



NEWS *from*

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ASSESSOR JEFFREY PRANG



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Assessor Warns Homeowners of Real Estate Fraud and Misleading Solicitations

LOS ANGELES, CA – Assessor Jeffrey Prang is alerting all property owners of increasing reports of deed scam solicitations and misleading mailings being sent across the county.

Television and radio advertising that urges property owners to protect their homes from theft by unauthorized changes to deeds and other legal documents has caused concerns among residents, who have approached the Assessor wanting to know how best they can protect themselves from falling victim to identity fraud.

Given the seriousness and frequency of both cyber threats and identity theft, the Assessor together with Board of Supervisors and county agencies already implement a notification system which alerts property owners of any change to a deed, deed of trust, or similar document recorded with the County of Los Angeles. Under the "Notice of Recordation" law in place since 2012, the last owner of record is mailed an official notification whenever a change to a deed or deed of trust is recorded. This notice provides the lawful owner advance notice and the opportunity to challenge any changes to ownership documents.

Mailed solicitations designed to appear as though they originated from the Assessor or another government agency, with stern warnings of fines and imprisonment, ask property owners to pay fees in order to obtain information already available to them for free. These solicitations are professionally designed to look official and include similar barcodes and phrasing, such as "Recorded Deed Notice." One example charges a fee for a property assessment profile that can be obtained for free from the Assessor.

In fact, this assessment information is available at no cost 24 hours a day, 7 days a week directly through the Assessor's office at portal.assessor.lacounty.gov. Assessment data is also available during business hours by phone at 213-974-3211 or 888-807-2111, in person, and via email at helpdesk@assessor.lacounty.gov.

"Homeowners should always be vigilant of attempts at theft that can lead to changes affecting legal documents and property ownership," said Assessor Jeffrey Prang. He continued, "I am also pleased to offer property owners an alternative to obtaining valuable assessment data so that they do not have

to rely on fee-based services for information that I believe ought to be free and readily accessible to the public. Our award-winning portal should be the first resource for any property owner or real estate professional."

Assessor Prang asks homeowners to report suspicious solicitations. Contact the fraud prevention and information line at 800-973-3370. Alternatively, send an email to helpdesk@assessor.lacounty.gov.

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ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Los Angeles County Assessor Jeffrey Prang leads the largest local public property assessment agency in the nation. His office of 1400 appraisers and support staff are dedicated to creating an accurate and timely property assessment roll. In 2017, the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office established values for 2.56 million properties valued collectively at \$1.47 trillion. For more information, visit assessor.lacounty.gov or follow us on social media [@LACAssessor](https://twitter.com/LACAssessor).