

If your real estate security contains your primary residence and becomes inventory property of the Agency, homestead protection rights will be provided.

(j) **The right not to be discriminated against**

The Federal Equal Credit Opportunity Act prohibits creditors from discriminating against credit applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age (provided the applicant has the capacity to enter into a binding contract); because all or part of the applicant's income derives from any public assistance program; or because the applicant has in good faith exercised any right under the Consumer Credit Protection Act. The Federal agency that administers compliance with this law is the Federal Trade Commission, Equal Credit Opportunity, Washington, D.C. 20580.

The servicing programs described by this Notice are subject to applicable Agency regulations published at 7 CFR part 766.

Subpart D—Homestead Protection Program

§ 766.151 Applying for Homestead Protection.

(a) *Pre-acquisition*—(1) *Notification*. If the borrower requested primary loan servicing but cannot develop a feasible plan, the Agency will notify the borrower of any additional information needed to process the homestead protection request. The borrower must provide this information within 30 days of Agency notification.

(2) *Borrower does not respond*. If the borrower does not timely provide the information requested, the Agency will deny the homestead protection request and provide appeal rights.

(3) *Application requirements*. A complete application for homestead protection will include:

- (i) Updates to items required under § 766.102;
- (ii) Information required under § 766.353; and
- (iii) Identification of land and buildings to be considered.

(b) *Post-acquisition*—(1) *Notification*. After the Agency acquires title to the real estate property, the Agency will notify the borrower of the availability of homestead protection. The borrower must submit a complete application within 30 days of Agency notification.

(2) *Borrower does not respond*. If the borrower does not respond to the Agency notice, the Agency will dispose of the property in accordance with 7 CFR part 767.

(3) *Application requirements*. A complete application for homestead protection will include:

- (i) Updates to items required under § 766.102; and
- (ii) Identification of land and buildings to be considered.

§ 766.152 Eligibility.

(a) *Property*. (1) The principal residence and the adjoining land of up to 10 acres, must have served as real estate security for the FLP loan and may include existing farm service buildings. Homestead protection does not apply if the FLP loans were secured only by chattels.

(2) The applicant may propose a homestead protection site. Any proposed site is subject to Agency approval.

(3) The proposed homestead protection site must meet all State and local requirements for division into a separate legal lot.

(4) Where voluntary conveyance of the property to the Agency is required to process the homestead protection request, the Agency will process any request for voluntary conveyance according to § 766.353.

(b) *Applicant*. To be eligible for homestead protection, the applicant:

(1) Must be the owner, or former owner from whom the Agency acquired title of the property pledged as security for an FLP loan. For homestead protection purposes, an owner or former owner includes:

- (i) A member of an entity who is or was personally liable for the FLP loan secured by the homestead protection

property when the applicant or entity held fee title to the property; or

(ii) A member of an entity who is or was personally liable for the FLP loan that possessed and occupied a separate dwelling on the security property;

(2) Must have earned gross farm income commensurate with:

(i) The size and location of the farm; and

(ii) The local agricultural conditions in at least 2 calendar years during the 6-year period immediately preceding the calendar year in which the applicant applied for homestead protection;

(3) Must have received 60 percent of gross income from farming in at least two of the 6 years immediately preceding the year in which the applicant applied for homestead protection;

(4) Must have lived in the home during the 6-year period immediately preceding the year in which the applicant applied for homestead protection. The applicant may have left the home for not more than 12 months if it was due to circumstances beyond their control;

(5) Must demonstrate sufficient income to make rental payments on the homestead property for the term of the lease, and maintain the property in good condition. The lessee will be responsible for any normal maintenance; and

(6) Must not be ineligible due to disqualification resulting from Federal crop insurance violation according to 7 CFR part 718.

§ 766.153 Homestead Protection transferability.

Homestead protection rights are not transferable or assignable, unless the eligible party dies or becomes legally incompetent, in which case the homestead protection rights may be transferred to the spouse only, upon the spouse's agreement to comply with the terms and conditions of the lease.

§ 766.154 Homestead Protection leases.

(a) *General.* (1) The Agency may approve a lease-purchase agreement on the appropriate Agency form subject to obtaining title to the property.

(2) If a third party obtains title to the property:

(i) The applicant and the property are no longer eligible for homestead protection;

(ii) The Agency will not implement any outstanding lease-purchase agreement.

(3) The borrower may request homestead protection for property subject to third party redemption rights. In such case, homestead protection will not begin until the Agency obtains title to the property.

(b) *Lease terms and conditions.* (1) The amount of rent will be based on equivalent rents charged for similar residential properties in the area in which the dwelling is located.

(2) All leases will include an option to purchase the homestead protection property as described in paragraph (c) of this section.

(3) The lease term will not be less than 3 years and will not exceed 5 years.

(4) The lessee must agree to make lease payments on time and maintain the property.

(5) The lessee must cooperate with Agency efforts to sell the remaining portion of the farm.

(c) *Lease-purchase options.* (1) The lessee may exercise in writing the purchase option and complete the homestead protection purchase at any time prior to the expiration of the lease provided all lease payments are current.

(2) The purchase price is the market value of the property when the option is exercised as determined by a current appraisal obtained by the Agency.

(3) The lessee may purchase homestead protection property with cash or other credit source.

(4) The lessee may receive Agency Non-program financing provided:

(i) The lessee has not received previous debt forgiveness;

(ii) The Agency has funds available to finance the purchase of homestead protection property; and

(iii) The lessee demonstrates an ability to repay such an FLP loan.

(d) *Lease terminations.* The Agency may terminate the lease if the lessee does not cure any lease defaults within 30 days of Agency notification.

(e) *Appraisal of homestead protection property.* The Agency will use an appraisal obtained within six months