



# SIGTARP

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL  
FOR THE TROUBLED ASSET RELIEF PROGRAM

ADVANCING ECONOMIC STABILITY THROUGH TRANSPARENCY, COORDINATED OVERSIGHT AND ROBUST ENFORCEMENT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Media Inquiries: 202-927-8940

Twitter: @SIGTARP

Web: [www.SIGTARP.gov](http://www.SIGTARP.gov)

## **OWNER OF MEDIA AGENCY THAT ADVERTISED HAMP MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE PLEADS GUILTY TO FALSE ADVERTISING**

WASHINGTON, DC - Christy Goldsmith Romero, Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program (SIGTARP), and Deidre M. Daly, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced today that Matthew Goldreich, age 46, of East Lyme, Connecticut, pleaded guilty today in New Haven federal court to a false advertising offense stemming from his production and dissemination of false advertisements for mortgage modification services.

According to court documents and statements made in court, Goldreich used his New London-based media agency, National Media Connection, LLC, to produce and air television, radio, and Internet advertisements for the National Mortgage Help Center, LLC ("NMHC"), a shell company incorporated by Goldreich. The advertisements falsely claimed that NMHC could help struggling homeowners obtain home mortgage loan modifications. For example, one advertisement that aired in 2010 stated: "Attention homeowners. We know it's tough out there. And while America's homeowners are facing more challenges than ever before, the National Mortgage Help Center is ready to help." The same advertisement also stated: "We may be able to lower your rate to as low as 1% and cut your mortgage payment in half. Our trained specialists know all the new regulations to get you quick relief. We help thousands of homeowners every day."

The advertisements included toll-free telephone numbers for mortgage borrowers to call for help modifying their mortgages. In truth, NMHC did not provide mortgage modification services for any homeowners, and operated only as a front. Homeowners who called the toll-free telephone numbers advertised by NMHC were routed to National Media Connection's clients. The clients, in turn, paid National Media Connection for these "leads." Under the pretense of helping homeowners modify their mortgages, certain National Media Connection clients then charged the homeowners fees and provided no services whatsoever in return.

"This is the first conviction of a lead generator who marketed mortgage modification services but instead connected fraudsters with people who would later become victims of a HAMP mortgage modification fraud," said Christy Goldsmith Romero, Special Inspector General for TARP (SIGTARP). "Goldreich, the President and CEO of a lead generating marketing company, brazenly used President Obama's image while referencing the government bailout in commercials and YouTube advertisements to convince struggling homeowners that his company would help them obtain mortgage modifications under the TARP bailout program known as HAMP, to save their homes. Instead, homeowners were routed as "leads" to clients of Goldreich, many of which charged the homeowners fees and provided no service whatsoever. Let this be a lesson to marketers and all those involved in committing and

facilitating fraud against homeowners seeking help in HAMP that SIGTARP and its law enforcement partners will bring them to justice.”

Goldreich pleaded guilty to one count of false advertising, an offense that carries a maximum term of imprisonment of one year and a fine of up to \$100,000. He is scheduled to be sentenced by Chief U.S. District Judge Janet C. Hall on November 5, 2015.

This ongoing investigation is being conducted by the Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program (SIGTARP), the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Office of Inspector General, and Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Avi Perry and Liam Brennan.

### **About SIGTARP**

The Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program investigates fraud, waste, and abuse in connection with TARP.

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