Local Government Federal Credit Union

THE PROMISE OF

FALL 2021

FOR THESE FIRST-TIME BUYERS, THE FUTURE IS SPELLED H-O-M-E

SOFA SENSE: HOW TO FIND DEALS ON FURNITURE

3 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE BUYING A HOME

STATISTA



A credit card with your best interest in mind

Breathe a sigh of relief knowing that you call the shots with an LGFCU Visa® Credit Card.* Using the LGFCU Visa Credit Card means you'll enjoy the same low rate for balance transfers, purchases and cash advances — with no annual fee.

Paying too much interest on other credit cards? Say no more.

Transfer your existing high-interest credit card balances to your LGFCU Visa Credit Card with no transfer fee.* Paying less interest over time means more options for you.



During 2020, LGFCU Visa Credit Card users saved nearly \$7.5 million in interest!⁺



Learn more about our low-rate credit card at lgfcu.org/aimcreditcards1.

*Credit card is subject to approval. APR = Annual Percentage Rate. The variable APR equals 9.75% and is calculated by adding a percentage to the Index Rate. The Index Rate is the 26-week Treasury Bill rate set at the first T-bill auction held each quarter and adjusted up to the nearest 0.25%. Your variable APR may change when the Index Rate changes. Any increase in the Index Rate may increase your interest charges and your minimum payment. There is no minimum interest rate. The maximum rate is 18.00% variable APR. Interest on cash advances and balance transfers begins to accrue from the date the transfer is posted to your account. Additional fees may apply; see the Visa Credit Cardholder Agreement for more details at Igfcu.org/creditcards.

t Based on external benchmarking, the total interest LGFCU Visa Credit Card users would have paid other financial institutions was compared to the interest they paid LGFCU during 2020. The total estimated savings was \$7,474,004.



You're more than a number



Maurice R. Smith Chief Executive Officer 28-year member

Forty-two years ago, I learned a valuable lesson as a young loan officer. Starting my career, I moved into a Raleigh apartment to begin my new job. I needed everything.

Fresh out of college, I had little money. I turned to the Credit Union for a loan to buy a bed. Seeing as I worked at the place, I figured I was a shoo-in.

The branch manager had me complete a loan application. I waited in the lobby for what felt like hours while he reviewed my request.

Afterward, he looked at me and asked how I felt. "Nervous," I replied. He said, "Good. Now you know how many of our members may feel when they approach the Credit Union for a loan."

He advised me to remember that pit in my stomach. That feeling would always remind me to empathize with members who need our help. I remember that exact feeling to this day.

As a lender, I have written hundreds of loans. Each loan request deserves special attention. Each member's situation is unique. I remember many of the stories you've told me. This is how we humanize the process of helping members with credit needs.

Today, many financial institutions reduce members to a number — a credit score. Think of your score as a grade the credit reporting agencies assign to show how dependable you are at repaying your debts.

The problem with a credit score is it doesn't tell a story. If you have blemishes on your credit, the score does not tell us why and how you have clawed your way back. A credit score does not reflect your character and your determination to honor your word.

At LGFCU, you're more than a credit score. We see your humanity. We empathize with your trials and your grit to make financial improvements. Your story includes your occupation, family and dreams for the future.

We do things differently at the Credit Union. We promise to treat each member with dignity and as an individual.

Don't settle for being a number. Know you are a *member* here.





www.lgfcu.org | 800.344.4846

Aim is a quarterly publication of Local Government Federal Credit Union and reaches more than 220,000 member households. As a not-for-profit cooperative, our mission is "to improve the lives of our members." To comment on Aim, email editor@lgfcu.org.

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Winner of the 2020 CUNA Councils Diamond Award for best member newsletters!

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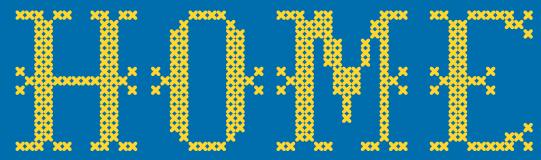
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lgfcu.org/ceopoint

THE PROMISE OF



FOR THESE FIRST-TIME BUYERS, THE FUTURE IS SPELLED H-O-M-E

t was just a routine day, until Will Darley saw a "For Sale by Owner" sign in front of his former family home in Landrum, S.C., the same house he lived in when he met Chelsea, the woman who later became his wife.



"It was like finding something you used to have and love!" Will said. "Chelsea and I were just getting serious about buying a house, so I called her right away."

"It's always been a special home to us," Chelsea said. "When we saw it was for sale, we knew it was where we wanted to raise our own family. We thought, 'Maybe we can.'" Will and Chelsea Darley jumped at the chance to buy his former family home, the one he lived in when they were courting. Having worked to build their credit scores, they crunched numbers using LGFCU's online calculators, then turned to their Credit Union for a mortgage loan. The Darleys are now making new memories in this special house with their son, Connor.

FATE AND FINANCES

As for most people, a home represents the purchase of a lifetime for the Darleys, longtime sweethearts who married in 2013. They'd already been preparing their finances for homebuying, intent on getting the most house for their money.



Written by Nancy Pardue Photographed by Edward Kensicki Design by Kristy Buchanan and Sabine Kowal "We both tried hard to build up our credit scores so that wouldn't be an issue through the homebuying process," said Chelsea, a health promotion specialist at Pardee Hospital in Hendersonville, N.C. "And we used the LGFCU calculators to see what our payment might be. That helped us set our maximum budget.

"It actually made more sense for us to purchase a home instead of renting, due to the rising cost of long-term rentals in our area."

TURNING PLANS INTO ACTION

The home's asking price was in budget and the seller, who remembered Will living there as a teen, was making renovations. That gave the Darleys time to turn their financial plans into action.

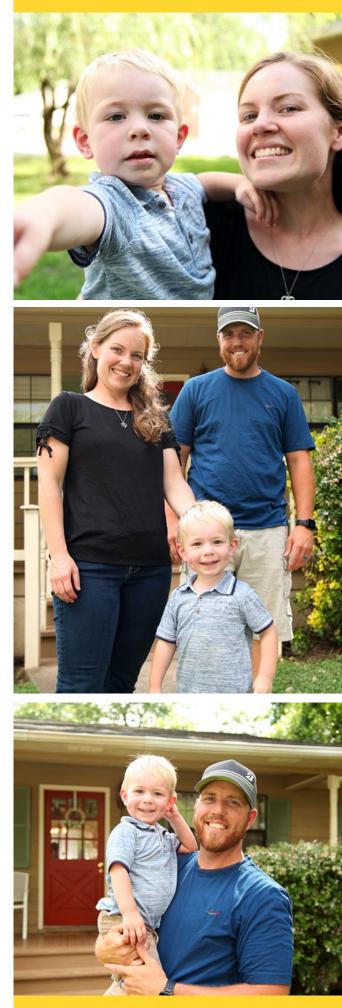
As members of LGFCU they turned to their Credit Union, knowing it offers mortgage options with competitive rates for members not only in North Carolina, but in its bordering states of South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Virginia.

Will and Chelsea were approved for LGFCU's First-Time Homebuyers Loan, an adjustable rate mortgage with a term up to 30 years and up to 100% financing. Like all LGFCU mortgages, it requires no private mortgage insurance, which can save the borrower thousands of dollars each year.



"Without the First-Time Homebuyers Loan, it would have definitely been harder. We did not need to have a down payment and we were able to finance the closing costs, so it made the most sense."

- CHELSEA DARLEY



"Without the First-Time Homebuyers Loan, it would have definitely been harder," Chelsea said. "We did not need to have a down payment and we were able to finance the closing costs, so it made the most sense. And we can move to a fixed-rate mortgage after five years."

'SMOOTH SAILING'

With help from their local branch in Columbus, N.C., Will and Chelsea were able to navigate the offer, home inspections and appraisals on their own.

"The process was different than I expected, but in a good way," said Will, a public works employee with the Town of Columbus. "I went into it thinking it would be stressful. I won't say it was easy, but it was smooth sailing."

"It's not instant like buying a car, so we learned patience. And I learned inspections are expensive!" Chelsea said. "Every time we weren't sure what the next step should be, our local branch



"The process was different than I expected, but in a good way. I went into it thinking it would be stressful. I won't say it was easy, but it was smooth sailing."

– WILL DARLEY

answered all of our questions and were so helpful in making the process smooth for us."

New this year, LGFCU offers the automated Mortgage Center, accessible through Member Connect, to make applying for a mortgage quicker and easier than before. The Mortgage Center allows members to complete the loan application within minutes and receive pre-approval faster, then e-sign disclosures and upload necessary loan documents. For many members, the entire loan process can now be completed online, except for the closing.





KEEPING IT REAL

The Darleys share these lessons learned for others considering a home purchase:

"It may seem overwhelming at first, but take it one step at a time and ask the right people. The Credit Union tells you what you need; they were the main driver for us," Chelsea said. "And don't overspend. Think about how [the house] will serve you long term and what you can afford, with the maintenance costs that come with it."

"We are down to earth people," Will added. "We may have looked at a few houses outside our price range, but we agreed not to go crazy and start off in a [financial] hole."

All their preparations proved worth it come closing day, a fun secret they kept from Will's parents.

"As soon as we got the keys, it was the excitement of 'now it's mine' and deciding where

to put our stuff. It felt good," Will said. "Then I called my parents and said, 'Remember that house we used to live in? We just bought it."

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Will and Chelsea moved into their home in January 2018. In December of that year, they welcomed their son Connor, now 2. He's helping them make new memories in this special house.

- "We know that God provided this house at the right time in our lives," Chelsea said. "It's cozy, and perfect for us."
- "And Landrum is a pretty little town, like in a movie," Will said. "It's a good place to raise kids, and it means a lot to see our family here. It all worked out, I guess you could say. Sort of like a fairy tale."

GOING UP: MEDIAN HOME PRICES

In NC: \$237,865, up 12.3% in the past year In SC: \$216,625, up 10.5%

Source: zillow.com

2022 OUTLOOK

Experts say home prices will continue to rise, mostly due to low inventory levels, but at a slower rate than in 2021.

Source: homebuyinginstitute.com

SO YOU WANT TO BUY A HOUSE?

f you're thinking of buying or building a home, consider that LGFCU offers many mortgage choices, with fixed or adjustable rates, plus loans for manufactured homes, vacation homes, rental property, and construction.

The Credit Union also offers options for refinancing an existing mortgage, and the Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC).

In 2020, LGFCU approved 3,524 mortgage loans for new and repeat homebuyers, totaling \$574 million.

Before you find the home of your dreams, it's wise to lay a financial foundation. Here are some of the steps toward finding your own home sweet home.

Mortgage loans are subject to approval. Greater than 90% loan-to-value limited to maximum financing of \$400,000. Additional fee for refinance transactions of 0.50% of the loan amount (no cap). Mortgages are available for properties located in NC, SC, GA, TN or VA. Members must reside in NC or bordering states to be eligible.

HELOCs are subject to approval, are available for properties located in NC, SC, GA or VA, and are not available for manufactured homes. Members must reside in NC or bordering states to be eligible.

AFFORD VS. OVERBOARD

Set your budget using the 30/43 rule:

Spend <30% of your gross monthly income on housing expenses and keep your total debt, including car and credit card payments, <43%.

Crunch the numbers at **Igfcu.org/aimafford**.

THE BIG 5

Lenders look at the five factors that make up your credit score:

- Payment history
- Outstanding debt
- Length of time using credit
- New credit
- Types of credit

A good score? 640 or higher.

Meet our Credit Score Mentor at Igfcu.org/aimcreditscore1.



DOWN PAYMENT

HOM

FOR SAL

SALE PENDING

Whether your mortgage type requires this or not, it's good to have money saved for closing costs or other homebuying necessities.

Average down payments in 2021 are 7% of the home price for first-time buyers and 16% for repeat buyers, according to the Homebuying Institute, homebuyinginstitute.com.

MORTGAGE MATCH-UP

Adjustable, fixed rate or first-time? Compare mortgage loans at Igfcu.org/aimcompare.

THINK AHEAD

Buying a house also means homeowners insurance and property taxes. Factor these into your monthly payment; an escrow account will mean the money is there when these bills come due.

For more homebuying tips, download the LGFCU booklet, "Buy, Build or Remodel," at **Igfcu.org/aimhomeloans**.

Top 3 questions to consider when buying a home

Tip: There's more to it than the monthly mortgage payment.

Member **Anthony J.** bought his first home with enough land to grow the organic food he shares with his community.

"It's the home that I drove by for several years," Anthony said. "The Credit Union allowed me to [become] a homeowner, and have the home of my dreams."



ere are three important questions to ask yourself when you decide to buy a home.

How long do I plan to stay?

It's not uncommon to upgrade or downsize your home after a few years. That means you'll want to consider how long it will take to recoup the thousands of dollars it will cost to finance a home and cover closing costs. Depending on the market, the average time frame to recoup is around five years.

Where is the home located?

Location is another important concern. Is the home close to work or will your commute mean more wear and tear on your vehicle, and an increased gas bill? Is the home close to the schools you want your kids to attend? Consider the future impact on your property value. Is the home in an "up-and-coming" area with new development planned, or is the area already developed?

What are the total monthly costs?

In addition to the mortgage payment, account for these financial factors:

- Homeowners insurance is required by your lender. Policy costs are based on several factors, including location, size, home value, etc.
- Property taxes will be assessed annually. The calculated amount is based on your home's value.
- If you choose to live in a planned community, you will likely encounter homeowner association (HOA) fees. These fees are typically paid throughout the year (e.g., monthly, quarterly, annually). This money helps with the upkeep of communal amenities like pools, gyms and/or landscaping.

Depending on the options your lender offers, you may roll your insurance and property tax payments into an escrow account included as part of your monthly mortgage payment. Otherwise, you'll need to pay the lump sums out of pocket every year.

Buying a home means asking a lot of questions. Find more answers at **lgfcu.org/aimhomeownership**.



FAT CAT is for kids ages birth through 12. Visit Igfcu.org/fatcat for more details.

WAYS TO SAVE

BALANCE YOUR BRAIN AGAINST YOUR BUDGET FOR FURNITURE FINDS

It's common to want to give your home a little sprucing up — new paint and maybe even new furniture to complete the look! Experts say the need for new is tied to the fear of missing out (FOMO). But can your wallet handle what your brain wants? If you're in the market for home furnishings, here are a few ways to bring your mind and your money into alignment.

BUY AND SAVE LOCALLY

North Carolina is home to one of the largest furniture markets in the United States — miles and miles of home goods shopping between Hickory and High Point! New pieces come direct from the manufacturer, outlet stores, even showrooms, all potentially for less than the suggested retail price.

Fall is a hot time for buying. Furniture shows in the central part of North Carolina highlight the coming trends. Think savings on current models.

RIGHT TIME FOR PURCHASING

In previous years, retail stores across the U.S. have slashed prices by as much as 50% retail around Labor Day, to make room for new merchandise.

A store going out of business may give you your look for less when you purchase the floor model. Remember, you're buying "as is," so be prepared to live with any possible defects. You can also check social media marketplaces for individuals selling used furniture. Estate sales may yield quality pieces that have aged well. You typically have more wiggle room on prices here than you would in a store.

WEIGH SPECIAL FINANCING OFFERS CAREFULLY

Your brain says a furniture deal offering 0% interest for a year is a deal too good to miss. While it's best to save, then buy, such a deal may get you your new living room set with lower monthly payments.

However, even though no interest will accumulate while you make payments during the promotional period, the interest rate could be as high as 28.99% on any remaining balance once that period ends. That higher rate might apply retroactively to the entire furniture price. That's a budget buster, so read the contract before signing.

So, practice a little mind-money awareness on your next furniture-buying foray.

You can find more ways to save with the #LGFCUdeals.

Strength, longevity reflect LGFCU-School of Government partnerships

This year, LGFCU celebrates a milestone with the UNC School of Government: the 10-year anniversary of the Development Finance Initiative (DFI). DFI partners with local governments across North Carolina to help revitalize communities and spur economic development. In 2022, the Credit Union will reach another 10-year milestone, in supporting the LGFCU Fellows Program. The Fellows Program helps local government employees transition into leadership roles, to better serve their communities.

> See more on LGFCU's commitment to improving communities at lgfcu.org/aimgiving.

LGFCU grants scholarship funds to 25 students

"Grateful. Proud. Blessed." These three words capture member Jericka B.'s excitement on being selected as one of 25 LGFCU Scholarship recipients. The program is one way the Credit Union gives back to the community and its members.

New this year, each recipient receives a one-time \$5,000 award to offset the cost of higher education, a boost from the previous \$1,000 scholarship. Congratulations to this year's scholarship recipients!

Learn more at lgfcu.org/scholarships.

SHRED

Stop by this LGFCU Shred Event to dispose of personal papers easily and securely for free!

Saturday, November 6

River Bend Town Hall | 9 a.m. to noon 45 Shoreline Drive | River Bend bit.ly/RiverBendShred

Visit **lgfcu.org/shredevents** or follow us for upcoming Shred Events near you.





Volunteer firefighter and retired local government employee Tim Johnson found his second career when he joined LGFCU as a Membership Development Officer five years ago. Tim's background allows him to be a resource for current and prospective members in the emergency services community in the eastern region of North Carolina.

DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE

"I understand the needs of local government employees, as well as their commitment to serving their communities. I am also a volunteer firefighter in my hometown. Relationships with these folks last a lifetime!"

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

"I try to build relationships by visiting fire and rescue departments, adding LGFCU as an event sponsor and volunteering at those events, when possible."

MOST REWARDING PART OF THE JOB

"Knowing that a member trusts me enough to reach out for assistance when needed and then being able to help them!"



MOVE OR IMPROVE

NEED A CHANGE OF SPACE?



Whether you're looking for a whole new scene or are ready to give your current home some TLC, LGFCU has the right products and financial tools to help you move or improve.

- Home financing options our experts will guide you to the best choice for your next purchase.
- Home Equity Line of Credit, or HELOC tap into your current home's equity for the cash you need to make the updates you want.

*HELOCs are subject to approval, are available for properties located in NC, SC, GA or VA, and are not available for manufactured homes. Members must reside in NC or bordering states to be eligible.

LG FCU I D C A L G D V E R N M E N T FED E R A L C R E D I T UNION

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Visit **lgfcu.org/aimmove** to learn more and apply online through our Mortgage Center.





APR

Loan Rates As of August 6, 2021

Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARM)*	Rate	APR	Margin	Floor Rate
5-year ARM 80% or less LTV	2.750%	2.827%	1.50%	2.750%
5-year ARM 80.1–90% LTV	2.950%	3.224%	2.00%	3.250%
5-year ARM 90.1–100% LTV	3.150%	3.620%	2.50%	3.750%
5-year ARM (First-Time Homebuyer) ⁺ 100% LTV	3.150%	3.620%	2.50%	3.750%
5-year ARM [‡] 100.1–110% LTV	4.500%	4.788%	3.50%	4.750%

Variable Rate Loans△

Home Equity (HELOC) ⁰ Up to 90% LTV	2.75%
Signature Personal Open/Closed-end, Unsecured	10.75%
Salary Advance (cash account <\$500) Open-end, \$500 maximum	12.00%
Salary Advance (cash account ≥\$500) Open-end, \$500 maximum	5.50%
Visa [®] Credit Card	9.75%

Fixed-Rate Loans	Payment example	APR
New Vehicle ^o Up to 36 months	A \$25,000 New Vehicle Loan will be \$727 for 36 months at 2.95% APR	2.95%
New Vehicle [°] 37–60 months	A \$25,000 New Vehicle Loan will be \$455 for 60 months at 3.50% APR	3.50%
New Vehicle° 61-72 months	A \$25,000 New Vehicle Loan will be \$391 for 72 months at 3.95% APR	3.95%
New Vehicle [°] 73-96 months	A \$25,000 New Vehicle Loan will be \$320 for 96 months at 5.25% APR	5.25%
Used Vehicle [∞] Up to 72 months	A \$15,000 Used Vehicle Loan will be \$235 for 72 months at 3.95% APR	3.95%

Deposit Rates As of August 6, 2021

Products	Min. deposit	Rate	APY
Regular Shares	\$25	0.10%	0.10%
Fat Cat Shares	\$5	0.10%	0.10%
Zard Shares	\$25	0.10%	0.10%
Holiday Cash Club	\$0	0.10%	0.10%
IRAs	\$25	0.45%	0.45%
Health Savings Account	\$0	0.45%	0.45%
Checking⁵	—	0.05%	0.05%
Money Market Shares	\$250	0.15%	0.15%
6-month Share Term Certificate**	\$250	0.30%	0.30%
12-month Share Term Certificate**	\$250	0.35%	0.35%
18-month Share Term Certificate**	\$250	0.35%	0.35%
24-month Share Term Certificate**	\$250	0.40%	0.40%
30-month Share Term Certificate**	\$250	0.40%	0.40%
36-month Share Term Certificate**	\$250	0.50%	0.50%
48-month Share Term Certificate**	\$250	0.50%	0.50%
60-month Share Term Certificate**	\$250	0.55%	0.55%

For current rates, visit lgfcu.org/rates.

All rates, terms and conditions can vary and are subject to change.

For additional information on any Credit Union account, visit Igfcu.org, call us at 888.732.8562, or contact your local branch. Calls may be recorded.

APR :	Annual Percentage Rate
APY :	Annual Percentage Yield
ARM :	Adjustable Rate Mortgage
LTV :	Loan To Value

* Rates are for new first mortgage loans and are subject to change daily. Rates for existing ARMs are subject to change at pre-determined intervals and may be different from the rates for new mortgages

⁺ These rates are for new first mortgage loans and are subject to change daily. The rates for existing adjustable-rate mortgage loans are subject to change at predetermined intervals and may be different from the rates for new mortgages.

Future rates and payments determined based on adding a margin to the index (5-Year Constant Maturity Treasury Yield rounded up to the next highest one-eighth of one percentage point). The interest rate on our 5-year ARMs cannot change by more than 2.0% every five years, or 6% over the life of the loan.

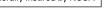
[‡] Special financing for first-time homebuyers (5-year ARM). Interest paid on the loan portion that is greater than fair market value is not tax deductible for federal income tax purpose. Consult a tax advisor for further information regarding the tax deductibility of interest and charges.

- △ Rates on these loans are subject to increase after consummation
- APR is based on the current index plus a margin. The APR is variable and subject to change quarterly. The index is based on the 26-week Treasury bill rate for the quarter and is set on or after the 15th day of the second month after the end of each calendar quarter adjusted up to the nearest 0.25%. The maximum quarterly rate adjusted up to the interest 0.20%. The maximum quarterly rate adjustment is 0.50%. Over the life of the loan the maximum APR will be the initial rate plus five percentage points or 12.75% APR, whichever is higher, but never more than 18% APR. Payment amount will change if the APR changes. HELOC interest payments may be tax deductible; consult your tax advisor.
- New vehicle is defined as current, prior or upcoming year model with 10,000 miles or less. Lending is limited to residents in NC, SC, GA, TN and VA. Borrower must maintain collision and comprehensive insurance protection with a maximum deductible of \$1,000 for the life of the loan. Must be age 18 or older for lending services.
- ∞ Used vehicles may not be older than 10 years or have mileage in excess of 150,000 at time of loan origination. Loan terms are limited to 48 months maximum for models to maximum of 150,000. Lending is limited to residents of NC, SC, GA, TN and VA. Borrower must maintain collision and comprehensive insurance protection with a maximum deductible of \$1,000 for the life of the loan. Must be age 18 or older for lending services.
- § Minimum deposit to open each account. Initial checking deposit must cover first box of checks and first \$1 monthly maintenance fee. The minimum balance to earn dividends in your Share/IRA/SEP/CESA accounts is \$25; for Share Term Certificates and for Money Market Share accounts, \$250.
- ** Share Term Certificates are fixed-rate accounts. Dividends are automatically paid monthly by transfer from the STC to another deposit account. If term is six or 12 months, you may request your dividends be paid when STC matures. Early withdrawal penalty for all STCs is 90 days' dividends or the actual dividends earned, whichever is less

Fees and/or other conditions may reduce the earnings on an account.

Quoted rates, dividends and annual percentage yields (APY) are subject to change daily at the discretion of the LGFCU Board of Directors.





NMLS #1079297



3600 Wake Forest Road Raleigh, NC 27609



Live your best life with a HELOC

Our low Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC)* rates mean you can open a HELOC for the things that matter most to you. Borrow against the equity built up in your home to help cover education expenses, weddings, travel and more!

A HELOC is open-ended, so withdraw only the money you need, as you need it.

Think of all you can do with a HELOC. Find out more at **Igfcu.org/aimheloc1**.

To learn if a HELOC is right for you, call us at 888.732.8562[†]

* HELOCs are subject to approval, are available for properties located in NC, SC, GA, or VA, and are not available for manufactured homes. Members must reside in NC or bordering states to be eligible.

t Calls may be recorded.

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