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Lakeland Foreclosure Rate Among Nation's Worst, Lincoln Madison Investments Advises Homeowners

Lakeland ranked among the nation's worst foreclosure markets in 2026. Lincoln Madison Investments outlines homeowners options before foreclosure becomes final.

A home in Lakeland, Florida, one of thousands across Polk County as the region posts one of the nation's worst foreclosure rates.

LAKELAND, FL, UNITED STATES, August 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ATTOM’s Mid-Year 2026 U.S. Foreclosure Market Report, released July 16, found the Lakeland-Winter Haven metro area had the second-worst foreclosure rate in the country among metro areas of 200,000 or more, behind only Punta Gorda, Florida, and the worst among metros of 500,000 or more, at one in every 421 housing units, up sharply from a year earlier when the city ranked among the nation’s top three. Florida posted the worst statewide foreclosure rate in the country, at one in every 373 housing units, up from its number-two ranking in mid-2025.

> “A lot of homeowners were fine two or three years ago. Now insurance, property taxes, and rate resets stack up until a mortgage becomes unaffordable, and the window to act closes fast.”
>
> *J. Woodsby*

Lincoln Madison Investments, a Lakeland-based investment firm with more than $100 million in Central Florida property, said a missed payment does not automatically mean losing a home, and several paths remain open depending on how much time is left before a foreclosure judgment is entered.

Refinancing can lower a monthly payment, but it generally only works before a homeowner falls behind. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac guidelines disqualify borrowers with a serious delinquency in the past 12 months, so this option is worth exploring at the first sign of trouble, not after a payment is missed.

Submitting a complete loss mitigation application more than 37 days before a scheduled foreclosure sale triggers protections under federal servicing rules: the service generally cannot request a judgment or move forward with the sale while the application is under review. It does not pause the entire process or guarantee an approved modification, but it can buy time to negotiate one.

Renting out the property is another option some homeowners consider, using the income to cover the mortgage while relocating elsewhere. It tends to work best for owners not in immediate danger of foreclosure who have time to find and screen a tenant.

For homeowners on a shorter timeline, selling is often the fastest way to resolve the situation before a foreclosure judgment affects their credit report. A sale to a Lakeland cash buyer, such as Lincoln Madison Investments, typically means accepting less than full market value in exchange for speed and certainty: no mortgage approval, no repair period, and no risk of a buyer's financing falling through. For homeowners racing a foreclosure deadline, that trade-off is often worth it. Homeowners across Lakeland and Polk County have used this route to sell a house fast in Lakeland, Florida when a foreclosure clock was already running.

"A lot of the homeowners we talk to were making their payments just fine two or three years ago," said J. Woodsby, real estate investor and broker at Lincoln Madison Investments. "What's changed for a lot of them is the insurance bill, the property tax bill, and in some cases a rate resetting on their loan. Those things stacking up can turn an affordable mortgage into one a family can't keep up with, and once that happens, the window to act starts closing fast."

Woodsby, who has more than 15 years of experience as a real estate investor and broker specializing in distressed assets, probate sales, and tax deed properties, said the right option depends on how much time is left, how much equity is in the property, and whether the goal is to keep the home or move on from it. Homeowners unsure which option fits are encouraged to speak with their mortgage service or a HUD-approved housing counselor before a sale date arrives.

About Lincoln Madison Investments

Lincoln Madison Investments is a Lakeland, Florida-based real estate investment company serving homeowners and landowners throughout Polk County, working with clients facing foreclosure, probate, tax deed sales, tenant disputes, and other complex property situations. Licensed agents are available seven days a week.

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