



what's inside: energy cost savings | holiday fraud protections | refinance option

chfa  
homeowner  
newsletter

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## protect yourself against holiday season fraud

Holiday spending is expected to reach a new record this year. The National Retail Federation predicts spending on gifts, food, decorations, and seasonal items for the winter holidays will reach \$902 per person. That's \$16 more than the previous record set in 2019. But with that spending, scammers are also looking to take advantage and find ways to take your money or personal information. Fraud tends to be more prevalent during the holidays. You can avoid becoming a victim by knowing the red flags to look for and taking a few simple precautions.

Three scams to watch for during the holidays:

1. **Fake or unsecure websites:** Look for poor grammar and check the website's URL for spelling errors. Also look for "https://" at the front of the URL. That's an indication the website is secure. It's also a red flag if you get a "card declined" message when you're checking out. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) Scam Tracker has received reports recently of people getting fraudulent charges on their accounts after receiving a "card declined" message while shopping online.
2. **Misleading social media ads:** The BBB Scam Tracker receives reports every day of people paying for items they found on social media that they never received, or they received the item, and it is counterfeit. The BBB found online purchase scams were the third riskiest scam reported in 2023. Before you order, research the company and read the reviews.
3. **Fake shipping notifications:** Scammers use the surge in online shopping to send phishing emails and texts about package deliveries. Avoid clicking on any links in these messages. Instead, find the original message you received directly from the store and use that to track your package.

How you pay for your purchases is also important. The BBB has found people who pay with a credit card, rather than digital wallet apps or prepaid money cards, are less likely to lose money. The BBB has additional information about payment types at [bbb.org](https://bbb.org).

## prepare your home for winter and save on energy costs

With winter almost here, there are some projects you can do now to maintain your home and save on energy costs.

- **Inspect your roof.** Whether you hire a professional or handle it yourself, spotting items such as missing or damaged shingles can help prevent potentially more expensive problems.
- **Seal air leaks.** Help maintain heat and a steady temperature in your home by filling window and door gaps with weather stripping or caulking. Also, you can buy an inexpensive door draft blocker for the gaps at the bottom of your exterior doors.
- **Cover your windows.** Use heavy curtains to block drafts. "Blackout" curtains tend to work especially well. For additional insulation, you can buy plastic sheets to attach directly to the window pane.
- **Clean or replace your furnace filter.** This simple step helps maintain and optimize the performance of your furnace. Check your filter and change it if it looks dirty. ENERGY STAR® recommends replacing the filter every three months if possible. Filters are generally inexpensive and widely available.
- **Add insulation.** Buy sheets of insulation and put them in your attic and crawl space to help retain your home's energy. Be sure to research which type of insulation works best for your home and any protective gear you may need.
- **Inspect your chimney and fireplace.** Before you start warming up by the fire this winter, it's a good idea to have your chimney vents and fireplace cleaned. The Chimney

Safety Institute of America recommends having your chimney and flue inspected for any blockages if you have a gas fireplace.

- **Clean your gutters.** Colorado's often sunny winter weather means you can probably still clean your gutters during the winter. Clogged gutters can lead to issues like water damage, loosened gutters, and ice buildup which can make them crack.
- **Switch ceiling fan direction.** Flip your ceiling fans' reverse switches so that the fans move in a clockwise direction. ENERGY STAR® says this creates an updraft that pushes the warm air that rises toward the ceiling back down into the room, which could help you save on heating bills.
- **Cover bare floors.** Laminate, wood, and tile floors can cause you to lose heat during the winter. Consider adding rugs to keep your feet warm and prevent heat loss.
- **Cut back tree branches.** Cutting back branches that overhang your home can help you avoid roof damage if a branch breaks. Winter snow can be heavy and may cause even healthy branches to break under the additional weight.

If you need help weatherizing your home, you may qualify for the Colorado Energy Office's free Weatherization Assistance Program. You can find details at [colorado.gov/energy](https://colorado.gov/energy) or by calling 303.866.2100. Energy Resource Center also offers free weatherization service to income-qualified residents. Go to [erc-co.org](https://erc-co.org) to see if you qualify.

## new option to reduce mortgage rate and monthly payments

Interest rates are decreasing following the Federal Reserve's cut of its federal funds rate recently. Now you may be able to save by refinancing.

The new CHFA FHA Streamline Refinance may provide an opportunity for current CHFA homeowners with an FHA loan to reduce their mortgage rate and monthly payments, without

having to pay off an existing CHFA DPA Second Mortgage Loan. CHFA will subordinate the CHFA DPA Second Mortgage Loan to the new CHFA First Mortgage Loan. There are no changes to the interest rate or loan terms on the existing CHFA DPA Second Mortgage Loan.

Contact your CHFA participating lender to see if this option works for you. You can find additional information about the program at [chfainfo.com/refinance](https://chfainfo.com/refinance).

## heads up:

### property tax statements

Property taxes assessed in 2024 are billed and payable in 2025. You'll soon be receiving notice from your local county assessor's office regarding your bill. Please note that this statement is for your records only. Your real estate property taxes are paid through an escrow account established on your behalf by CHFA Loan Servicing. If you have questions about your tax statement, please contact your local county directly.

### year-end statements

Your 2024 CHFA Tax Statement (IRS Form 1098) will be mailed by the end of January 2025. This statement is for your records only. If you have any questions after receiving the Form 1098, please contact CHFA Loan Servicing at 1.855.587.8655. However, if you have any tax-related questions, or questions regarding the filing implications of this and other tax statements, please consult a professional tax advisor.

## helpful resource:

### colorado homeownership coalition

The Colorado Homeownership Coalition (CHC) aids homeowners experiencing a temporary disruption in income to avoid delinquent housing obligations and ultimately resume self-sufficiency. Each qualifying homeowner may receive up to \$10,000 to cover delinquent mortgage payments, homeowners' association dues, or property taxes. CHFA was proud to support CHC with a \$20,000 Direct Effect grant in 2024. To see if you qualify, visit [chchelps.org](https://chchelps.org).

## dates to remember:

**First of the Month:** CHFA mortgage payments are due by the first of each month and late fees may be assessed if a payment is received after the 16th of the month. Sign up for ACH payments.

Visit [chfainfo.com/payment-options](https://chfainfo.com/payment-options).

## your mortgage online app:

Access your loan and make payments. Download it from:





## contact us

Contact CHFA Loan Servicing at 855.587.8655 as early as possible if you think you might have difficulty making your mortgage payment.

## experiencing hardship? help is available!

Some homeowners may experience financial challenges that could affect their ability to make their mortgage payment. If you are facing hardship, CHFA is here to help.

### Finding the Right Option for You

CHFA Loan Servicing will help you determine what options might best fit your needs, depending on your unique circumstances. If you apply for hardship assistance, we will discuss your repayment options with you. There are various repayment options available to CHFA homeowners. CHFA Loan Servicing will provide information to help you choose which option may work best for you.

### Additional Resources

To speak to a housing counselor, contact Colorado Housing Connects at 877.601.HOPE or HUD at [hud.gov](http://hud.gov) or 800.569.4287.

## apply

If you are ready to apply for hardship assistance, you may do so online at [loansolutioncenter.com](http://loansolutioncenter.com). If you wish to speak to someone directly about your options, contact CHFA Loan Servicing's Loss Mitigation team at 866.397.5370.

### denver

303.297.chfa (2432)  
800.877.chfa (2432)

### western slope

970.241.2341  
800.877.8450

[www.chfainfo.com](http://www.chfainfo.com)

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