



Choosing the Mortgage Option For You

Understanding the Most Common Mortgage Options and Making an Informed Choice



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If you are financially ready to purchase a home and take on the responsibilities of homeownership, you'll need to understand the different mortgage products available to you. Take the time to learn all about the components of a mortgage and about the most common types of mortgages.

Common Mortgage Products

There are many types of mortgages available to you. It's important that you shop around to find the mortgage that's right for you. Some of the most common mortgages available today include (but are not limited to) the following:

Fixed-Mortgage Rate

Fixed-rate mortgages are the most common mortgage products available. Because your interest rate never changes, the monthly principal and interest payment remains the same for the entire term of the loan — whether it's a 15-year, 20-year or 30-year mortgage — allowing for more predictability in your monthly housing costs. Fixed-rate mortgages are the most stable type of mortgage.

Adjustable-Rate Mortgages

Adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) may start with a lower interest rate, making your initial monthly payments lower. However, unlike a fixed-rate mortgage, your interest rate will adjust periodically, based on an index that reflects changing market interest rates. Bear in mind that if the interest rate adjusts upward, so will your monthly payments.

Government Programs

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Rural Housing Service (RHS) also offer mortgage products for borrowers that meet certain requirements.

- **FHA Loans:** The FHA, part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), insures a home loan, so your lender can offer you a loan package that may include lower down payments.

- **VA Loans:** The VA guarantees VA loans to make housing affordable to eligible U.S. veterans. You can apply for a VA loan with any mortgage lender that participates in the VA home loan program.
- **RHS Loans:** RHS loans are primarily used to help low-income individuals purchase homes in rural areas. Funds can be used to build, repair, renovate or relocate a home, or to purchase and prepare sites.

Enhanced Relief Refinance® Mortgages

Freddie Mac's Enhanced Relief Refinance mortgages provide eligible homeowners who are making timely mortgage payments with expanded access to refinancing opportunities. This includes homeowners who have little or no equity in their home. Please contact your lender for additional information and eligibility requirements.



Components of a Mortgage Payment

The following costs are generally reflected in your mortgage payment:

- **Principal:** The principal is the amount of money borrowed to buy your house.
- **Interest:** Interest is the cost you pay to borrow money from the lender, usually expressed as a percentage of the amount borrowed.
- **Taxes:** Your lender will typically include 1/12th of the estimated annual real estate taxes on the home you purchased. They will put this 1/12th in an escrow account each time you make a payment so they can pay your taxes when they're due.
- **Homeowners Insurance:** Your payment will also include 1/12th of the annual homeowners insurance premium. Your lender will put this money into an escrow account and pay your homeowners insurance on your behalf when it is due to your insurance company.
- **Mortgage Insurance:** If your down payment is less than 20%, your lender will require private or government mortgage insurance. Just like your taxes and homeowners insurance, 1/12th of the annual premium will be included in your monthly payment and placed into an escrow account.
- **Homeowners Association Fees/Condominium Fees:** Most neighborhoods, and all condominiums, have a homeowners association (HOA) that maintains common areas, manages trash and snow removal, and helps enforce regulations set forth by the neighborhood or condominium developer. If you have a HOA, you'll need to pay a regular fee to the association to help cover expenses.
- **Escrow:** The escrow is money or documents held by a neutral third party prior to closing. It can also be an account held by the lender (or servicer) into which a homeowner pays money for taxes and insurance.

Shop Around for the Best Option

There are many types of mortgages available to you. It's important that you shop around to find the mortgage that's right for you. The mortgage rate and length, or term, as well as points you will be charged are all factors in deciding which mortgage to choose. Keep in mind that the lowest mortgage rate may not always be the best choice. Rates are important, but also consider the overall cost of the loan. Contact your lender today to find out what mortgage product is best for you.

For More Information

- Contact a lender, real estate professional or housing counselor to learn more about the mortgage and homebuying process.
- CreditSmart® is a free suite of educational resources to support financial capability and homeownership education. The curriculum covers important topics such as credit, money management and responsible homeownership. To learn more, visit <https://creditsmart.freddiemac.com>
- CreditSmart® Homebuyer U is a free, online consumer education course offered within the CreditSmart suite that presents key learning principles for homebuyer preparedness and education. To learn more, visit <https://creditsmart.freddiemac.com/paths/homebuyer-u/>
- Visit My Home by Freddie Mac® for information on buying a home and the mortgage process, as well as a suite of tools to help you make informed decisions. <https://myhome.freddiemac.com/>
- To find a HUD-approved housing counseling agency near you, visit <https://myhome.freddiemac.com/bhc> or call 877-300-4179.

Source: Content adapted from Freddie Mac's award-winning CreditSmart, a multilingual financial education curriculum designed to help consumers build and maintain better credit, make sound financial decisions, and understand the steps to sustainable homeownership.



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