

Applicant: Miami Dade State Attorney's Office

Title of the Project: Targeting and Reducing Mortgage Fraud Through a Data-Driven Approach

Dollar Amount Requested: \$2,417,968.93

Category III Reducing Mortgage Fraud and Crime Related to Vacant Properties

Abstract

The State of Florida and Miami-Dade County in particular, are major locations for mortgage fraud. Eight different organizations that measure mortgage fraud nationally indicate that Florida is either number one or two in mortgage fraud complaints and that Miami is the number one city for those complaints.

To respond to this costly crime problem, the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office will establish a Mortgage Fraud Unit to work closely with the Miami-Dade Mortgage Fraud Task Force. Prosecutors and staff (financial investigators, paralegals, and trial coordinators) and a data analysis team are needed to combat this problem.

The initiative has five major goals:

Goal 1. Use Recovery Act Funds to hire/retain prosecutors and staff to develop criminal cases against those engaged in mortgage fraud.

Goal 2. Reduce the backlog of cases that have accumulated because of resource issues; prosecute and convict those involved in mortgage fraud.

Goal 3. Improve the efficiency of processing mortgage fraud cases by prioritizing investigations and prosecutions through data analysis.

Goal 4. Improve investigations through training and education of investigators, prosecutors, and those involved in mortgage fraud in non-police organizations.

Goal 5. Work with law enforcement agencies and organizations within Miami-Dade County to prevent mortgage fraud

The Mortgage Fraud Unit will work with law enforcement and regulatory agencies throughout the County, develop protocols for investigations, use data analysis to guide its strategy, and implement 'best practices' models to successfully prosecute mortgage fraud. Justice & Security Strategies, Inc. (JSS) will be the research partner to assist with mapping and analysis. Deliverables will include: 1) quarterly and annual reports; 2) power point presentations about key prosecutions; and 3) periodic reports about the status of mortgage fraud in Miami-Dade.