over multiple weeks), giving a few main numbers to call, and conveying the most important message: that people seek help early. Please feel free to tailor this message to your parish, note any services you may provide and, if you wish, include any of the local agencies from the attached "Resource List" that you may recognize or know are assisting people in your area; and
2. A 2-page "Resource List" for your own staff to be more aware of the resources available to homeowners or renters in need. This is to provide additional information for staff to have on hand, or it can be copied and made available for distribution if a parish chooses to do that.

The Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA) was established by the Archdiocese in 1969 and has developed over 2,300 units of affordable and mixed-income housing. POUA's developments serve families with children; frail elderly residents; the working poor; homeless individuals and families; and special needs populations. The Planning Office is working on a number of foreclosure prevention initiatives to help residents stay in their homes. It has convened a broad group of activists who are working to find solutions for preventing foreclosures, and is advocating for federal and state resources and policies to address the foreclosure crisis. The Office is also exploring the possibility of acquiring foreclosed properties to keep people in their homes, or to make the housing available to people of modest means. The focus of POUA's work is not only to save homes, but to help revitalize neighborhoods that have seen an increasing number of vacant, abandoned properties. The Planning Office also works with other organizations nationwide, including Catholic Charities USA and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, to advocate for the construction and preservation of permanent affordable housing.