

## **UTICA NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES AWARDED MAJOR STATE GRANT TO ASSIST AREA HOMEOWNERS IN DANGER OF FORECLOSURE**

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(UTICA) -- Assemblywoman RoAnn M. Destito (D/WF-Rome) today announced that the UNHS NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center has been awarded \$170,000 from the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal(DHCR) to help Mohawk Valley homeowners in danger of foreclosure.

“The Subprime Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Services Program will provide counseling and legal services for homeowners who may have entered into a subprime mortgage, and are now in danger of losing their home,” Destito said. “This grant will give Neighborhood Housing Services the ability to expand financial counseling, mediation services, and legal representation to borrowers in the area who may have been the victims of predatory lending practices.”

Destito says the program will also provide funding to assist housing counselors, mediators, or attorneys who are helping subprime mortgage borrowers keep their homes by providing credit counseling or homeownership assistance training programs.

“There are homeowners who may be in a subprime or predatory loan and either not know it, or possibly not even know what that means for them,” said Janice Forte, Executive Director of the HomeOwnership Center. “Foreclosure prevention and predatory lending education are a continual and integral part of our current services. This grant award not only allows us to expand our services, but also gives us the opportunity to partner with Legal Aid when customers are in need of legal services.”

\$25 million has been included in the 2008-2009 New York State Budget for the program, which is being administered by DHCR, and the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation.

“This grant will provide homeowners who are facing foreclosure with guidance and information that hopefully will prevent them from losing their homes, and it also will fund programs to provide potential homebuyers with the information they need to avoid being taken in by subprime mortgage offers,” Destito said.

The HomeOwnership Center was chartered in 1979, and provides Home Buyer Education, Financial Literacy and Pre-purchase Counseling programs. The agency serves low-to-moderate income families in Oneida, Herkimer, and Madison Counties, and is a HUD-Certified Counseling Agency.