September 9, 2015

Working with a Hearing and Speech Impaired Borrower

[Please open the attachment and follow the written notes exchanged between the hearing and speech impaired borrower and me.]

Last month, I had the honor of performing a closing for a borrower who was hearing and speech impaired. I did not know that the signer had hearing and speech challenges until I sat at the closing table.

When I arrived at her home, I felt welcomed because the door was open. However, there was a big sign, "Beware of Mean Dog," on the porch. I could see in the window sitting on the back of the sofa watching me as I walked up the steps. He did not attempt to bark or move until I rang the doorbell. Then, he barked softly and stumbled to the door. After I displayed my usual fearful dog reaction, the borrower held her finger up, motioning to me to wait a minute while she put the dog in the back yard.

[Section A-Identification]
As stated earlier, when I sat with her at the closing table, I soon realized that the borrower was hearing and speech impaired. She read my lips when I asked for identification and presented me with her driver's license [which was already on the table.] Then she wrote on note paper that "She [her house mate] will get my passport after she is done with her phone call."] I then wrote a reply, "Only if I need it." [Some lenders required 1 form of identification and others may require 2 or more forms of identification.]

[Section B-Recording Details of the Transaction in the Journal] As most of you know, I have been using and electronic journal [instead of the paper notary journal] since August 1, 2014; over a year now. Through verbal and written communication, I explained the electronic journal and "asked permission" to take a picture of her identification. I also let her know that I would need an electronic signature from her. She was fine with that.

Presenting the Documents
My presentation of the documents consisted of pointing to the title of the documents and giving a "do you understand or need more explanation about this document gesture" to the hearing and speech impaired borrower. When the borrower needed more explanation, she would write it on the note paper.

The borrower wanted to know when the monthly payment was due, between the 1^{st} and 15^{th}. I said "Yes, mortgages normally have a window of 15 days to make payment" However, I wrote, "Verify with loan officer." [I made this statement just in case other arrangements were made by loan officer.]

W-9 – Request for Taxpayer Identification and Certification
The W-9 Form verifies the borrower's social security number. The lender sends a 1098 form at the end of the year disclosing the annual mortgage interest. You will see where I wrote "Verify SSN."

Affiliated Business Arrangement Disclosure document discloses other settlement providers that the lender transacted business with in closing the loan, such as the escrow company, appraisal company, etc.

Prince George's Finance Affidavit
Prince George's Finance Affidavit is a document used in Prince George's County to determine taxes on the new loan. This document is recorded with the Deed of Trust. I asked the question, "Have you borrowed money within the past year from a financial institution such as a bank, credit union, etc." so I could determine where her initials would be placed on the document. The fact that she had not borrowed money within the past year, I had her initial "A and B1."

PayPlan Enrollment Authorization
When presenting the PayPlan Enrollment Authorization, I asked/wrote "Were arrangements made with your lender to debit your bank account each month to pay your mortgage payment?" [If arrangements were made, she needed to fill in the proper information and attach a VOIDED check. Otherwise, just initial "Decline" or write "Decline" and initial on the document.]

Closing Wrap Up
Once the borrower finished signing all the documents, I asked/wrote, "Give me a minute to review the documents, okay?" [It is so important to take the time and review the documents again before leaving the loan closing appointment. It saves you time, mileage, and money not to have to go back to a closing to correct missed signatures, etc.]

Once I finish reviewing the documents, I presented the borrower with 2 signed copies of the Right Cancel document. I said/wrote, "By law I leave you signed copies of the Right to Cancel for your records."

And that concluded my closing with the hearing and speech impaired borrower.

After reading the last statement the borrower wrote, I understood why her dog barked lightly and stumbled to the door when I arrived.

I hope you learned a few pointers from my experience with the hearing and speech impaired borrower.