

Your Options When Facing Foreclosure in Pennsylvania

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Your Options When Facing Foreclosure in Pennsylvania

Getting a foreclosure notice is frightening — but in Pennsylvania, a notice is the **start** of a process, not the end of it. State law builds in time and protections most homeowners never use because they don't know they exist.

This short guide explains how foreclosure works in Pennsylvania, the main paths available to you, and the free resources that can help. It's written for homeowners in Cumberland, Dauphin, and Lancaster Counties, but the process is the same statewide.

Who we are: GDL Home Solutions LLC is a local home buyer in Central Pennsylvania. When selling is the right move, we can make a written offer on your home. When it isn't, we'd rather point you to the resources below than buy a house you should have kept. Either way, talking to us is free and there's no obligation.

What this guide is not: legal or financial advice. For advice about your specific situation, talk to a HUD-approved housing counselor or an attorney (free options are listed at the end).

How Foreclosure Works in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is a **judicial foreclosure** state — your lender must sue you in court and win before your home can be sold. That takes months, and every step has a built-in window where you can act.

The typical sequence:

1. **Missed payments.** After about 30 days late, the loan is in default. Late fees start, and the lender's letters begin.
2. **Act 91 Notice.** Before most residential foreclosures can start, PA law requires the lender to send an Act 91 notice giving you **30 days** to seek help — this is your signal to contact a housing counselor immediately, not a formality.
3. **Foreclosure complaint.** If nothing changes, the lender files a lawsuit. You'll be served papers and have **20 days** (then a second notice and 10 more) to respond. Responding matters — even just to buy time.
4. **Judgment.** If you don't respond or the court sides with the lender, it enters a judgment allowing sale of the home.
5. **Sheriff sale.** The home is scheduled for public auction. You must get at least **30 days'** notice of the sale date. Until the sale actually happens, options are still open — loans can be reinstated, sales can be postponed, and homes can still be sold by you instead of the sheriff.

From first missed payment to sheriff sale usually takes **several months to over a year**. The single biggest mistake homeowners make is waiting. Every option below works better the earlier you start.

Path 1: Keep the Home

Loan modification

Your lender permanently changes the loan terms — lower rate, longer term, missed payments moved to the back of the loan — so the monthly payment becomes affordable again. Best when your financial trouble was temporary and you can afford a reasonable payment going forward. You apply through your mortgage servicer; a HUD counselor can prepare the application with you for free.

Forbearance

A temporary pause or reduction in payments, agreed with the lender, while you get back on your feet — common after job loss, illness, or a family emergency. The missed amount still has to be repaid later, so ask exactly how repayment works before you sign.

Reinstatement

Pennsylvania law gives many homeowners the right to stop a foreclosure by paying the past-due amount (plus fees) in a lump sum before the sale. If money is coming — a tax refund, insurance settlement, family help — reinstatement can end the case outright.

Path 2: Exit Without a Foreclosure on Your Record

Short sale

If you owe more than the home is worth, the lender may agree to let you sell for less than the balance and treat the debt as settled. It takes lender approval and patience, but it avoids a sheriff sale and is generally far easier on your credit and your peace of mind. Get any debt-forgiveness terms in writing.

Deed in lieu of foreclosure

You voluntarily transfer the home to the lender and walk away. Usually a last resort before sale — but still better on your record than a completed foreclosure.

Path 3: Sell the Home Yourself

If keeping the home isn't realistic, selling it yourself — before the sheriff does — usually puts you in a far better position:

- **You keep the equity.** At a sheriff sale, homes often go for far less than market value. Selling yourself means the difference goes to you, not lost at auction.
- **You control the timeline.** A sale you arrange can close before the auction date and on a schedule that works for your move.
- **Your credit takes a smaller hit.** A completed foreclosure stays on your credit report for seven years.

You can list with a real-estate agent (strongest price if the home shows well and you have time) or sell directly to a local buyer like us — no repairs, no showings, a written offer, and a closing date that fits your deadline. If the numbers work better for you with an agent, we'll tell you that.

If Your Sheriff Sale Is Weeks Away

Late is not the same as too late. Even close to a sale date:

- **Call a housing counselor or legal aid today** (numbers below). Sales can sometimes be postponed, and PA courts can grant delays in hardship cases.
- **Filing a response or motion** in the court case can slow things down enough to complete a sale or workout.
- **A fast direct sale** can sometimes close before the auction — this is exactly the situation our emergency line exists for: **717-317-8031** if your auction is within 14 days.

Free Help — Use It

These organizations exist to help Pennsylvania homeowners for free. Talking to them costs nothing and doesn't commit you to anything:

- **HUD-Approved Housing Counselors** — free or low-cost counseling, loan-mod application help. Find one at [hud.gov](https://www.hud.gov) (search “find a counselor”) or call **1-800-569-4287**.
- **PA Legal Aid Network** — free legal help for eligible residents, including foreclosure defense. [palegalaid.net](https://www.palegalaid.net)
- **Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA)** — state homeowner-assistance programs. [phfa.org](https://www.phfa.org)

Beware of rescue scams. Anyone who charges an upfront fee to “save your home,” tells you to stop talking to your lender, or pressures you to sign over your deed “temporarily” is a red flag. Legitimate counseling is free, and legitimate buyers put offers in writing with no pressure.

Quick Reference: Key Terms

Default — Falling behind on the mortgage terms, usually by missing payments.

Act 91 Notice — PA-required notice giving you 30 days to seek help before foreclosure starts.

Foreclosure complaint — The lawsuit the lender files to begin formal foreclosure.

Judgment — The court ruling that allows the home to be sold.

Sheriff sale — The public auction where a foreclosed home is sold.

Reinstatement — Stopping foreclosure by paying the full past-due amount before the sale.

Short sale — Selling for less than the mortgage balance, with lender approval.

Forbearance — A temporary agreed pause or reduction in payments.

Deed in lieu — Voluntarily transferring the home to the lender to avoid a sheriff sale.

Talk It Through — Free, Confidential, No Obligation

Every situation is different. A ten-minute conversation is usually enough to see which of these paths actually fits yours.

GDL Home Solutions LLC — a trustworthy local home buyer serving Cumberland, Dauphin, and Lancaster Counties.

- Call or text: **223-278-6662**
- Auction within 14 days? Emergency line: **717-317-8031**
- Email: help@gdlhomesolutions.com
- Web: gdlhomesolutions.com

This guide is general information about the Pennsylvania foreclosure process, not legal or financial advice. Laws and timelines change; verify details for your case with a HUD-approved counselor or an attorney. © 2026 GDL Home Solutions LLC.