

## Know Your Rights

The Truth in Lending Act allows borrowers who already own their homes at least three days after closing to cancel a deal. This is known as a “right of rescission.”

If you believe your lender or broker has violated the law or is engaging in unfair or deceptive practices, contact the Pennsylvania Department of Banking or the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General right away.

## Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Department of Banking  
1-800-PA-BANKS  
[www.banking.state.pa.us](http://www.banking.state.pa.us)

U.S. Department of Housing and  
Urban Development (HUD)  
202-708-1112  
[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

Pennsylvania Housing Finance  
Agency  
[www.phfa.org](http://www.phfa.org)

Pennsylvania Office of  
Attorney General  
1-800-441-2555  
[www.attorneygeneral.gov](http://www.attorneygeneral.gov)

AARP Foundation  
1-888-687-2277  
[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

Home Equity Conversion  
Mortgage Resources  
1-800-209-8085  
[www.hecmresources.org](http://www.hecmresources.org)

“An investment in  
knowledge always  
pays the best interest.”

-Ben Franklin

## Understanding Reverse Mortgages



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF BANKING

17 North Second Street | Suite 1300  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101  
**1.800.PA.BANKS**  
[www.banking.state.pa.us](http://www.banking.state.pa.us)



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> protect > regulate > inform



## Is a reverse mortgage the right option for you?

If you are a homeowner age 62 or older looking for money to supplement your retirement income, pay for medical expenses or home improvements, pay off your current mortgage or buy a new home, you may be considering a reverse mortgage.

Unlike a traditional loan in which you make monthly payments to a lender, a reverse mortgage provides you with monthly payments, a lump sum, a line of credit or a combination of these payment methods. The money can be used for any purpose and does not have to be repaid until you sell your home, move or pass away.

### Reverse Mortgage Basics

A reverse mortgage allows older homeowners to withdraw equity from their homes. The money does not have to be paid back until the borrower dies, sells the home, or permanently moves out. To be eligible for most reverse mortgages, you must be at least 62 years old and already own your home.

The most popular reverse mortgage type is the Federal Housing Administration Home Equity Conversion Mortgage, or HECM. The federal government limits some of the fees that can be charged and requires borrowers to receive counseling from an independent certified agency. Private, proprietary reverse mortgages are not subject to the same eligibility guidelines, fee limits and counseling requirements.

### Reverse Mortgage Pros

- Allows you to stay in your home with no monthly mortgage payments.
- Pays off your existing mortgage.
- There are no income or credit qualifications.
- You receive payments.
- Proceeds are not taxable.
- You may use a reverse mortgage to purchase a new home.

### Reverse Mortgage Cons

- Reverse mortgages cost much more than traditional home loans. For example, paperwork and processing fees can be as high as \$6,000.
- Although reverse mortgage loans will not affect your regular Social Security or Medicare benefits, Medicaid or other public assistance may be affected.
- The terms of a reverse mortgage can be complex and difficult to understand.
- Anyone listed on your home's title must also be listed as a borrower on the reverse mortgage against the home. If a spouse or other person listed on the title does not meet the age requirement, he or she must be removed from the title (and lose legal rights to the home) in order to proceed with a reverse mortgage.
- Your heir's inheritance can be affected.

### Choosing a Counselor

Reverse mortgage counseling is available in-person or by telephone. You can seek counseling from an agency approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA).



### Also Consider

- You may wish to include a trusted family member or friend in your decision to obtain a reverse mortgage.
- Even with a reverse mortgage, you are still responsible for paying property taxes, homeowners insurance and upkeep on your home.
- Because of the high costs, a reverse mortgage is not a good idea if you plan to move or sell your home in a few years.
- You should not use a reverse mortgage to finance an investment or annuity. There is no safe investment that can earn returns high enough to recoup the costs of the loan.
- Be careful when considering sales pitches. You are not required to buy other products to get a reverse mortgage.
- The amount of money you owe on a reverse mortgage grows larger over time. Monthly servicing fees, insurance premiums and interest charges are added to the borrowed amount, and future interest calculations are based on the new total. This causes the amount you owe to grow at an ever-increasing pace as long as the loan is outstanding.

Reverse mortgage costs can vary from lender to lender, so it pays to shop around and compare offers.