

HOME EQUITY APPLICATION DISCLOSURE

Borrower:

Lender:

United Community Bank
Raceland Office
4626 Hwy 1
P. O. Box 248
Raceland, LA 70394

IMPORTANT TERMS OF OUR HOME EQUITY APPLICATION DISCLOSURE

This disclosure contains important information about our Consumer HELOC Plan 1st Mortgage (the "Plan" or the "Credit Line"). You should read it carefully and keep a copy for your records.

AVAILABILITY OF TERMS. All of the terms of the Plan described herein are subject to change. If any of 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 paid 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. Under this Plan, we have the following rights:

Temporary Credit Suspension and Credit Reduction. We may temporarily suspend your right to obtain credit advances on your Credit Line and/or reduce your credit limit while any of the following circumstances exists:

- (1) The value of your Property declines significantly below its appraised value for purposes of the Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, a decline such that the initial difference between the credit limit and the available equity is reduced by fifty percent (50%) and may include a smaller decline depending on individual circumstances;
- (2) We reasonably believe that you will be unable to fulfill the repayment terms under the Plan because of a material change in your financial circumstances;
- (3) You are in default of a material obligation under the Plan. A material obligation includes, but is not limited to, your duty to immediately notify us should there be an adverse change in your credit, financial condition or marital status, to provide us with updated financial or credit related information upon request; to continue to reside in any Property that secures your Credit Line and was your principal dwelling at the inception of your Credit Line and your agreement not to permit an intervening lien to be filed against your Property that would take priority over our security interest securing advances made under the Plan;
- (4) We are precluded by government action from imposing the Annual Percentage Rate provided under the Plan;
- (5) The priority of our security interest is adversely affected by government action to the extent that the value of our security interest in your Property is less than one hundred and twenty percent (120%) of your credit line;
- (6) The maximum Annual Percentage Rate under the Plan is reached (until such time as the APR declines below that maximum);
- (7) We are notified by regulatory authorities that continued credit advances under the Plan constitute an unsafe and unsound lending practice; or
- (8) You or any accountholder requests that we do so. We may at our option require that any such request be put in writing and sent to us by certified mail before suspending credit on your Credit Line. We may require that any requests to reinstate credit privileges also be put in writing and provided by each accountholder.

If the circumstances that caused us to prohibit additional advances or reduce the credit limit under your Credit Line subsequently ceases to exist, you must notify us of that fact. Upon notification, we may reinstate your Credit Line to its previous status if we agree that the circumstance has changed.

Termination and Acceleration. We may terminate and accelerate payment of all amounts you owe to us under the Plan, which you agree to pay to us immediately without notice or demand, or take lesser action as provided under the Plan if any of the following events occur:

- (1) You or any person signing the Plan Agreement notifies us to cancel your Credit Line for any reason. We may at our option request that this written notice to cancel be put in writing and delivered to us by certified mail before cancelling your Credit Line;
- (2) Your death results in an impairment of our security interest in your Property;
- (3) You fail to meet the repayment terms of the Plan;
- (4) You commit fraud or make a material misrepresentation at any time in connection with the Credit Agreement. This can include, for example, a false statement about your income, assets, liabilities, or any other aspects of your financial condition.
- (5) Any action or inaction by you adversely affects our security interest in your Property. For example: you transfer title to your Property or sell your Property without our permission, you fail to maintain required insurance on your Property, you fail to maintain the Property, a tax lien that primes our security interest is filed against your Property or your Property is taken by eminent domain, your Property is foreclosed upon by a prior lienholder, or another creditor attempts to enforce a judgment against your Property.

If an event occurs that would allow us to terminate and accelerate all amounts you owe us under your Account, we may initially elect to take lesser action, such as prohibiting additional advances, reducing your credit limit, or changing the terms of the Plan by increasing your Annual Percentage and Daily Periodic Rates, Minimum Payment or collateral requirements. If we choose to take such lesser action initially, we reserve the right to terminate and accelerate all amounts due under your Account, regardless of whether any additional events have occurred which would permit termination and acceleration.

Fees and Charges. In order to open and maintain an account, you must pay certain fees and charges.

Lender Fees. The following fees must be paid to us:

Description	Amount	When Charged
NSF Handling Fee:	\$25.00	At the time a payment is returned to us for non-sufficient funds
Stop Payment Fee:	\$29.00	At the time you request a Stop Payment

Late Charge. Your payment will be late if it is not received by us within 10 days after the "Payment Due Date" shown on your periodic statement. If your payment is late we may charge you 5.000% of the unpaid amount of the payment.

HOME EQUITY APPLICATION DISCLOSURE (Continued)

Third Party Fees. You must pay certain fees to third parties such as appraisers, credit reporting firms, and government agencies.

These third party fees generally total between \$25.00 and \$2,500.00. We estimate the breakdown of these as follows:

Description	Amount	When Charged
Appraisal (POC):	\$75.00 to \$600.00	Upon Each Occurrence
Recording Fee::	\$75.00 to \$525.00	At Account Closing
Notary Fee: :	\$25.00 to \$300.00	At Account Closing
Title Insurance::	\$500.00 to \$2500.00	Upon Each Occurrence

PROPERTY INSURANCE. You must carry insurance on the property that secures the Plan.

MINIMUM PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS. You can obtain advances of credit during the following period: 5 YEAR DRAW PERIOD WITH OPTION FOR RENEWAL (the "Draw Period"). Your Regular Payment will equal the amount of your accrued FINANCE CHARGES. You will make 59 of these payments. You will then be required to pay the entire balance owing in a single balloon payment. If you make only the minimum payments, you may not repay any of the principal balance by the end of this payment stream. Your payments will be due monthly. Your "Minimum Payment" will be the Regular Payment, plus any amount past due and all other charges. An increase in the ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE may increase the amount of your Regular Payment.

In any event, if your Credit Line balance falls below \$100.00, you agree to pay your balance in full.

MINIMUM PAYMENT EXAMPLE. If you made only the minimum payment and took no other credit advances, it would take 5 years to pay off a credit advance of \$10,000.00 at an ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE of 9.632%. During that period, you would make 59 monthly payments ranging from \$73.89 to \$81.81 and one final payment of \$10,081.81.

TRANSACTION REQUIREMENTS. The following transaction limitations will apply to the use of your Credit Line:

Credit Line Home Equity Line Check Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and the writing of Home Equity Line Checks.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00. This means any Home Equity Line Check must be written for at least the minimum advance amount.

Telephone Request Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and requesting an advance by telephone.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00.

Request By Mail Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and requesting an advance by mail.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00.

In Person Request Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and requesting an advance in person.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00.

Internet Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and accessing by other methods.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00.

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

VARIABLE RATE FEATURE. The Plan has a variable rate feature. The ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE (corresponding to the periodic rate), and the minimum payment amount can change as a result. The ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE does not include costs other than interest.

THE INDEX. The annual percentage rate is based on the value of an index (referred to in this disclosure as the "Index"). The Index is the Wall Street Journal Prime. Information about the Index is available or published in the Wall Street Journal. We will use the most recent Index value available to us as of the day before the rate change any annual percentage rate adjustment.

ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE. To determine the Periodic Rate that will apply to your account, we add a margin to the value of the Index, then divide the value by 360 days. To obtain the ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE we multiply the Periodic Rate by the number of days in a year (366 during leap years). This result is the **ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE**. A change in the Index rate generally will result in a change in the ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE. The amount that your ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE may change also may be affected by the lifetime annual percentage rate limits, as discussed below.

Please ask us for the current Index value, margin and annual percentage rate. After you open a credit line, rate information will be provided on periodic statements that we send you.

FREQUENCY OF ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE ADJUSTMENTS. Your ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE can change daily. There is no limit on the amount by which the annual percentage rate can change during any one year period. However, under no circumstances will your ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE exceed 20.785% per annum or, go below 5.069% per annum at any time during the term of the Plan.

MAXIMUM RATE AND PAYMENT EXAMPLE. If you had an outstanding balance of \$10,000.00, the minimum payment at the maximum ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE of 20.785% would be \$176.53. This ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE could be reached immediately or prior to the 1st payment.

PREPAYMENT. You may prepay all or any amount owing under the Plan at any time without penalty.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE. The example below shows how the ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE and the minimum payments for a single \$10,000.00 credit advance would have changed based on changes in the Index from 2011 to 2025. The Index values are from the following reference period: January 1st of each year. While only one payment per year is shown, payments may have varied during each year. Different outstanding principal balances could result in different payment amounts.

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

HOME EQUITY APPLICATION DISCLOSURE (Continued)

Page 3

INDEX TABLE

Year (January 1st of each year.)	Index (Percent)	Margin (1) (Percent)	ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE	Monthly Payment (Dollars)
2011.....	3.250.....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2012.....	3.250.....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2013.....	3.250.....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2014.....	3.250.....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2015.....	3.250.....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2016.....	3.500.....	2.000	5.576	
2017.....	3.750.....	2.000	5.830	
2018.....	4.500.....	2.000	6.590	
2019.....	5.500.....	2.000	7.604	
2020.....	4.750.....	2.000	6.844	
2021.....	3.250.....	2.000	5.323	
2022.....	3.250.....	2.000	5.323	
2023.....	7.500.....	2.000	9.632	
2024.....	8.500.....	2.000	10.646	
2025.....	7.500.....	2.000	9.632	

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

BORROWER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Borrower, after having read the contents of the above disclosure, acknowledges receipt of this Disclosure Statement and further acknowledges that this Disclosure was completed in full prior to its receipt. The Borrower also acknowledges receipt of the handbook entitled "What you should know about Home Equity Lines of Credit".

BORROWER:

X _____
Borrower Date

X _____
Borrower Date

HOME EQUITY APPLICATION DISCLOSURE

Borrower:

Lender:

United Community Bank
Raceland Office
4626 Hwy 1
P. O. Box 248
Raceland, LA 70394

IMPORTANT TERMS OF OUR HOME EQUITY APPLICATION DISCLOSURE

This disclosure contains important information about our Consumer HELOC Plan 2nd Mortgage (the "Plan" or the "Credit Line"). You should read it carefully and keep a copy for your records.

AVAILABILITY OF TERMS. All of the terms of the Plan described herein are subject to change. If any of 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 paid 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. Under this Plan, we have the following rights:

Temporary Credit Suspension and Credit Reduction. We may temporarily suspend your right to obtain credit advances on your Credit Line and/or reduce your credit limit while any of the following circumstances exists:

- (1) The value of your Property declines significantly below its appraised value for purposes of the Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, a decline such that the initial difference between the credit limit and the available equity is reduced by fifty percent (50%) and may include a smaller decline depending on individual circumstances;
- (2) We reasonably believe that you will be unable to fulfill the repayment terms under the Plan because of a material change in your financial circumstances;
- (3) You are in default of a material obligation under the Plan. A material obligation includes, but is not limited to, your duty to immediately notify us should there be an adverse change in your credit, financial condition or marital status, to provide us with updated financial or credit related information upon request; to continue to reside in any Property that secures your Credit Line and was your principal dwelling at the inception of your Credit Line and your agreement not to permit an intervening lien to be filed against your Property that would take priority over our security interest securing advances made under the Plan;
- (4) We are precluded by government action from imposing the Annual Percentage Rate provided under the Plan;
- (5) The priority of our security interest is adversely affected by government action to the extent that the value of our security interest in your Property is less than one hundred and twenty percent (120%) of your credit line;
- (6) The maximum Annual Percentage Rate under the Plan is reached (until such time as the APR declines below that maximum);
- (7) We are notified by regulatory authorities that continued credit advances under the Plan constitute an unsafe and unsound lending practice; or
- (8) You or any accountholder requests that we do so. We may at our option require that any such request be put in writing and sent to us by certified mail before suspending credit on your Credit Line. We may require that any requests to reinstate credit privileges also be put in writing and provided by each accountholder.

If the circumstances that caused us to prohibit additional advances or reduce the credit limit under your Credit Line subsequently ceases to exist, you must notify us of that fact. Upon notification, we may reinstate your Credit Line to its previous status if we agree that the circumstance has changed.

Termination and Acceleration. We may terminate and accelerate payment of all amounts you owe to us under the Plan, which you agree to pay to us immediately without notice or demand, or take lesser action as provided under the Plan if any of the following events occur:

- (1) You or any person signing the Plan Agreement notifies us to cancel your Credit Line for any reason. We may at our option request that this written notice to cancel be put in writing and delivered to us by certified mail before cancelling your Credit Line;
- (2) Your death results in an impairment of our security interest in your Property;
- (3) You fail to meet the repayment terms of the Plan;
- (4) You commit fraud or make a material misrepresentation at any time in connection with the Credit Agreement. This can include, for example, a false statement about your income, assets, liabilities, or any other aspects of your financial condition.
- (5) Any action or inaction by you adversely affects our security interest in your Property. For example: you transfer title to your Property or sell your Property without our permission, you fail to maintain required insurance on your Property, you fail to maintain the Property, a tax lien that primes our security interest is filed against your Property or your Property is taken by eminent domain, your Property is foreclosed upon by a prior lienholder, or another creditor attempts to enforce a judgment against your Property.

If an event occurs that would allow us to terminate and accelerate all amounts you owe us under your Account, we may initially elect to take lesser action, such as prohibiting additional advances, reducing your credit limit, or changing the terms of the Plan by increasing your Annual Percentage and Daily Periodic Rates, Minimum Payment or collateral requirements. If we choose to take such lesser action initially, we reserve the right to terminate and accelerate all amounts due under your Account, regardless of whether any additional events have occurred which would permit termination and acceleration.

Fees and Charges. In order to open and maintain an account, you must pay certain fees and charges.

Lender Fees. The following fees must be paid to us:

Description	Amount	When Charged
NSF Handling Fee:	\$25.00	At the time a payment is returned to us for non-sufficient funds
Stop Payment Fee:	\$29.00	At the time you request a Stop Payment

Late Charge. Your payment will be late if it is not received by us within **10 days after the "Payment Due Date" shown on your periodic statement.** If your payment is late we may charge you 5.000% of the unpaid amount of the payment.

HOME EQUITY APPLICATION DISCLOSURE (Continued)

Third Party Fees. You must pay certain fees to third parties such as appraisers, credit reporting firms, and government agencies.

These third party fees generally total between \$75.00 and \$600.00. We estimate the breakdown of these as follows:

Description	Amount	When Charged
Appraisal (POC):	\$75.00 to \$600.00	Upon Each Occurrence

PROPERTY INSURANCE. You must carry insurance on the property that secures the Plan.

MINIMUM PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS. You can obtain advances of credit during the following period: 5 YEAR DRAW PERIOD WITH OPTION FOR RENEWAL (the "Draw Period"). Your Regular Payment will equal the amount of your accrued FINANCE CHARGES. You will make 59 of these payments. You will then be required to pay the entire balance owing in a single balloon payment. If you make only the minimum payments, you may not repay any of the principal balance by the end of this payment stream. Your payments will be due monthly. Your "Minimum Payment" will be the Regular Payment, plus any amount past due and all other charges. An increase in the ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE may increase the amount of your Regular Payment.

In any event, if your Credit Line balance falls below \$100.00, you agree to pay your balance in full.

MINIMUM PAYMENT EXAMPLE. If you made only the minimum payment and took no other credit advances, it would take 5 years to pay off a credit advance of \$10,000.00 at an ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE of 9.632%. During that period, you would make 59 monthly payments ranging from \$73.89 to \$81.81 and one final payment of \$10,081.81.

TRANSACTION REQUIREMENTS. The following transaction limitations will apply to the use of your Credit Line:

Credit Line Home Equity Line Check Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and the writing of Home Equity Line Checks.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00. This means any Home Equity Line Check must be written for at least the minimum advance amount.

Telephone Request Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and requesting an advance by telephone.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00.

Request By Mail Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and requesting an advance by mail.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00.

In Person Request Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and requesting an advance in person.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00.

Internet Limitations. The following transaction limitations will apply to your Credit Line and accessing by other methods.

Minimum Advance Amount. The minimum amount of any credit advance that can be made on your Credit Line is \$100.00.

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

VARIABLE RATE FEATURE. The Plan has a variable rate feature. The ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE (corresponding to the periodic rate), and the minimum payment amount can change as a result. The ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE does not include costs other than interest.

THE INDEX. The annual percentage rate is based on the value of an index (referred to in this disclosure as the "Index"). The Index is the Wall Street Journal Prime. Information about the Index is available or published in the Wall Street Journal. We will use the most recent Index value available to us as of the day before the rate change any annual percentage rate adjustment.

ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE. To determine the Periodic Rate that will apply to your account, we add a margin to the value of the Index, then divide the value by 360 days. To obtain the ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE we multiply the Periodic Rate by the number of days in a year (366 during leap years). This result is the ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE. A change in the Index rate generally will result in a change in the ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE. The amount that your ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE may change also may be affected by the lifetime annual percentage rate limits, as discussed below.

Please ask us for the current Index value, margin and annual percentage rate. After you open a credit line, rate information will be provided on periodic statements that we send you.

FREQUENCY OF ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE ADJUSTMENTS. Your ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE can change daily. There is no limit on the amount by which the annual percentage rate can change during any one year period. However, under no circumstances will your ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE exceed 20.785% per annum or, go below 5.069% per annum at any time during the term of the Plan.

MAXIMUM RATE AND PAYMENT EXAMPLE. If you had an outstanding balance of \$10,000.00, the minimum payment at the maximum ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE of 20.785% would be \$176.53. This ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE could be reached immediately or prior to the 1st payment.

PREPAYMENT. You may prepay all or any amount owing under the Plan at any time without penalty.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE. The example below shows how the ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE and the minimum payments for a single \$10,000.00 credit advance would have changed based on changes in the Index from 2011 to 2025. The Index values are from the following reference period: January 1st of each year. While only one payment per year is shown, payments may have varied during each year. Different outstanding principal balances could result in different payment amounts.

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

**HOME EQUITY APPLICATION DISCLOSURE
(Continued)**

Page 3

INDEX TABLE

Year (January 1st of each year.)	Index (Percent)	Margin (1) (Percent)	ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE	Monthly Payment (Dollars)
2011.....	3.250....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2012.....	3.250....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2013.....	3.250....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2014.....	3.250....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2015.....	3.250....	2.000	5.323	45.21
2016.....	3.500....	2.000	5.576	
2017.....	3.750....	2.000	5.830	
2018.....	4.500....	2.000	6.590	
2019.....	5.500....	2.000	7.604	
2020.....	4.750....	2.000	6.844	
2021.....	3.250....	2.000	5.323	
2022.....	3.250....	2.000	5.323	
2023.....	7.500....	2.000	9.632	
2024.....	8.500....	2.000	10.646	
2025.....	7.500....	2.000	9.632	

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

BORROWER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Borrower, after having read the contents of the above disclosure, acknowledges receipt of this Disclosure Statement and further acknowledges that this Disclosure was completed in full prior to its receipt. The Borrower also acknowledges receipt of the handbook entitled "What you should know about Home Equity Lines of Credit".

BORROWER:

X _____
Borrower Date

X _____
Borrower Date



Disclosure of Right to Receive a Copy of an Appraisal

We may order an appraisal to determine the property's value and charge you for this appraisal. We will promptly give you a copy of any appraisal, even if your loan does not close.

You can pay for an additional appraisal for your own use at your own cost.

Applicant Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we have received a copy of this Disclosure of Right to Receive a copy of an Appraisal.

Applicant:

Date:

Applicant:

Date:

What you should know about home equity lines of credit



Consumer Financial
Protection Bureau

January 2014

This booklet was initially prepared by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has made technical updates to the booklet to reflect new mortgage rules under Title XIV of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act). A larger update of this booklet is planned in the future to reflect other changes under the Dodd-Frank Act and to align with other CFPB resources and tools for consumers as part of the CFPB's broader mission to educate consumers. Consumers are encouraged to visit the CFPB's website at consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home to access interactive tools and resources for mortgage shoppers, which are expected to be available beginning in 2014.

Table of contents

Table of contents	3
1. Introduction	4
1.1 Home equity plan checklist.....	4
2. What is a home equity line of credit?	6
2.1 What should you look for when shopping for a plan?.....	7
2.2 Costs of establishing and maintaining a home equity line.....	8
2.3 How will you repay your home equity plan?	9
2.4 Line of credit vs. traditional second mortgage loans	10
2.5 What if the lender freezes or reduces your line of credit?.....	11
Appendix A:.....	12
Defined terms	12
Appendix B:.....	15
More information	15
Appendix C:.....	16
Contact information	16

1. Introduction

If you are in the market for credit, a home equity plan is one of several options that might be right for you. Before making a decision, however, you should weigh carefully the costs of a home equity line against the benefits. Shop for the credit terms that best meet your borrowing needs without posing undue financial risks. And remember, failure to repay the amounts you've borrowed, plus interest, could mean the loss of your home.

1.1 Home equity plan checklist

Ask your lender to help you fill out this worksheet.

Basic features for comparison	Plan A	Plan B
Fixed annual percentage rate	%	%
Variable annual percentage rate	%	%
▣ Index used and current value	%	%
▣ Amount of margin		
▣ Frequency of rate adjustments		
▣ Amount/length of discount (if any)		
▣ Interest rate cap and floor		
Length of plan		
Draw period		

Basic features for comparison (continued)	Plan A	Plan B
Repayment period		
Initial fees		
Appraisal fee		
Application fee		
Up-front charges, including points		
Closing costs		
Repayment terms		
During the draw period		
Interest and principal payments		
Interest-only payments		
Fully amortizing payments		
When the draw period ends		
Balloon payment?		
Renewal available?		
Refinancing of balance by lender?		

2. What is a home equity line of credit?

A home equity line of credit is a form of revolving credit in which your home serves as collateral. Because a home often is a consumer's most valuable asset, many homeowners use home equity credit lines only for major items, such as education, home improvements, or medical bills, and choose not to use them for day-to-day expenses.

With a home equity line, you will be approved for a specific amount of credit. Many lenders set the credit limit on a home equity line by taking a percentage (say, 75 percent) of the home's appraised value and subtracting from that the balance owed on the existing mortgage. For example:

Appraised value of home	\$100,000
Percentage	x 75%
Percentage of appraised value	= \$75,000
Less balance owed on mortgage	– \$40,000
Potential line of credit	\$35,000

In determining your actual credit limit, the lender will also consider your ability to repay the loan (principal and interest) by looking at your income, debts, and other financial obligations as well as your credit history.

Many home equity plans set a fixed period during which you can borrow money, such as 10 years. At the end of this “draw period,” you may be allowed to renew the credit line. If your plan

does not allow renewals, you will not be able to borrow additional money once the period has ended. Some plans may call for payment in full of any outstanding balance at the end of the period. Others may allow repayment over a fixed period (the “repayment period”), for example, 10 years.

Once approved for a home equity line of credit, you will most likely be able to borrow up to your credit limit whenever you want. Typically, you will use special checks to draw on your line. Under some plans, borrowers can use a credit card or other means to draw on the line.

There may be other limitations on how you use the line. Some plans may require you to borrow a minimum amount each time you draw on the line (for example, \$300) or keep a minimum amount outstanding. Some plans may also require that you take an initial advance when the line is set up.

2.1 What should you look for when shopping for a plan?

If you decide to apply for a home equity line of credit, look for the plan that best meets your particular needs. Read the credit agreement carefully, and examine the terms and conditions of various plans, including the annual percentage rate (APR) and the costs of establishing the plan. Remember, though, that the APR for a home equity line is based on the interest rate alone and will not reflect closing costs and other fees and charges, so you’ll need to compare these costs, as well as the APRs, among lenders.

2.1.1 Variable interest rates

Home equity lines of credit typically involve variable rather than fixed interest rates. The variable rate must be based on a publicly available index (such as the prime rate published in some major daily newspapers or a U.S. Treasury bill rate). In such cases, the interest rate you pay for the line of credit will change, mirroring changes in the value of the index. Most lenders cite the interest rate you will pay as the value of the index at a particular time, plus a “margin,” such as 2 percentage points. Because the cost of borrowing is tied directly to the value of the index, it is important to find out which index is used, how often the value of the index changes, and how high it has risen in the past. It is also important to note the amount of the margin.

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

Variable-rate plans secured by a dwelling must, by law, have a ceiling (or cap) on how much your interest rate may increase over the life of the plan. Some variable-rate plans limit how much your payment may increase and how low your interest rate may fall if the index drops.

Some lenders allow you to convert from a variable interest rate to a fixed rate during the life of the plan, or let you convert all or a portion of your line to a fixed-term installment loan.

2.2 Costs of establishing and maintaining a home equity line

Many of the costs of setting up a home equity line of credit are similar to those you pay when you get a mortgage. For example:

- A fee for a property appraisal to estimate the value of your home;
- An application fee, which may not be refunded if you are turned down for credit;
- Up-front charges, such as one or more “points” (one point equals 1 percent of the credit limit); and
- Closing costs, including fees for attorneys, title search, mortgage preparation and filing, property and title insurance, and taxes.

In addition, you may be subject to certain fees during the plan period, such as annual membership or maintenance fees and a transaction fee every time you draw on the credit line.

You could find yourself paying hundreds of dollars to establish the plan. And if you were to draw only a small amount against your credit line, those initial charges would substantially increase the cost of the funds borrowed. On the other hand, because the lender’s risk is lower than for other forms of credit, as your home serves as collateral, annual percentage rates for home equity lines are generally lower than rates for other types of credit. The interest you save could offset the costs of establishing and maintaining the line. Moreover, some lenders waive some or all of the closing costs.

2.3 How will you repay your home equity plan?

Before entering into a plan, consider how you will pay back the money you borrow. Some plans set a minimum monthly payment that includes a portion of the principal (the amount you borrow) plus accrued interest. But, unlike with typical installment loan agreements, the portion of your payment that goes toward principal may not be enough to repay the principal by the end of the term. Other plans may allow payment of only the interest during the life of the plan, which means that you pay nothing toward the principal. If you borrow \$10,000, you will owe that amount when the payment plan ends.

Regardless of the minimum required payment on your home equity line, you may choose to pay more, and many lenders offer a choice of payment options. However, some lenders may require you to pay special fees or penalties if you choose to pay more, so check with your lender. Many consumers choose to pay down the principal regularly as they do with other loans. For example, if you use your line to buy a boat, you may want to pay it off as you would a typical boat loan.

Whatever your payment arrangements during the life of the plan—whether you pay some, a little, or none of the principal amount of the loan—when the plan ends, you may have to pay the entire balance owed, all at once. You must be prepared to make this “balloon payment” by refinancing it with the lender, by obtaining a loan from another lender, or by some other means. If you are unable to make the balloon payment, you could lose your home.

If your plan has a variable interest rate, your monthly payments may change. Assume, for example, that you borrow \$10,000 under a plan that calls for interest-only payments. At a 10 percent interest rate, your monthly payments would be \$83. If the rate rises over time to 15 percent, your monthly payments will increase to \$125. Similarly, if you are making payments that cover interest plus some portion of the principal, your monthly payments may increase, unless your agreement calls for keeping payments the same throughout the plan period.

If you sell your home, you will probably be required to pay off your home equity line in full immediately. If you are likely to sell your home in the near future, consider whether it makes sense to pay the up-front costs of setting up a line of credit. Also keep in mind that renting your home may be prohibited under the terms of your agreement.

2.4 Line of credit vs. traditional second mortgage loans

If you are thinking about a home equity line of credit, you might also want to consider a traditional second mortgage loan. This type of loan provides you with a fixed amount of money, repayable over a fixed period. In most cases, the payment schedule calls for equal payments that pay off the entire loan within the loan period. You might consider a second mortgage instead of a home equity line if, for example, you need a set amount for a specific purpose, such as an addition to your home.

In deciding which type of loan best suits your needs, consider the costs under the two alternatives. Look at both the APR and other charges. Do not, however, simply compare the APRs, because the APRs on the two types of loans are figured differently:

- The APR for a traditional second mortgage loan takes into account the interest rate charged plus points and other finance charges.
- The APR for a home equity line of credit is based on the periodic interest rate alone. It does not include points or other charges.

2.4.1 Disclosures from lenders

The federal Truth in Lending Act requires lenders to disclose the important terms and costs of their home equity plans, including the APR, miscellaneous charges, the payment terms, and information about any variable-rate feature. And in general, neither the lender nor anyone else may charge a fee until after you have received this information. You usually get these disclosures when you receive an application form, and you will get additional disclosures before the plan is opened. If any term (other than a variable-rate feature) changes before the plan is opened, the lender must return all fees if you decide not to enter into the plan because of the change. Lenders are also required to provide you with a list of homeownership counseling organizations in your area.

When you open a home equity line, the transaction puts your home at risk. If the home involved is your principal dwelling, the Truth in Lending Act gives you three days from the day the account was opened to cancel the credit line. This right allows you to change your mind for any reason. You simply inform the lender in writing within the three-day period. The lender must

then cancel its security interest in your home and return all fees— including any application and appraisal fees—paid to open the account.

The Home Ownership and Equity Protection Act of 1994 (HOEPA) addresses certain unfair practices and establishes requirements for certain loans with high rates and fees, including certain additional disclosures. HOEPA now covers some HELOCs. You can find out more information by contacting the CFPB at the website address and phone number listed in the Contact information appendix, below.

2.5 What if the lender freezes or reduces your line of credit?

Plans generally permit lenders to freeze or reduce a credit line if the value of the home “declines significantly” or when the lender “reasonably believes” that you will be unable to make your payments due to a “material change” in your financial circumstances. If this happens, you may want to:

- **Talk with your lender.** Find out what caused the lender to freeze or reduce your credit line and what, if anything, you can do to restore it. You may be able to provide additional information to restore your line of credit, such as documentation showing that your house has retained its value or that there has not been a “material change” in your financial circumstances. You may want to get copies of your credit reports (go to the CFPB’s website at consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb/5/can-i-review-my-credit-report.html for information about how to get free copies of your credit reports) to make sure all the information in them is correct. If your lender suggests getting a new appraisal, be sure you discuss appraisal firms in advance so that you know they will accept the new appraisal as valid.
- **Shop around for another line of credit.** If your lender does not want to restore your line of credit, shop around to see what other lenders have to offer. If another lender is willing to offer you a line of credit, you may be able to pay off your original line of credit and take out another one. Keep in mind, however, that you may need to pay some of the same application fees you paid for your original line of credit.

APPENDIX A:

Defined terms

This glossary provides general definitions for terms commonly used in the real estate market. They may have different legal meanings depending on the context.

DEFINED TERM	
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP OR MAINTENANCE FEE	An annual charge for access to a financial product such as a line of credit, credit card, or account. The fee is charged regardless of whether or not the product is used.
ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE (APR)	The cost of credit, expressed as a yearly rate. For closed-end credit, such as car loans or mortgages, the APR includes the interest rate, points, broker fees, and other credit charges that the borrower is required to pay. An APR, or an equivalent rate, is not used in leasing agreements.
APPLICATION FEE	Fees charged when you apply for a loan or other credit. These fees may include charges for property appraisal and a credit report.
BALLOON PAYMENT	A large extra payment that may be charged at the end of a mortgage loan or lease.
CAP (INTEREST RATE)	A limit on the amount that your interest rate can increase. Two types of interest-rate caps exist. <i>Periodic adjustment caps</i> limit the interest-rate increase from one adjustment period to the next. <i>Lifetime caps</i> limit the interest-rate increase over the life of the loan. By law, all adjustable-rate mortgages have an overall cap.

**CLOSING OR
SETTLEMENT COSTS**

Fees paid when you close (or settle) on a loan. These fees may include application fees; title examination, abstract of title, title insurance, and property survey fees; fees for preparing deeds, mortgages, and settlement documents; attorneys' fees; recording fees; estimated costs of taxes and insurance; and notary, appraisal, and credit report fees. Under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, the borrower receives a good faith estimate of closing costs within three days of application. The good faith estimate lists each expected cost as an amount or a range.

CREDIT LIMIT

The maximum amount that may be borrowed on a credit card or under a home equity line of credit plan.

EQUITY

The difference between the fair market value of the home and the outstanding balance on your mortgage plus any outstanding home equity loans.

INDEX

The economic indicator used to calculate interest-rate adjustments for adjustable-rate mortgages or other adjustable-rate loans. The index rate can increase or decrease at any time. See also Selected index rates for ARMs over an 11-year period (consumerfinance.gov/f/201204_CFPB_ARMs-brochure.pdf) for examples of common indexes that have changed in the past.

INTEREST RATE

The percentage rate used to determine the cost of borrowing money, stated usually as a percentage of the principal loan amount and as an annual rate.

MARGIN

The number of percentage points the lender adds to the index rate to calculate the adjustable-rate-mortgage interest rate at each adjustment.

MINIMUM PAYMENT

The lowest amount that you must pay (usually monthly) to keep your account in good standing. Under some plans, the minimum payment may cover interest only; under others, it may include both principal and interest.

**POINTS (ALSO
CALLED DISCOUNT
POINTS)**

One point is equal to 1 percent of the principal amount of a mortgage loan. For example, if a mortgage is \$200,000, one point equals \$2,000. Lenders frequently charge points in both fixed-rate and adjustable-rate mortgages to cover loan origination costs or to provide additional compensation to the lender or broker. These points usually are paid at closing and may be paid by the borrower or the home seller, or may be split between them. In some cases, the money needed to pay points can be borrowed (incorporated in the loan amount), but doing so will increase the loan amount and the total costs. Discount points (also called discount fees) are points that you voluntarily choose to pay in return for a lower interest rate.

SECURITY INTEREST

If stated in your credit agreement, a creditor, lessor, or assignee's legal right to your property (such as your home, stocks, or bonds) that secures payment of your obligation under the credit agreement. The property that secures payment of your obligation is referred to as "collateral."

TRANSACTION FEE

Fee charged each time a withdrawal or other specified transaction is made on a line of credit, such as a balance transfer fee or a cash advance fee.

VARIABLE RATE

An interest rate that changes periodically in relation to an index, such as the prime rate. Payments may increase or decrease accordingly.

APPENDIX B:

More information

For more information about mortgages, including home equity lines of credit, visit consumerfinance.gov/mortgage. For answers to questions about mortgages and other financial topics, visit consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb. You may also visit the CFPB's website at consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home to access interactive tools and resources for mortgage shoppers, which are expected to be available beginning in 2014.

Housing counselors can be very helpful, especially for first-time home buyers or if you're having trouble paying your mortgage. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) supports housing counseling agencies throughout the country that can provide free or low-cost advice. You can search for HUD-approved housing counseling agencies in your area on the CFPB's web site at consumerfinance.gov/find-a-housing-counselor or by calling HUD's interactive toll-free number at 800-569-4287.

The company that collects your mortgage payments is your loan servicer. This may not be the same company as your lender. If you have concerns about how your loan is being serviced or another aspect of your mortgage, you may wish to submit a complaint to the CFPB at consumerfinance.gov/complaint or by calling (855) 411-CFPB (2372).

When you submit a complaint to the CFPB, the CFPB will forward your complaint to the company and work to get a response. Companies have 15 days to respond to you and the CFPB. You can review the company's response and give feedback to the CFPB.

APPENDIX C:

Contact information

For additional information or to submit a complaint, you can contact the CFPB or one of the other federal agencies listed below, depending on the type of institution. If you are not sure which agency to contact, you can submit a complaint to the CFPB and if the CFPB determines that another agency would be better able to assist you, the CFPB will refer your complaint to that agency and let you know.

Regulatory agency	Regulated entities	Contact information
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) P.O. Box 2900 Clinton, IA 52733	Insured depository institutions and credit unions with assets greater than \$10 billion (and their affiliates), and non-bank providers of consumer financial products and services, including mortgages, credit cards, debt collection, consumer reports, prepaid cards, private education loans, and payday lending	(855) 411-CFPB (2372) consumerfinance.gov consumerfinance.gov/complaint
Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (FRB) Consumer Help P.O. Box 1200 Minneapolis, MN 55480	Federally insured state-chartered bank members of the Federal Reserve System	(888) 851-1920 federalreserveconsumerhelp.gov

Regulatory agency	Regulated entities	Contact information
Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) Customer Assistance Group 1301 McKinney Street Suite 3450 Houston, TX 77010	National banks and federally chartered savings banks/associations	(800) 613-6743 occ.treas.gov helpwithmybank.gov
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) Consumer Response Center 1100 Walnut Street, Box #11 Kansas City, MO 64106	Federally insured state-chartered banks that are not members of the Federal Reserve System	(877) ASK-FDIC or (877) 275-3342 fdic.gov fdic.gov/consumers
Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) Consumer Communications Constitution Center 400 7th Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20024	Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks	Consumer Helpline (202) 649-3811 fhfa.gov fhfa.gov/Default.aspx?Page=369 ConsumerHelp@fhfa.gov
National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) Consumer Assistance 1775 Duke Street Alexandria, VA 22314	Federally chartered credit unions	(800) 755-1030 ncua.gov mycreditunion.gov
Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Consumer Response Center 600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W. Washington, DC 20580	Finance companies, retail stores, auto dealers, mortgage companies and other lenders, and credit bureaus	(877) FTC-HELP or (877) 382-4357 ftc.gov ftc.gov/bcp

Regulatory agency	Regulated entities	Contact information
Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Complaint Center 100 F Street, N.E. Washington, DC 20549	Brokerage firms, mutual fund companies, and investment advisers	(202) 551-6551 sec.gov sec.gov/complaint/select.shtml
Farm Credit Administration Office of Congressional and Public Affairs 1501 Farm Credit Drive McLean, VA 22102	Agricultural lenders	(703) 883-4056 fca.gov
Small Business Administration (SBA) Consumer Affairs 409 3 rd Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20416	Small business lenders	(800) U-ASK-SBA or (800) 827-5722 sba.gov
Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) 1155 21 st Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20581	Commodity brokers, commodity trading advisers, commodity pools, and introducing brokers	(866) 366-2382 cftc.gov/ConsumerProtection/index.htm

Regulatory agency	Regulated entities	Contact information
U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division 950 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W. Housing and Civil Enforcement Section Washington DC 20530	Fair lending and housing issues	(202) 514-4713 TTY–(202) 305-1882 FAX–(202) 514-1116 To report an incident of housing discrimination: 1-800-896-7743 fairhousing@usdoj.gov
Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Fair Housing/Equal Opportunity 451 7 th Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20410	Fair lending and housing issues	(800) 669-9777 hud.gov/complaints

