

Once again Pinellas County residents have received an official-looking letter emphasizing the government's recommendation to keep a certified copy of property deeds. Only this time the private company sending the letter hopes residents will see the value in paying \$85 plus \$4.95 for shipping and handling for a document they can obtain from the [Clerk's office](#) for about \$2.50, according to Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court.

"In the past another was charging about \$60 for a certified copy of a deed," said Burke. "This is a different company with an even higher price: nearly \$90. These businesses often contend that they offer the convenience of avoiding the hassles of going to the Clerk's office in person."

"We already provide that convenience and Pinellas County residents don't need to pay almost \$90 for it," said Burke. "They can send a written request with a check or money order and we will send them a certified copy of the deed if they don't want to come into the office in person."

The written request must have the deed's Official Record (OR) book and page number. Residents can obtain this information online at <http://www.pinellasclerk.org> or from the Records department (727) 464-4876, according to Burke.

"From our website people can print a free uncertified copy," said Burke. "And from our Recording Services departments they can purchase one for \$1 per page and have it certified for \$1.50 more."

The letter from Fastdeeds.com does include a disclaimer, which states the company is not affiliated with any state agency and that many records are available for nominal fees from government agencies.

For more information call (727) 464-3341 or visit the website. A copy of a letter received may be [viewed here](#).

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FloridaHousingSearch.org Brings Renters Home

More than 100 people a day use FloridaHousingSearch.org in their search for a place to call home.



That's good news to the hundreds of property owners listing their affordable or low-cost rental properties for free on FloridaHousingSearch.org. Four months after the launch of FloridaHousingSearch.org in Pinellas County, nearly 500 landlords use the service to advertise approximately 700 available units.

FloridaHousingSearch.org is an Internet listing that is free to both landlords and renters. It is an easily navigated website, with information on each property that is listed by the landlord, and can include information such as location, pet allowance, payment responsibilities, acceptance of Section 8 and Pinellas County rent vouchers, and whether security or other background checks are necessary. A photo may be included. A bilingual call center is available to support those without Internet access.

For landlords, the website offers 24-hour access to managing, adding and updating property listings, which can be immediately removed from the site once