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**Written by Andrew Cadorette, Education and Marketing Administrator, New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority.**

**Purchasing Your Home: As Easy as Apple Pie**

Purchasing your home was as easy as apple pie, right? First, you found the right ingredients: a qualified real estate agent; a knowledgeable and easy-to-work with lender; and a detail-oriented, yet affordable, home inspector. You mixed it all together with the right mortgage product, then added in a little hard work, and voilà, you bought a home. Right? Okay, well, maybe it was not that easy, but with the right team, buying your home can go pretty smoothly. So how do you keep your apple pie from going sour?

Did you know that, as a new homeowner, you may now be a target for new junk mail and unsolicited phone calls? Some of these unsolicited offers may be legitimate financial opportunities, but many are only trying to separate you from your hard earned money. In the end, many of these “sour apple” offers may not be your best option and may negatively impact your ability to afford your new home.

How do these potentially “sour apples” find their way into your pie? Once you own a home, your deed and mortgage become public record. There are businesses that search these public records and sell that information. Additionally, many credit reporting agencies sell your credit information, notifying businesses of your new status as a homeowner. These potentially “sour apples” then contact new homeowners like you, often disguising their correspondence to look like it came from your current mortgage holder. The “sour apple” may even go so far as to state your lender’s name, loan amount, and property address to make it appear official. This is often an attempt to mislead you. Some of these companies may try to get you to quickly refinance with them, purchase some kind of insurance you may not need, or get you to apply for an unsolicited credit card. Many have nothing to do with your current mortgage loan.

Once you are in your home, how do you keep the “sour apples” from showing up? If you receive unwanted offers in the mail, protect yourself and your investment, and be sure to shred these offers before throwing them out. If you have questions about any correspondence from your lender, contact your lender to verify that it is a legitimate correspondence. Don’t be fooled.

If you suspect fraud or want to file a complaint about suspicious unsolicited offers, contact the New Hampshire Department of Justice’s Consumer Protection Bureau at 603-271-3641, or file a complaint at www.doj.nh.gov.

Additionally, as part of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, you also have the right to “opt out” of unsolicited mail. To do this, go to www.optoutprescreen.com.

Furthermore, if you have not already done so, register your name and number with the Federal Trade Commission's National [Do Not Call Registry](http://www.donotcall.gov/). To do this, go to www.donotcall.gov, or call 1-888-382-1222. Although these precautions might stop most of the sour apples, they will not stop them all. So be on your guard, and enjoy your slice of pie.

This information has been provided by the Mortgage Bankers and Brokers Association of New Hampshire (MBBA-NH) in conjunction with the New Hampshire Union Leader.  Any questions about the content should be directed to the MBBA-NH at 6 Garvins Falls Road, Suite 106, Concord, NH 03301. E-mail info@mbba-nh.org or visit mbba-nh.org for more information.

This article was written by Andrew Cadorette, Education and Marketing Administrator, New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority is a self-supporting public benefit corporation. The Authority operates a number of rental and homeownership programs designed to assist low- and moderate-income persons with obtaining affordable housing. Since its inception, New Hampshire Housing has helped more than 39,000 families purchase their own homes and has been instrumental in financing the creation of more than 14,500 multi-family housing units. More information about its programs can be found on the agency's websites at www.nhhfa.org or www.GoNewHampshireHousing.com.

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