

Contact DRE

To contact the California Department of Real Estate, call (877) 373-4542 toll-free for assistance in English or Spanish.

Department of Real Estate District Offices

Sacramento
(Principal Office)
1651 Exposition Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95815

Los Angeles
320 W. 4th Street, Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90013-1105

Fresno
2550 Mariposa Mall,
Suite 3070
Fresno, CA 93721-2273

Oakland
1515 Clay Street, Suite 702
Oakland, CA 94612-1462

San Diego
8620 Spectrum Center Blvd.,
Suite 301
San Diego, CA 92123



SOURCES OF HOME LOANS

Introduction

Home loans are available through many different sources, including mortgage banking companies, commercial banks, community banks, credit unions, savings banks, mortgage brokers, and other financial institutions.

To find a lender, you can:

- Contact your bank or financial institution.
- Consult a nonprofit housing counseling agency in your area.
- Ask family members, friends, and co-workers.
- Ask your real estate agent.

Additionally, there are many government programs that offer home loans and/or assistance to homebuyers.

Federal Programs

There are a variety of homebuyer-assistance programs sponsored by the Federal government, including programs that offer down payment assistance for low- to moderate-income home purchasers; mortgage insurance programs; special home loan programs for veterans, teachers and law enforcement officers; and loans to help revitalize inner-city housing. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has established a network of HUD-approved housing counseling agencies that can provide information on Federal programs and give you advice on buying a home, resolving credit issues, and other related matters. For more information, contact HUD at www.hud.gov or (800) 569-4287 to find a HUD-approved housing counseling agency in your area.

DEPARTMENT OF REAL ESTATE
1651 Exposition Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95815
Public Information Line: (877) 373-4542
Fax: (916) 263-8943
www.dre.ca.gov





State Programs

California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA): CalHFA administers several different homeownership programs. CalHFA offers 30-year fixed-rate mortgage loans with interest rates and fees that are typically lower than conventional home loans, with caps on fees and rates. CalHFA also provides down payment assistance with deferred payments that do not need to be repaid until the home is sold, refinanced, or paid in full. For more information, contact CalHFA at www.calhfa.ca.gov or (877) 922-5432.

Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet): CalVet offers home loans to eligible veterans at a low interest rate, with low or no down payment, and with low loan fees. CalVet loans can also be used for construction and rehabilitation. For more information, contact CalVet at www.calvet.ca.gov or (800) 952-5626.

Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD): HCD offers several programs that help homebuyers, primarily those with low to moderate income levels, by funding local public agencies and private entities, which in turn produce affordable housing or make loans and grants to end users at the local level. For more information about HCD's programs, contact HCD at www.hcd.ca.gov/fa or (916) 263-6928 to obtain a copy of the Loan and Grant Program Directory.

City and County Programs

Most cities and counties in California offer homebuyer assistance programs designed to meet the needs of their respective communities. These programs may offer home loans to first-time buyers, provide down payment assistance, offer funding for property rehabilitation and community revitalization, etc. Many of the previously described Federal and State homebuyer assistance programs are administered by cities and counties. To find out what programs are available in your community, contact your local planning, community development, and/or housing departments. Contact information can be found in the California Planners Book of Lists at www.opr.ca.gov/s_publications.php.

Additionally, many counties in California participate in the Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) program. A qualified homebuyer can obtain an MCC, which acts as a Federal income tax credit. It reduces an individual's income tax and increases net earnings, thus allowing a buyer to more easily qualify for a mortgage. To see if your community has an MCC program, contact your local housing or redevelopment agency or ask your real estate agent, mortgage broker, or lender.

Tips for Borrowers

- Ask for a Mortgage Loan Disclosure Statement and/or a loan estimate. These documents will tell you the cost and proposed terms of the loan.
- If using the services of a mortgage broker, contact the California Department of Business Oversight at www.dbo.ca.gov or (866) 275-2677, and/or the Department of Real Estate at www.dre.ca.gov or (877) 373-4542 to make sure the mortgage broker is properly licensed.
- Consider asking the mortgage broker for references.
- Check for special programs you may qualify for with Federal, State or local government.
- Do not sign blank forms or forms you do not understand.
- Ask for copies of the forms you complete or sign.

Questions to Ask When Applying for a Home Loan

- Who is the lender?
- What is the interest rate and term of the loan?
- What is the monthly payment for principal and interest?
- How much are the property taxes and insurance?
- What is the annual percentage rate?
- What are points?
- Is a rebate being paid by the lender to the broker?
- When will I receive an estimate of my costs for the loan?
- Is there a prepayment penalty?
- Is there a balloon payment? When is it due and how much is the payment?
- Are there any up-front fees to pay?
- If I have to pay up-front fees, are they refundable?
- How long does loan approval take?
- When will the loan close and how much money must I have at closing?
- If I have a rate locked in, is it in writing?
- What happens if interest rates change during the loan process?
- If the loan does not go through, is there a cancellation charge?
- Is the loan assumable by someone later? Is there a fee?

