

naf Reverse

THE FREE FAMILY GUIDE

Reverse Mortgages in California: A Family Guide

What it is, what it really costs, how to protect your family, and worksheets to fill in together, in 28 pages.



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What's inside

For homeowners 62 and older (55 and older for some loans) and the grown children who help them. Read it together, mark it up, and keep it with your papers.

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How to use this guide

- **Read the basics together** (pages 3 to 6), then the costs and the downsides.
- **Take the self-check** on page 9 and compare the other options on page 10.
- **Fill in the worksheet** on page 25 and the family checklist on page 23.
- **Talk with me first** (page 22), and bring this guide to that call and to your counseling session. Look up any word on page 27.



Is a reverse mortgage right for you?

A reverse mortgage helps some homeowners stay in the home they love, and it's the wrong choice for others. This guide gives you the plain facts, the downsides included, so your family can decide with clear eyes.

It may fit if you

- want to stay in your home for years
- have a good amount of equity built up
- can keep up property taxes, insurance, HOA dues and upkeep

It may not fit if you

- plan to move soon
- want to leave as much equity as possible to your heirs
- would struggle to keep up the home and its bills

As a loan officer, I want you to be able to check everything. That's why every answer here sticks to the official rules, and why I'll tell you plainly if it isn't right for you. — Tom

What a reverse mortgage is

A reverse mortgage is a loan against your home's equity. You keep the title. Instead of you paying the lender each month, interest and fees are added to the loan balance over time.

Who can get one

The FHA-insured kind, called a HECM, is for homeowners 62 and older. Some private (proprietary) reverse mortgages start at 55 in California. The home has to be your main home.

What you keep paying

There's no required monthly mortgage payment. You still pay property taxes, homeowners insurance, HOA dues and upkeep, and you live in the home. If you don't, the loan can come due and the home can go to foreclosure.

When it's repaid

When the last borrower dies, sells the home, moves out for good (or is away more than 12 months in a row for illness), or doesn't meet the loan terms. It's usually repaid by selling the home. A HECM is a non-recourse loan: the lender can collect only from the home, not from you or your family's other money.

What it costs you

There are upfront costs: FHA mortgage insurance on a HECM, an origination fee, the counseling fee and closing costs. Many can be paid from the loan. The balance grows over time, which leaves less equity for you or your heirs.

Six kinds of reverse mortgages

Type	Who it's for	Good to know
HECM	Homeowners 62+	FHA-insured (protects the lender). Lump sum (fixed rate only), line of credit, monthly payments or a mix.
HECM refinance	62+ and still paying a mortgage	Pays off your current mortgage if the new loan is big enough.
HECM for Purchase	62+ and buying your next home	You pay part of the price; the reverse mortgage covers the rest.
Proprietary (jumbo)	Often higher-value homes; some from 55	Private, not FHA-insured; rules set by the lender. Example: HomeSafe, which I can offer too.
HomeSafe Second	55+ in California	A second loan behind your mortgage; you keep paying your first mortgage.
Single-purpose	Often modest incomes	From some agencies and nonprofits, for one use like repairs or property taxes; the FTC calls them the least expensive kind.

> **Made-up example:** Lorraine, 59, wants money for a new roof but loves her current mortgage rate. She's too young for a HECM, so she compares HomeSafe Second (her first mortgage stays) with a home equity line (which has a monthly payment), then talks it over with a counselor.

With every type you keep paying property taxes, homeowners insurance, HOA dues and upkeep, and the balance grows over time. Each type, with an example: "The types of reverse mortgages" at thereverseguide.com.

Five ways to receive the money

Option	How it works	Often fits
Lump sum	Everything at closing, in one payment (fixed-rate HECM only)	Paying off a mortgage or a big need now
Line of credit	Draw when you need it; on an adjustable-rate HECM the unused part grows over time	A safety net for repairs or medical bills
Monthly, set time	Equal payments for the months you choose	Bridging a gap, like until a pension starts
Monthly, for as long as you live there	Equal payments as long as you live there and meet the loan terms	A steady monthly amount
A mix	Monthly payments plus a line of credit	A steady monthly amount and a cushion

> **Made-up example:** Ruthie, 74, doesn't need money today but wants a cushion for a new roof or medical bills. She opens an adjustable-rate HECM line of credit and draws only when a bill comes; the unused part grows, giving her more room later. She keeps paying her property taxes, insurance, HOA dues and upkeep.

The balance grows on what you take, plus interest and mortgage insurance. On an adjustable-rate HECM you can usually change options later; in the first 12 months the first-year limit still applies, and HUD caps the fee at $20. Private loans set their own options.

What it really costs

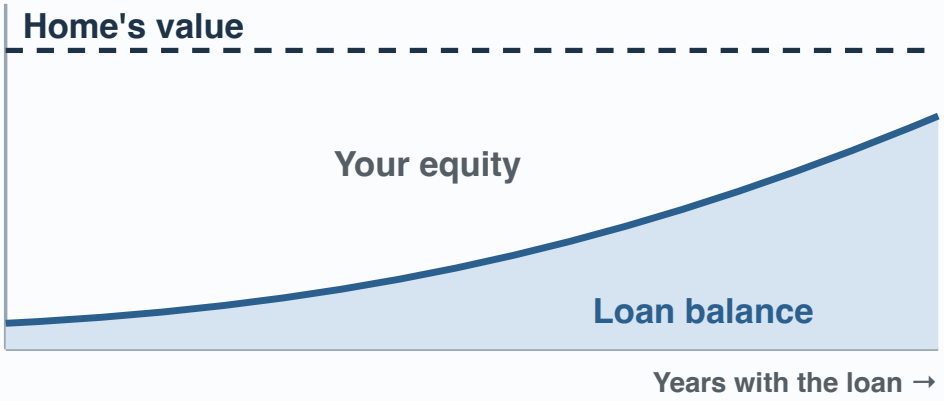
The costs are real, so here they are in one place. These are HUD's rules for a HECM. Your own numbers depend on your home's value, the lender and the day, so get them in writing.

Cost	How it's set	When
Upfront mortgage insurance	2% of the maximum claim amount (your home's appraised value or HUD's limit, whichever is less). Set by HUD; goes to FHA.	At closing; usually paid from the loan
Yearly mortgage insurance	0.5% a year of the loan balance. Set by HUD.	Charged monthly and added to the balance
Origination fee	The lender's fee. HUD sets a legal maximum based on your home's value, and a lender may charge less. Ask for the exact amount in writing.	At closing
Third-party closing costs	Appraisal, title, recording, credit report, flood certification and similar. Reasonable and customary, no more than the lender actually paid.	At closing
Counseling fee	Set by the counseling agency. No one may be turned away because they can't pay.	Before you apply, or at closing if disclosed
Interest	Depends on the rate you choose, fixed or adjustable.	Added to the balance every month
Servicing	Built into the interest rate, or a flat monthly fee with a HUD maximum.	Every month

Paying costs from the loan means less cash out of pocket today, but less money available to you and a bigger balance from day one. A HECM lender can't collect any fee until you've finished counseling, and in California you then wait 7 days. Private (proprietary) loans set their own costs: they may have no FHA mortgage insurance, but their rates and other costs differ. Ask for every loan's costs in writing.

How the balance grows

With a reverse mortgage, the loan balance grows and your equity shrinks over time



An illustration only, not to scale. Interest and mortgage insurance are added to the balance each month, along with any fees financed into the loan. Home values can rise or fall.

With a regular mortgage, each payment lowers what you owe. A reverse mortgage works the other way. Here's how I explain it. Interest and the yearly mortgage insurance are added to the balance each month. Next month, interest is charged on that bigger balance, so the balance grows a little faster each year. The more you draw and the longer the loan runs, the bigger it gets.

What slows it down

- Draw only what you need. With a line of credit, money you haven't drawn isn't part of the balance.
- Pay some or all of it back any time, with no prepayment penalty (HECM rule; private loans set their own terms).

How to compare

- Get each lender's costs in writing, item by item, on the same day.
- Read the Total Annual Loan Cost (TALC) disclosure. It shows the projected cost over different time frames.

From Tom: People tell me reverse mortgages are very expensive. My answer is that they "don't have to be." But every cost is real, so see each one in writing.

A quick self-check

Answer for yourself, then talk it over with your family. This isn't a test. More "no" answers are a sign to slow down and look hard at other options.

Ask yourself	Yes	No
Do I plan to stay in this home for many years?	☐	☐
Can I keep paying property taxes, insurance, HOA dues and upkeep, now and at 85 or 90?	☐	☐
Am I retired, or living on a limited income?	☐	☐
Would a monthly mortgage payment strain my budget?	☐	☐
If I still owe a mortgage, could a reverse mortgage pay it off, plus costs and any set-aside?	☐	☐
Is everyone who lives with me either on the loan, an eligible spouse, or ready with another plan?	☐	☐
Am I at peace with leaving less of the home's value to my heirs?	☐	☐
Have I compared at least one other option?	☐	☐
Am I deciding at my own pace, with no one pushing an annuity or investment?	☐	☐

It's usually the wrong choice when

- you may sell or move within a few years (upfront costs weigh heavily over a short stay)
- taxes, insurance and upkeep are already hard to pay
- leaving the home free and clear to your children matters most
- an adult child or other person lives with you and would need to stay

From Tom: "If a family can afford to make the payment and they're not in a retirement situation yet, then there's no need for them to go into a reverse." If you're retired or your income is limited, it's often the better fit. It depends on each family.

Other options, side by side

Every option uses your home's value, and none is free. I offer reverse mortgages, so I've tried hard to be fair here.

Option	Monthly payment?	Good to know
Reverse mortgage (HECM)	No required monthly mortgage payment. Taxes, insurance, HOA dues and upkeep stay yours.	62+. The balance grows; higher upfront costs. No one owes more than the home is worth.
HELOC (home equity line)	Yes, once you borrow. Often interest-only at first, then much higher.	Rates are usually variable. The lender can freeze or cut the line if your home's value drops a lot or your finances change.
Home equity loan	Yes, usually a fixed payment	A lump sum; the balance goes down as you pay. If you still have a mortgage, you'll have two payments.
Selling or downsizing	No loan payment if you buy with cash or rent	Ends the debt question, but means leaving the home. Prop 19 may let owners 55+ move their tax base. Ask your county assessor.
Property Tax Postponement (State Controller)	No. The state postpones property taxes	62+ (or blind or disabled), at least 40% equity, income under the state limit. A lien and 5% simple interest a year (set by state law). Choosing a reverse mortgage makes all postponed taxes due.

Start with what the money is for

- **Property taxes only?** Look at Property Tax Postponement first (2026-27 filing: Oct. 1, 2026 to Feb. 10, 2027).
- **One repair?** Ask about local repair programs and single-purpose loans.
- **Can you make a payment?** Compare a HELOC or home equity loan.
- **Home more than you need?** Compare selling, or a HECM for Purchase on a smaller home.
- **Might sell soon?** The CFPB suggests a lower-cost option, such as a HELOC.

Myths and facts, honest both ways

Many fears come from old rules and bad ads. Some downsides are real. Here's which is which.

What people believe	What's true	The real downside
"The bank owns your house."	The title stays in your name. The lender has a lien, like any mortgage.	The loan comes due when the last borrower dies, sells, moves out for good, or doesn't meet the loan terms.
"My kids will inherit the debt."	A HECM is non-recourse. Heirs never owe more than the home is worth.	The growing balance can use up most or all of the equity.
"They can kick you out any time."	You can stay as long as it's your main home and you meet the loan terms.	Unpaid taxes, insurance or HOA dues, or a home left in poor repair, can lead to foreclosure.
"Your home must be paid off."	With a HECM, your current mortgage is paid off from the loan at closing. (HomeSafe Second leaves it in place.)	You need enough equity for the payoff, costs and any set-aside.
"It's a government handout."	It's a loan from a private lender. FHA insures HECMs, but that protects the lender.	You pay interest and mortgage insurance on every dollar you take.
"It cuts my Social Security and Medicare."	The FTC says a reverse mortgage won't affect Social Security or Medicare.	Money you hold can affect SSI or Medi-Cal (see page 16).

From Tom: Most people who come to me are uninformed, or they carry old fears. In my view, "the public needs to be re-educated on the truth behind them." That means telling you the downsides as plainly as the upsides.



What are the steps?

1. **Talk with me first**
   Ask your questions with no obligation. Bring family if you like.

2. **Meet an independent counselor**
   Before you can apply for any reverse mortgage in California (and every HECM), you meet with an independent HUD-approved counselor; HECM sessions usually last about an hour. The lender doesn't choose or pay them, and no one can be turned away because they can't pay the fee.

3. **Wait 7 days, then apply**
   California requires 7 days between counseling and a final application or any fee. The lender then reviews your finances and orders an appraisal.

4. **Close, then three days to change your mind**
   On most reverse mortgages that aren't purchases, you have three business days after closing to cancel.

Find a counselor: answers.hud.gov/housingcounseling or call (800) 569-4287.



Worried about taxes and insurance?

Before a HECM, the lender reviews your credit history, income and expenses (HUD calls it the Financial Assessment). If it shows a concern, the lender may require a **set-aside**, called a LESA.

What it does

Part of the loan is held back to pay your property taxes and homeowners (and flood) insurance. With a fully funded set-aside, the lender pays them and adds each payment to your balance.

What it doesn't do

It doesn't pay HOA dues or repairs. It lowers the amount you can borrow, and it can run short if taxes and insurance rise. It isn't a promise of approval.

You can also ask for a set-aside on your own. One you choose can't be canceled later.

Your duties, and the risks

To keep a reverse mortgage in good standing

Live there
It stays your main home.

Property taxes
Paid on time.

Insurance
Homeowners insurance kept in force.

HOA dues
If you have them.

Upkeep
Keep the home in good repair.

Yearly letter
Answer the occupancy certification.

Fall behind on these and the loan can come due.

What can put the home at risk (HECM rules)

- **Unpaid property taxes or insurance.** The servicer may pay the bill, add it to your balance and, if it isn't fixed, ask HUD to call the loan due.
- **The home stops being anyone's main home,** or the last borrower is away more than 12 months in a row for illness with no other borrower living there.
- **Another loan term isn't kept,** such as keeping the home in good repair.

If a letter comes

1. Don't ignore it. Call the servicer using the number on your monthly statement, not the one on the letter.
2. Ask in writing what's owed and why, and about a repayment plan (up to 60 months, if your income supports it).
3. If the youngest borrower is 80 or older with critical circumstances, ask about HUD's At-Risk extension. It's HUD's decision, never promised.
4. Call a HUD-approved counselor. Don't pay anyone upfront who promises to stop a foreclosure.

A borrower can usually catch up and reinstate the loan, even after foreclosure has started. Private loans set their own rules; ask your servicer for them in writing.

Still paying a mortgage? Two different paths

	Refinance into a HECM	HomeSafe Second
Your current mortgage	Paid off by the new loan	Stays; you keep paying it
Monthly payment on the new loan	None required	None required
Minimum age	62	55 in California
What it is	FHA-insured reverse mortgage (the insurance protects the lender)	A private reverse second mortgage, not a HECM; it sets its own rules
Works when	The new loan is big enough to pay off what you owe, plus costs and any set-aside	You want to keep a first mortgage you're happy with, and have equity to spare

With either one, you still pay property taxes, homeowners insurance, HOA dues and upkeep, and the new loan's balance grows over time. If the numbers don't work, you'll hear that plainly.

Read more: "Refinancing into a reverse mortgage" and "HomeSafe Second" at thereverseguide.com.

Taxes and benefits, in short

I'm a loan officer, not a tax or benefits advisor, so this page only says what the official sources say. Ask a professional about your own case before you take any money out.

Topic	What the sources say
Income tax	The IRS treats reverse mortgage money as loan proceeds, so loan advances are generally not taxable income. Interest that builds up is generally not deductible (IRS Publication 936, 2025). Ask a tax professional about your situation.
Social Security and Medicare	The FTC says a reverse mortgage "won't affect your Social Security or Medicare benefits."
SSI	The Social Security Administration's staff manual treats loan money as not income. But cash you still have after the month you receive it can count as a resource (savings).
Medi-Cal and state programs	California counts reverse mortgage payments as loan proceeds, not income, and money you haven't drawn as home equity, not an asset (Civil Code 1923.9). That rule gives way to federal law, and Medi-Cal also follows federal Medicaid law (Title 19).
Postponed property taxes	Choosing a reverse mortgage makes all taxes postponed under the state program due.
An inherited home	See page 20 for the income tax basis and Prop 19.

Who to ask

- **A tax professional,** for any tax question.
- **A benefits advisor or elder-law attorney,** before any draw if you're on SSI or Medi-Cal, or long-term care is possible. To find services, call 1-800-510-2020.
- **HICAP,** (800) 434-0222, for free Medicare counseling (not reverse mortgage counseling).

My advice: ask first, borrow second. Nothing in this guide is tax, legal or benefits advice.

A younger spouse, and moving into care

A spouse who isn't on the loan (HECM)

The youngest borrower must be 62 at closing, so a younger spouse can't be a borrower. They may be able to stay after the borrower dies as an **eligible non-borrowing spouse**, but only if all three are true:

Married	Married to the borrower at closing, and still married
Named	Named in the loan papers as an Eligible Non-Borrowing Spouse. This can't be added later.
Living there	The home is their main home

While they stay, no more loan money is paid out, and they must keep paying taxes, insurance and upkeep. This applies to HECMs with FHA case numbers from Aug. 4, 2014 on; for older loans, ask the servicer in writing. The spouse takes part in counseling too.

Moving into care, or time away

Away for	What the rules say
Up to 60 days in a row	Doesn't trigger the loan (California law)
More than 60 days, under a year	Doesn't trigger the loan if you first secure and protect the home in a way the lender accepts
More than 12 months in a row for illness, and no other borrower lives there	The loan can be called due, with HUD's approval. An eligible spouse may be able to stay.

Tell the servicer about any absence longer than 2 months, and answer the yearly occupancy check (by phone is fine). Before renting out a room, ask the servicer in writing. Private loans set their own rules.

Protecting a parent

The loan is legal and regulated. The danger comes from people around it. Your parent decides; your job is to make sure the decision is theirs, made with clear information.

Red flags: walk away and call for help

- Someone pushes to put the money into an annuity, investment or insurance. No one involved in the loan can require it.
- A contractor suggests a reverse mortgage to pay for repairs.
- Mail with seals or "government" names, or a fee to "find" or "arrange" the loan.
- Pressure to sign fast, blank pages to sign, or family kept out of meetings.
- Someone offers to "handle" the counseling, or picks the counselor.
- Loan money moves to a new "helper," caregiver or relative.

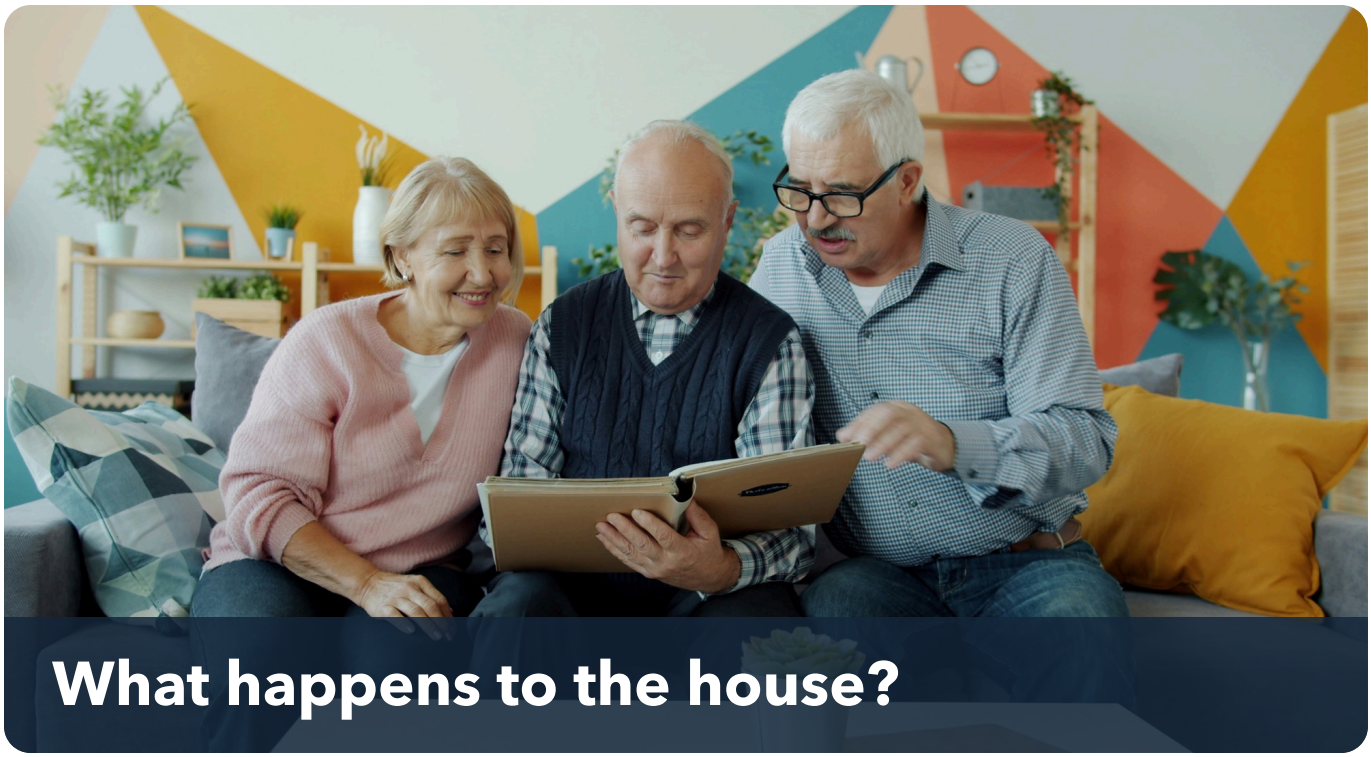
How families can help, with respect

- **Ask to be included** in meetings with the lender and counselor. It's your parent's call.
- **Ask your parent to explain it back:** it's a loan, the balance grows, taxes, insurance, HOA dues and upkeep stay theirs, and when it comes due.
- **Use the 7-day wait.** It's there for a reason.

Tom's advice: set up a durable power of attorney or a living trust while your parent can still sign. Tom has seen people on title become unable to sign before their family set anything up. In his words: "I think everybody should have that. Even those that aren't considering a reverse mortgage, it's a good idea to have."

Talk to an elder law or estate planning attorney. Whether a lender accepts a given document depends on the document and the loan's rules, so ask early.

Where to report suspected abuse is on page 26. If someone is in danger right now, call 911.



What happens to the house?

On a HECM, when the last borrower passes away or moves out for good, the loan comes due. The lender doesn't automatically take the house. The family chooses:

- **Keep it** by paying off the loan (ask the servicer in writing for the exact payoff figure).
- **Sell it.** If the balance is more than the home is worth, a sale for at least 95% of its appraised value can settle the loan.
- **Sign it over** to the lender (a deed in lieu), if you don't want to keep or sell it.

The servicer's notice gives you 30 days to choose. Extra time, up to two 90-day extensions, may be approved by HUD if you can show you're selling or paying it off. It's never promised. Keep the taxes and insurance paid meanwhile. Because it's non-recourse, the family's own money isn't at risk for any shortfall.

Private loans set their own terms; ask the lender. On a HECM, a spouse who isn't on the loan can stay only if they were married to the borrower at closing, are named in the loan papers, and live there.

After a death: the first call and the clock

The first call

- ☐ Call the servicer (the company on the monthly statement, often not the one that made the loan). HUD's rules let the servicer accept a phone call as notice of the death, so don't wait for a letter. Follow up in writing.
- ☐ Write down the date, the person's name and what they said.
- ☐ Ask for the payoff amount and the appraisal, in writing.
- ☐ Keep the property taxes and homeowners insurance paid until the title transfers.
- ☐ Tell the servicer your plan in writing: pay off, sell, or sign over. Talk to an estate attorney early about who can sign.

After the last borrower dies: the clock

The letter
The servicer mails the estate a letter listing the options.

30 days
From the letter's date, tell the servicer your plan: pay off and keep, sell, or sign it over.

About 6 months
From the due date, roughly the time you have to sell or pay off.

More time?
Up to two 90-day extensions, only with proof and HUD's approval. Never promised.

These are HUD's rules for a HECM. Call the servicer early, and get every number and date in writing.

Taxes on an inherited home

- **Income tax.** The IRS says the basis of inherited property is generally its fair market value on the date of death. There are exceptions, so talk to a tax professional before you sell or keep it.
- **Property tax (Prop 19).** If a child makes a parent's main home their own main home within one year, they may keep the parent's tax base, up to a limit. If no one moves in, the home is generally reassessed. Ask the county assessor.

Built-in protections, and a few rules of thumb

- **Independent counseling** before any reverse mortgage in California, and for a HECM, any non-borrowing spouse too.
- **A 7-day wait** in California before a final application or fee.
- **Non-recourse (HECM):** no personal liability for the balance. Private loans set their own terms; ask the lender.
- **No product tie-ins:** no one can require you to buy an annuity, insurance or an investment.
- **A 3-day right to cancel** on most reverse mortgages that aren't home purchases, until midnight of the third business day after closing.
- **A translation:** if the lender negotiates mainly in Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese or Korean, California requires a written translation before you sign.

Do

- Bring your family into the conversation early.
- Ask for every cost in writing.
- Keep property taxes, insurance and HOA dues current.
- Answer the servicer's yearly occupancy letter or call.

Don't

- Sign anything under pressure, or before counseling.
- Borrow more than you need; the balance grows.
- Ignore a letter from your servicer.
- Trust a pitch about a "Form 1098-SR" tax break; a California county tax office says no such IRS form exists.

Before the worksheets: let’s talk



The next few pages are tools you can use on your own: a family checklist, questions for any lender, a worksheet for your numbers, local help and a glossary. Use them.

But a reverse mortgage is a big decision, and the quickest way to see whether it fits your family is a conversation. My goal is that you make an honest, educated decision, whether that's a reverse mortgage or something else.

What a call with me covers

- ✓ Your situation and what you're hoping to solve
- ✓ Whether a reverse mortgage fits, and I'll tell you plainly if it doesn't
- ✓ Every cost, in writing
- ✓ How counseling and California's 7-day wait work
- ✓ Other options worth comparing

It isn't an application, there's no credit check, and there's no cost or pressure. Bring your family. Before you can apply, you'll meet with an independent HUD-approved counselor; it's required.



Talk with me first

(909) 869-6588 · tom.jarboe@naf.com

Or ask for a personal estimate: thereverseguide.com/estimate

A family conversation checklist

Talk these through together before anyone decides. The decision is the homeowner's; the conversation is everyone's.

The plan

- ☐ What is the money for, in one sentence?
- ☐ How long do we expect to stay in this home?
- ☐ Who would help with the bills and the home if health changed?

The people

- ☐ Who lives here now? Would anyone need to stay after the loan comes due?
- ☐ Is there a younger spouse who should be named in the loan papers?
- ☐ What does each of us expect to happen to the house later?

The bills

- ☐ Can we keep up taxes, insurance, HOA dues and upkeep for years?
- ☐ Would a set-aside for taxes and insurance help?
- ☐ Could any draw affect SSI or Medi-Cal? Who will we ask?

The paperwork

- ☐ Is there a durable power of attorney or a living trust?
- ☐ Where are the deed, loan and marriage papers kept?
- ☐ Who may talk with the servicer for the homeowner?

Next steps

- ☐ Who comes to the counseling session and the meeting with the lender?
- ☐ Which other option will we compare side by side?

> **Tom's personal opinion:** "the parents should be living for themselves, not living for the kids." That's his view, not a rule. Talk it over with your family.

Questions to ask any lender, including me

- ☐ Is this a HECM or a private (proprietary) reverse mortgage? Why that one for me?
- ☐ What are the upfront costs and mortgage insurance? Please put them in writing.
- ☐ Will I need a set-aside? How much would it hold back?
- ☐ After paying off my mortgage, any set-aside and the closing costs, what's left, if anything?
- ☐ Which bills stay mine: taxes, insurance, HOA dues, upkeep?
- ☐ What happens if my spouse isn't on the loan?
- ☐ What happens if I move into care, or I'm away a long time?
- ☐ What will my heirs need to do, and how long will they have?
- ☐ Will anyone ask me to buy an annuity, insurance or an investment? (The answer should be no.)
- ☐ If this isn't right for me, what else should I look at?

Your notes

Your numbers worksheet

Fill in what you know, in pencil. No math needed, and no guesses: leave a line blank if you're not sure. Bring this page when you talk with me or your counselor.

Your home

What you think the home is worth _____

Mortgage balance (from your latest statement) _____

Any other loans or liens on the home _____

Property taxes (per year) _____

Homeowners insurance (per year) _____

HOA dues (per month) _____

Repairs coming up _____

Your monthly budget

Money coming in each month _____

Money going out each month _____

Bills that worry you most _____

Your goals

- ☐ Stay in my home
- ☐ Pay off my mortgage
- ☐ A cushion for repairs or medical bills
- ☐ Help with monthly bills
- ☐ Buy a home that fits better
- ☐ Something else: _____

The people

Who lives in the home _____

Who should be part of the decision _____

Help near Diamond Bar

Reverse mortgage counseling (required before you apply)		
HUD's counselor line, or search answers.hud.gov/housingcounseling		**(800) 569-4287**
Ontario	Inland Fair Housing and Mediation Board	800-321-0911
Orange	NeighborWorks Orange County	714-409-3444
Rancho Cucamonga	Neighborhood Partnership Housing Services	909-988-5979
Riverside	Carolyn E. Wylie Center	951-683-5193
Riverside	Credit.org	800-431-8157
San Bernardino	Inland Empire Resource Center	909-887-8700

HUD's list, checked Nov. 2, 2026. I'm not recommending any of them. Ask each about HECM counseling, fees and languages.

LA County (Diamond Bar, Walnut, Pomona, West Covina, Rowland Heights)	Number
Assessor (home values, exemptions)	(213) 974-3211
Treasurer and Tax Collector (your tax bill)	(213) 974-2111 · toll-free (888) 807-2111
Elder abuse hotline (Adult Protective Services), 24/7. In danger now? Call 911.	1-877-477-3646

San Bernardino County (Chino Hills, Ontario)	Number
Assessor-Recorder-County Clerk	909-387-8307
Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector (your tax bill)	(909) 387-8308
Adult Protective Services, 24/7	877-565-2020

Statewide	Number
Senior Information & Assistance (connects you to your county's aging office)	1-800-510-2020
Property Tax Postponement, State Controller	(800) 952-5661
HICAP, free Medicare counseling	(800) 434-0222

Words to know

HECM
Home Equity Conversion Mortgage: the FHA-insured reverse mortgage, for homeowners 62 and older.

Proprietary reverse mortgage
A private reverse mortgage, not FHA-insured. It sets its own rules; some start at 55 in California.

Servicer
The company on your monthly statement that runs the loan after closing. Often not the company that made it.

Counseling
A required session with an independent HUD-approved counselor before you can apply. California adds a 7-day wait.

Non-recourse
On a HECM, you and your heirs never owe more than the home is worth when the loan is repaid.

Maximum claim amount
The lowest of the home's appraised value, the purchase price, or HUD's limit. HUD figures mortgage insurance from it.

Mortgage insurance (MIP)
FHA insurance on a HECM. HUD sets it at 2% upfront and 0.5% a year. It protects the lender.

Origination fee
The lender's fee for making the loan. HUD caps it, and a lender may charge less.

HECM for Purchase
A HECM used to buy your next home. You pay part of the price, and the taxes, insurance and upkeep are yours.

Line of credit
Money you draw when you need it. On an adjustable-rate HECM, the unused part grows.

Set-aside (LESA)
Part of the loan held back to pay property taxes and homeowners insurance.

Financial Assessment
The lender's review of your credit, income and expenses before a HECM.

Non-borrowing spouse
A spouse who isn't on the loan. On a HECM, one who was married to the borrower at closing, is named in the loan papers, and lives there may be able to stay after the borrower dies.

Due and payable
When the loan must be repaid, for example after the last borrower dies or moves out for good.

Occupancy certification
The yearly check that the home is still your main home. It can be done by phone.

Deed in lieu
Signing the home over to the lender instead of a foreclosure.

Cash for keys
Moving help a servicer may offer when a home is signed over. It's the servicer's choice, never promised.

TALC disclosure
Total Annual Loan Cost: a required table showing the projected cost over different time frames.

Durable power of attorney
A document that lets a trusted person act for you and keeps working if you lose capacity.

Property Tax Postponement
A State Controller program that postpones property taxes for eligible owners, with a lien and interest.



Let’s talk, with no pressure



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Want more detail? More than 40 plain-English guides are free at thereverseguide.com. Talk with me first; before you can apply, you'll meet an independent counselor: (800) 569-4287.

Tom Jarboe, NMLS #210600, New American Funding, LLC, Company NMLS ID #6606, an FHA-approved lender (FHA Direct Endorsement Lender #21221-0000-9). Branch NMLS #2856926. Licensed by the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation under the California Residential Mortgage Lending Act. Loans made or arranged pursuant to a California Financing Law license. For licensing information, visit www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org. A reverse mortgage is a loan. Interest and fees are added to the balance over time, and the loan must be repaid when the last borrower dies, sells the home, moves out for good (or is away more than 12 months in a row for illness), or doesn't meet the loan terms. Reverse Mortgage - Borrower must pay required taxes and insurance. HECM borrowers must be 62 or older. HomeSafe and HomeSafe Second are proprietary (private) products, are not FHA-insured and are not part of the HECM program; in California, HomeSafe is available from age 55. Borrowers must live in the home as their main home and keep paying property taxes, homeowners insurance, HOA dues and upkeep, or the loan can come due and the home can go to foreclosure. Not a commitment to lend; all loans are subject to credit approval, verification and underwriting, and program terms can change without notice. This guide is not from HUD or FHA and was not approved by HUD, FHA or any government agency. New American Funding is not acting for HUD, FHA or any government agency. Nothing in this guide is tax, legal or benefits advice. Equal Housing Lender. Photos: Unsplash (license on file).