UPDATED CONSUMER PROTECTION GUIDE

TRIGGER LEADS: WHAT HOMEBUYERS SHOULD KNOW

Why a mortgage credit inquiry once led to a flood of solicitations — and what federal law now limits.

Updated August 17, 2026

MAJOR UPDATE: The Homebuyers Privacy Protection Act became effective in March 2026. Credit reporting agencies are now generally prohibited from furnishing mortgage-triggered consumer reports to unrelated third parties unless a statutory exception applies.

WHAT WAS A MORTGAGE TRIGGER LEAD?

A trigger lead was created when a consumer reporting agency detected a mortgage-related credit inquiry and used that event to help other creditors make prescreened offers.

Important: receiving these calls did not necessarily mean your loan officer or lender sold your application. The contact could have originated from a consumer reporting agency's prescreening process.

WHY BORROWERS FOUND IT FRUSTRATING

- Rapid volume: calls, texts and emails could begin shortly after a credit inquiry.
- Confusion: callers sometimes implied an affiliation with the borrower's lender.
- Security concerns: spoofed local numbers and aggressive scripts made legitimate contacts harder to identify.

WHAT CHANGED UNDER THE NEW FEDERAL LAW

BEFORE THE REFORM

Mortgage inquiries could be used to generate prescreened offers from unrelated mortgage companies, often producing a sudden wave of outreach.

NOW — THE GENERAL RULE

A consumer reporting agency may not furnish another mortgage-triggered report unless the receiving party has the consumer's authorization or fits a limited relationship-based exception.

WHO MAY STILL RECEIVE A REPORT?

The statute includes limited exceptions, including a party with documented consumer authorization; the originator or servicer of a current residential mortgage loan; or an insured bank or credit union that holds a current consumer account.

The new law sharply limits the old trigger-lead practice, but it does not stop every marketing call or message from every possible source.

YOUR PRACTICAL PROTECTION CHECKLIST

These habits remain useful even after the federal reform because they reduce unrelated prescreened offers and help you distinguish legitimate mortgage communication from aggressive marketing or fraud.

1. Review consent carefully.
   Before authorizing anyone to access or share credit-related information, understand who will receive it and why.
2. Opt out of prescreened offers.
   Visit OptOutPrescreen.com or call 1-888-5-OPT-OUT. Opting out affects prescreened offers; it does not prevent you from applying for credit.
3. Use the National Do Not Call Registry.
   Register at DoNotCall.gov. Some categories and existing-business relationships may be exempt, but registration can reduce covered telemarketing calls.
4. Verify before sharing information.
   Ask for the caller's full name, company, callback number and NMLS identification. Independently verify the company before discussing your loan.
5. Protect codes and credentials.
   Never provide one-time passcodes, passwords, Social Security numbers or banking credentials to an unexpected caller or texter.
6. Save and report suspicious outreach.
   Keep screenshots, caller IDs and messages. Report suspected fraud or deceptive practices to the appropriate regulator or law-enforcement agency.

IF AN UNEXPECTED MORTGAGE COMPANY CONTACTS YOU

A SIMPLE RESPONSE

"I did not authorize your company to contact me. Please place me on your internal do-not-call list and do not contact me again."

RED FLAGS

Be cautious if a caller pressures you to act immediately, misrepresents an affiliation, refuses to provide licensing information, or asks for a password, security code or advance payment.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Borrowers now have substantially stronger federal protection against mortgage trigger leads.
You should still know who is contacting you, verify every unexpected request, and use the opt-out and do-not-call tools that fit your preferences.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR MORTGAGE PROCESS?

If you receive confusing outreach or want help understanding who is legitimately involved in your transaction, contact me directly.

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OFFICIAL SOURCES

• Public Law 119-36, Homebuyers Privacy Protection Act: Congress.gov — H.R. 2808
• Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, "Who can request to see my credit report?": consumerfinance.gov
• Federal Trade Commission, National Do Not Call guidance: DoNotCall.gov