

## Home Equity Early Disclosure

### IMPORTANT TERMS OF OUR HOME EQUITY LINE OF CREDIT PLAN

This disclosure contains important information about our Home Equity Line of Credit Plan. You should read it carefully and keep a copy for your records.

**AVAILABILITY OF TERMS:** All of the terms described below are subject to change. If these terms change (other than the annual percentage rate) and you decide, as a result, not to enter into an agreement with us, you are entitled to a refund of any fees that you pay to us or anyone else in connection with your application.

**SECURITY INTEREST:** We will take a security interest in your home. You could lose your home if you do not meet the obligations in your agreement with us.

**POSSIBLE ACTIONS:** We can terminate your line, require you to pay us the entire outstanding balance in one payment, and charge you certain fees, if (1) you engage in fraud or material misrepresentation in connection with the plan; (2) you do not meet the repayment terms of this plan, or (3) your action or inaction adversely affects the collateral or our rights in the collateral.

We can refuse to make additional extensions of credit or reduce your credit limit if (1) any reasons mentioned above exist; (2) the value of the dwelling securing the line declines significantly below its appraised value for purposes of the line; (3) we reasonably believe that you will not be able to meet the repayment requirements due to a material change in your financial circumstances; (4) you are in default of a material obligation of the agreement; (5) government action prevents us from imposing the annual percentage rate provided for in the agreement; (6) the priority of our security interest is adversely affected by government action to the extent that the value of the security interest is less than 120 percent of the credit line; (7) a regulatory agency has notified us that continued advances would constitute an unsafe and unsound business practice, or (8) the maximum annual percentage rate is reached.

**MINIMUM PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS:** You can obtain credit advances for 10 years. This period is called the "draw period." After the draw period ends the repayment period will begin. The length of the repayment period will depend on the balance at the time of the last advance you obtain before the draw period ends. You will be required to make monthly payments during both the draw and repayment periods. At the time you obtain a credit advance a payoff period of 300 monthly payments will be used to calculate your payment. The payoff period will always be the shorter of the payoff period for your outstanding balance or the time remaining to the maturity date. Your payment will be set to repay the balance after the advance, at the current annual percentage rate, within the payoff period. Your payment will be rounded up to the nearest dollar. Your payment will remain the same unless you obtain another credit advance. Your payment may also change if the annual percentage rate increases or decreases. Each time the annual percentage rate changes, we will adjust your payment to repay the balance within the original payoff period. Your payment will include any amounts past due and any amount by which you have exceeded your

credit limit, and all other charges. Your payment will never be less than the smaller of \$25.00, or the full amount that you owe.

**MINIMUM PAYMENT EXAMPLE:** If you made only the minimum monthly payment and took no other credit advances it would take 24 years 5 months to pay off a credit advance of \$10,000 at an **ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE** of 7.25%. During that period, you would make 292 payments of \$73.00 and one (1) final payment of \$3.39.

**FEES AND CHARGES:** You may pay certain fees to third parties to open the plan. These fees generally total between \$0.00 and \$3,000.00. If you ask, we will provide you with an itemization of the fees you will have to pay third parties.

**FEE REIMBURSEMENT:** The credit union may pay some or all of the bona-fide third party fees on your behalf; however, if you payoff and close the plan within 36 months from its opening date you agree to reimburse the credit union for those bona-fide third party fees, as permitted by applicable law. If you ask, the credit union will provide you with an itemization of the bona-fide third party fees.

**PROPERTY INSURANCE:** You must carry insurance on the property that secures this plan. If the property is located in a Special Flood Hazard Area we will require you to obtain flood insurance if it is available. The following notice is required by New York law. You are required to obtain property insurance on the property that is security for your mortgage loan. We cannot require you to obtain an insurance policy in excess of the replacement cost of the improvements on the property securing the loan.

**REFUNDABILITY OF FEES:** If you decide not to enter into this plan within three business days of receiving this disclosure and the home equity brochure, you are entitled to a refund of any fee you may have already paid.

**VARIABLE RATE FEATURE:** This plan has a variable rate feature and the annual percentage rate (corresponding to the periodic rate) and the minimum payment may change as a result. The annual percentage rate includes only interest and no other costs. The annual percentage rate is based on the value of an index. The index is the Prime Rate published in the Money Rates column of *The Wall Street Journal*. When a range of rates has been published the highest rate will be used. We will use the most recent index value available to us as of the date of any annual percentage rate adjustment. To determine the annual percentage rate that will apply to your account, we add a margin to the value of the Index. Ask us for the current index value, margin and annual percentage rate. After you open a plan, rate information will be provided on periodic statements that we send you.

**RATE CHANGES:** The annual percentage rate can change on the first day of each month. There is no limit on the amount by which the annual percentage rate can change during any one year period. The maximum **ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE** that can apply is 18.0% or the maximum permitted by law, whichever is less. However, under no

circumstances will your **ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE** go below 2.75% at any time during the term of the plan.

**TAX DEDUCTIBILITY:** You should consult a tax advisor regarding the deductibility of interest and charges for the plan.

**TRANSACTION REQUIREMENTS:** You must obtain an initial advance of \$2,500.00.

**MAXIMUM RATE AND PAYMENT EXAMPLE:** If you had an outstanding balance of \$10,000, the minimum payment at the maximum **ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE** of 18.0% would be \$152.00. This annual percentage rate could be reached at the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> payment.

**HISTORICAL EXAMPLE:** The following table shows how the annual percentage rate and the minimum payments for a single \$10,000 credit advance would have changed based on changes in the index over the past 15 years. The index values are as of the last business day of January of each year.

While only one payment per year is shown, payments may have varied during each year.

The table assumes that no additional credit advances were taken, that only the minimum payments were made, and that the rate remained constant during each year. It does not necessarily indicate how the index or your payments will change in the future.

WALL STREET JOURNAL PRIME RATE INDEX TABLE

Year (as of the last business day of January)	Index (Percent)	Margin <sup>(1)</sup> (Percent)	ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE	Monthly Payment (Dollars)
2011.....	3.250	-0.250	3.000	\$48.00
2012.....	3.250	-0.250	3.000	\$48.00
2013.....	3.250	-0.250	3.000	\$48.00
2014.....	3.250	-0.250	3.000	\$48.00
2015.....	3.250	-0.250	3.000	\$48.00
2016.....	3.500	-0.250	3.250	\$49.00
2017.....	3.750	-0.250	3.500	\$50.00
2018.....	4.500	-0.250	4.250	\$53.00
2019.....	5.500	-0.250	5.250	\$57.00
2020.....	4.750	-0.250	4.500	\$54.00
2021.....	3.250	-0.250	3.000	\$49.00
2022.....	3.250	-0.250	3.000	\$49.00
2023.....	7.500	-0.250	7.250	\$62.00
2024.....	8.500	-0.250	8.250	\$65.00
2025.....	7.500	-0.250	7.250	\$62.00

<sup>(1)</sup> This is a margin we have used recently; your margin may be different.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

# Home Equity Lines of Credit (HELOC)

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Borrowing from the  
value of your home



Consumer Financial  
Protection Bureau



An official publication of the U.S. government

## How to use the booklet

When you and your lender discuss home equity lines of credit, often referred to as HELOCs, you receive a copy of this booklet. It helps you explore and understand your options when borrowing against the equity in your home.

You can find more information from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) about home loans at [cfpb.gov/mortgages](https://cfpb.gov/mortgages). You'll also find other mortgage-related CFPB resources, facts, and tools to help you take control of your borrowing options.

## About the CFPB

The CFPB is a 21st century agency that implements and enforces federal consumer financial law and ensures that markets for consumer financial products are fair, transparent, and competitive.

This pamphlet, titled What you should know about home equity lines of credit, was created to comply with federal law pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1637a(e) and 12 CFR 1026.40(e).

## How can this booklet help you?

This booklet can help you decide whether home equity line of credit is the right choice for you, and help you shop for the best available option.

A home equity line of credit (HELOC) is a loan that allows you to borrow, spend, and repay as you go, using your home as collateral.

Typically, you can borrow up to a specified percentage of your equity. Equity is the value of your home minus the amount you owe on your mortgage.

**Consider a HELOC if you are confident you can keep up with the loan payments. If you fall behind or can't repay the loan on schedule, you could lose your home.**

## After you finish this booklet:

- You'll understand the effect of borrowing against your home
- You'll think through your borrowing and financing options, besides a HELOC
- You'll see how to shop for your best HELOC offer
- You'll see what to do if the economy or your situation changes

# Compare a HELOC to other money sources

Before you decide to take out a HELOC, it might make sense to consider other options that might be available to you, like the ones below.

**TIP**

Renting your home out to other people may be prohibited under the terms of your line of credit.

MONEY SOURCE	HOW MUCH CAN YOU BORROW	VARIABLE OR FIXED RATE	IS YOUR HOME AT RISK?	TYPICAL ADVANTAGES	TYPICAL DISADVANTAGES
<b>HELOC</b> <i>You borrow against the equity in your home</i>	Generally a percentage of the appraised value of your home, minus the amount you owe on your mortgage	Variable, typically	Yes	Continue repaying and borrowing for several years without additional approvals or paperwork	Repayment amount varies; repayment is often required when you sell your home
<b>SECOND MORTGAGE OR HOME EQUITY LOAN</b> <i>You borrow against the equity in your home</i>	Generally a percentage of the appraised value of your home, minus the amount you owe on your mortgage	Fixed	Yes	Equal payments that pay off the entire loan	If you need more money, you need to apply for a new loan; repayment is often required when you sell your home
<b>CASH-OUT REFINANCE</b> <i>You replace your existing mortgage with a bigger mortgage and take the difference in cash</i>	Generally a percentage of the appraised value of your home; the amount of your existing loan plus the amount you want to cash out	Variable or fixed	Yes	Continue to make just one mortgage payment	Closing costs are generally higher; it may take longer to pay off your mortgage; interest rate may be higher than your current mortgage
<b>PERSONAL LINE OF CREDIT</b> <i>You borrow based on your credit, without using your home as collateral</i>	Up to your credit limit, as determined by the lender	Variable, typically	No	Continue repaying and borrowing for several years without additional approvals or paperwork	Solid credit is required; you may need to pay the entire amount due once a year; higher interest rate than a loan that uses your home as collateral

# Compare a HELOC to other money sources

MONEY SOURCE	HOW MUCH CAN YOU BORROW	VARIABLE OR FIXED RATE	IS YOUR HOME AT RISK?	TYPICAL ADVANTAGES	TYPICAL DISADVANTAGES
<b>RETIREMENT PLAN LOAN</b> <i>You borrow from your retirement savings in a 401(k) or similar plan through your current employer</i>	Generally, up to 50% of your vested balance or \$50,000, whichever is less	Fixed	No	Repay through paycheck deductions; paperwork required but no credit check and no impact on your credit score	If you leave or lose your job, repay the whole amount at that time or pay taxes and penalties; spouse may need to consent
<b>HOME EQUITY CONVERSION MORTGAGE (HECM)</b> <i>You must be age 62 or older, and you borrow against the equity in your home</i>	Depends on your age, the interest rate on your loan, and the value of your home	Fixed or variable	Yes	You don't make monthly loan payments—instead, you typically repay the loan when you move out, or your survivors repay it after you die	The amount you owe grows over time; you might not have any value left in your home if you want to leave it to your heirs
<b>CREDIT CARD</b> <i>You borrow money from the credit card company and repay as you go</i>	Up to the amount of your credit limit, as determined by the credit card company	Fixed or variable	No	No minimum purchase; consumer protections in the case of fraud or lost or stolen card	Higher interest rate than a loan that uses your home as collateral
<b>FRIENDS AND FAMILY</b> <i>You borrow money from someone you are close to</i>	Agreed on by the borrower and lender	Variable, fixed or other	No	Reduced waiting time, fees, and paperwork compared to a formal loan	Forgiven loans and unreported or forgiven interest can complicate taxes, especially for large loans; can jeopardize important personal relationships if something goes wrong

# How HELOCs work

## PREPARE FOR UP-FRONT COSTS

Some lenders waive some or all of the up-front costs for a HELOC. Others may charge fees. For example, you might get charged:

- A fee for a property **appraisal**, which is a formal estimate of the value of your home
- An application fee, which might not be refunded if you are turned down
- Closing costs, including fees for attorneys, title search, mortgage preparation and filing, property and title insurance, and taxes

## PULL MONEY FROM YOUR LINE OF CREDIT

Once approved for a HELOC, you can generally spend up to your credit limit whenever you want. When your line of credit is open for spending, you are in the **borrowing period**, also called the **draw period**. Typically, you use special checks or a credit card to draw on your line. Some plans require you to borrow a minimum amount each time (for example, \$300) or keep a minimum amount outstanding. Some plans require you to take an initial amount when the credit line is set up.

## MAKE REPAYMENTS DURING THE “DRAW PERIOD”

Some plans set a minimum monthly payment that includes a portion of the **principal** (the amount you borrow) plus accrued interest. The portion of your payment that goes toward principal typically does not repay the principal by the end of the term. Other plans may allow payment of the interest only, during the draw period, which means that you pay nothing toward the principal.

If your plan has a variable interest rate, your monthly payments may change even if you don't draw more money.

## ENTER THE “REPAYMENT PERIOD”

Whatever your payment arrangements during the draw period—whether you pay some, a little, or none of the principal amount of the loan—when the draw period ends you enter a repayment period. Your lender may set a schedule so that you repay the full amount, often over ten or 15 years.

Or, you may have to pay the entire balance owed, all at once, which might be a large amount called a **balloon payment**. You must be prepared to make this **balloon payment** by refinancing it with the lender, getting a loan from another lender, or some other means. If you are unable to pay the balloon payment in full, you could lose your home.

## RENEW OR CLOSE OUT THE LINE OF CREDIT

At the end of the repayment period, your lender might encourage you to leave the line of credit open. This way you don't have to go through the cost and expense of a new loan, if you expect to borrow again. Be sure you understand if annual maintenance fees or other fees apply, even if you are not actively using the credit line.

## TIP

If you sell your home, you are generally required to pay off your HELOC in full immediately. If you are likely to sell your home in the near future, consider whether or not to pay the up-front costs of setting up a line of credit.



## GET THREE HELOC ESTIMATES

*Shopping around lets you compare costs and features, so you can feel confident you're making the best choice for your situation.*

		OFFER A	OFFER B	OFFER C
Initiating the HELOC				
Credit limit	\$			
First transaction	\$			
Minimum transaction	\$			
Minimum balance	\$			
Fixed annual percentage rate	%			
Variable annual percentage rate	%			
» Index used and current value				
» Amount of margin				
» Frequency of rate adjustments				
» Amount/length of discount rate (if any)				
» Interest rate cap and floor				
Length of plan				
» Draw period				
» Repayment period				
Initial fees				
» Appraisal fee	\$			
» Application fee	\$			





### GET THREE HELOC ESTIMATES

Shopping around lets you compare costs and features, so you can feel confident you're making the best choice for your situation.

		OFFER A	OFFER B	OFFER C
» Up-front charges, including points	\$			
» Early termination fee	\$			
» Closing costs				
During the draw period				
» Interest and principal payments	\$			
» Interest-only payments?	\$			
» Fully amortizing payments	\$			
» Annual fee (if applicable)	\$			
» Transaction fee (if applicable)	\$			
» Inactivity fee	\$			
» Prepayment and other penalty fees	\$			
During the repayment period				
» Penalty for overpayments?				
» Fully amortizing payment amount?				
» Balloon repayment of full balance owed?				
» Renewal available?				
» Refinancing of balance by lender?				
» Conversion to fixed-term loan?				

## How variable interest rates work

Home equity lines of credit typically involve variable rather than fixed interest rates.

A variable interest rate generally has two parts: the index and the margin.

An **index** is a measure of interest rates generally that reflects trends in the overall economy. Different lenders use different indexes in their loans. Common indexes include the U.S. prime rate and the Constant Maturity Treasury (CMT) rate. Talk with your lender to find out more about the index they use.

The **margin** is an extra percentage that the lender adds to the index.

Lenders sometimes offer a temporarily discounted interest rate for home equity lines—an introductory or **teaser rate** that is unusually low for a short period, such as six months.

## Rights and responsibilities

Lenders are required to disclose the terms and costs of their home equity lines of credit. They need to tell you:

- Annual percentage rate (APR)
- Information about variable rates
- Payment terms
- Requirements on transactions, such as minimum draw amounts and number of draws allowed per year

- Annual fees
- Miscellaneous charges

You usually get these disclosures when you receive a loan application, and you get additional disclosures before the line of credit is opened. In general, the lender cannot charge a nonrefundable fee as part of your application until three days after you have received the disclosures.

If the lender changes the terms before the loan is made, you can decide not to go forward with it, and the lender must return all fees. There is one exception: the variable interest rate might change, and in that case if you decide not to go ahead with the loan, your fees are not refunded.

Lenders must give you a list of HUD-approved housing counselors in your area. You can talk to counselor about how HELOCs work and get free or low-cost help with budgeting and money management.

### Right to cancel (also called right to rescind)

If you change your mind for any reason, under federal law, you can cancel the credit line in the first three days. Notify the lender in writing within the first three days after the account was opened. The lender must then cancel the loan and return the fees you paid, including application and appraisal fees.

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### TIP

Some HELOCs let you convert some of your balance to a fixed interest rate. The fixed interest rate is typically higher than the variable rate, but it means more predictable payments.

## If something changes during the course of the loan

HELOCs generally permit the lender to freeze or reduce your credit line if the value of your home falls or if they see a change for the worse in your financial situation. If this happens, you can:

- **Talk with your lender.** Find out the reason for the freeze or reduction. You might need to check your credit reports for errors that might have caused a downgrade in your credit. Or, you might need to talk with your lender about a new appraisal on your home and make sure the lender agrees to accept a new appraisal as valid.
- **Shop for another line of credit.** If another lender offers you a line of credit, you may be able to use that to pay off your original line of credit. Application fees and other fees may apply for the new loan.



### WELL DONE!

For most people, a home is their most valuable asset. A HELOC can help you make the most of this asset, when you understand the ins and outs and know what to expect.

## In this booklet:

### **ASK YOURSELF**

Have I considered other sources of money and loans, besides a HELOC?

Have I shopped around for HELOC features and fees?

Am I comfortable with the worst-case scenario, where I could lose my home?

### **ONLINE TOOLS**

**CFPB website**  
[cfpb.gov](https://cfpb.gov)

**Answers to common questions**  
[cfpb.gov/askcfpb](https://cfpb.gov/askcfpb)

**Tools and resources for home buyers**  
[cfpb.gov/owning-a-home](https://cfpb.gov/owning-a-home)

**Talk to a HUD-approved housing counselor**  
[cfpb.gov/find-a-housing-counselor](https://cfpb.gov/find-a-housing-counselor)

**Submit a complaint**  
[cfpb.gov/complaint](https://cfpb.gov/complaint)