

# Home Equity Loan: How to Get the Best Home Equity Loan Deal

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## 1. The Single Most Critical Factor in Getting the Best Home Equity Loan.

Once you consider applying for a Home Equity Loan, one of the first things you need to do is shop around and choose a lender. Choosing a reliable lender that offers good rates is the single most critical factor in getting a good home equity loan deal.

Only by obtaining several quotes that are specific to your situation and location you will be really able to discover the best rate that is available to you. How many quotes? go for at least 3 quotes from different lenders, less than that will not do the job.

Now, usually shopping around for three quotes can be a tedious and time consuming task, however, you can make it easier and more effective by using a free online quoting service such as [Ratelt-Site](#) (If the link doesn't work, copy and paste the following URL into a browser: [www.liraz.com/rate-site](http://www.liraz.com/rate-site)).

Rateit-Site will provide you with several competing offers from reliable lenders that offer low rates in your area thus enabling you to compare and pinpoint on the best rate that is available for your location.

### **So what is exactly a Home Equity Loan**

If you are in the market for credit, a home equity plan is one of several options that might be right for you. Before making a decision, however, you should weigh carefully the costs of a home equity line against the benefits. Shop for the credit terms that best meet your borrowing needs without posing undue financial risks. And remember, failure to repay the amounts you've borrowed, plus interest, could mean the loss of your home.

A home equity line of credit is a form of revolving credit in which your home serves as collateral. Because a home often is a consumer's most valuable asset, many homeowners use home equity credit lines only for major items, such as education, home improvements, or medical bills, and choose not to use them for day-to-day expenses.

With a home equity line, you will be approved for a specific amount of credit. Many lenders set the credit limit on a home equity line by taking a percentage (say, 75%) of the home's appraised value and subtracting from that the balance owed on the existing mortgage.

In determining your actual credit limit, the lender will also consider your ability to repay the loan (principal and interest) by looking at your income, debts, and other financial obligations as well as your credit history.

Many home equity plans set a fixed period during which you can borrow money, such as 10 years. At the end of this "draw period," you may be allowed to renew the credit line. If your plan does not allow renewals, you will not be able to borrow additional money once the period has ended. Some plans may call for payment in full of any outstanding balance at the end of the period. Others may allow repayment over a fixed period (the "repayment period"), for example, 10 years.

Once approved for a home equity line of credit, you will most likely be able to borrow up to your credit limit whenever you want. Typically, you will use special checks to draw on your line. Under some plans, borrowers can use a credit card or other means to draw on the line.

There may be other limitations on how you use the line. Some plans may require you to borrow a minimum amount each time you draw on the line (for example, \$300) or keep a minimum amount outstanding. Some plans may also require that you take an initial advance when the line is set up.

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## **2. How To Choose a Home Equity Loan That Best Suits Your Needs?**

If you decide to apply for a home equity line of credit, look for the plan that best meets your particular needs. Read the credit agreement carefully, and examine the terms and conditions of various plans, including the annual percentage rate (APR) and the costs of establishing the plan. Remember, though, that the APR for a home equity line is based on the interest rate alone and will not reflect closing costs and other fees and charges, so you'll need to compare these costs, as well as the APRs, among lenders.

Home equity lines of credit typically involve variable rather than fixed interest rates. The variable rate must be based on a publicly available index (such as the prime rate published in some major daily newspapers or a U.S. Treasury bill rate). In such cases, the interest rate you pay for the line of credit will change, mirroring changes in the value of the index. Most lenders cite the interest rate you will pay as the value of the index at a particular time, plus a "margin," such as 2 percentage points. Because the cost of borrowing is tied directly to the value of the index, it is important to find out which index is used, how often the value of the index changes, and how high it has risen in the past. It is also important to note the amount of the margin.

Lenders sometimes offer a temporarily discounted interest rate for home equity lines—an "introductory" rate that is unusually low for a short period, such as 6 months.

Variable-rate plans secured by a dwelling must, by law, have a ceiling (or cap) on how much your interest rate may increase over the life of the plan. Some variable-rate plans limit how much your payment may increase and how low your interest rate may fall if the index drops.

Some lenders allow you to convert from a variable interest rate to a fixed rate during the life of the plan, or let you convert all or a portion of your line to a fixed-term installment loan.

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### **3. What Are the Costs of a Home Equity Loan**

Many of the costs of setting up a home equity line of credit are similar to those you pay when you get a mortgage. For example:

- \* A fee for a property appraisal to estimate the value of your home;
- \* An application fee, which may not be refunded if you are turned down for credit;
- \* Up-front charges, such as one or more "points" (one point equals 1 percent of the credit limit); and
- \* Closing costs, including fees for attorneys, title search, mortgage preparation and filing, property and title insurance, and taxes.

In addition, you may be subject to certain fees during the plan period, such as annual membership or maintenance fees and a transaction fee every time you draw on the credit line.

You could find yourself paying hundreds of dollars to establish the plan. And if you were to draw only a small amount against your credit line, those initial charges would substantially increase the cost of the funds borrowed. On the other hand, because the lender's risk is lower than for other forms of credit, as your home serves as collateral, annual percentage rates for home equity lines are generally lower than rates for other types of credit. The interest you save could offset the costs of establishing and maintaining the line. Moreover, some lenders waive some or all of the closing costs.

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#### **4. How Will You Repay Your Home Equity Loan**

Before entering into a plan, consider how you will pay back the money you borrow. Some plans set a minimum monthly payment that includes a portion of the principal (the amount you borrow) plus accrued interest. But, unlike with typical installment loan agreements, the portion of your payment that goes toward principal may not be enough to repay the principal by the end of the term. Other plans may allow payment of interest only during the life of the plan, which means that you pay nothing toward the principal. If you borrow \$10,000, you will owe that amount when the payment plan ends.

Regardless of the minimum required payment on your home equity line, you may choose to pay more, and many lenders offer a choice of payment options. Many consumers choose to pay down the principal regularly as they do with other loans.

For example, if you use your line to buy a boat, you may want to pay it off as you would a typical boat loan.

Whatever your payment arrangements during the life of the plan—whether you pay some, a little, or none of the principal amount of the loan—when the plan ends, you may have to pay the entire balance owed, all at once. You must be prepared to make this “balloon payment” by refinancing it with the lender, by obtaining a loan from another lender, or by some other means. If you are unable to make the balloon payment, you could lose your home.

If your plan has a variable interest rate, your monthly payments may change. Assume, for example, that you borrow \$10,000 under a plan that calls for interest-only payments. At a 10% interest rate, your monthly payments would be \$83. If the rate rises over time to 15%, your monthly payments will increase to \$125. Similarly, if you are making payments that cover interest plus some portion of the principal, your monthly payments may increase, unless your agreement calls for keeping payments the same throughout the plan period.

If you sell your home, you will probably be required to pay off your home equity line in full immediately. If you are likely to sell your home in the near future, consider whether it makes sense to pay the up-front costs of setting up a line of credit. Also keep in mind that renting your home may be prohibited under the terms of your agreement.

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## **5. The Difference Between a Home Equity Loan and a Second Mortgage**

If you are thinking about a home equity line of credit, you might also want to consider a traditional second mortgage loan. This type of loan provides you with a fixed amount of money, repayable over a fixed period. In most cases, the payment schedule calls for equal payments that pay off the entire loan within the loan period. You might consider a second mortgage instead of a home equity line if, for example, you need a set amount for a specific purpose, such as an addition to your home.

In deciding which type of loan best suits your needs, consider the costs under the two alternatives. Look at both the APR and other charges. Do not, however, simply compare the APRs, because the APRs on the two types of loans are figured differently:

\* The APR for a traditional second mortgage loan takes into account the interest rate charged plus points and other finance charges.

\* The APR for a home equity line of credit is based on the periodic interest rate alone. It does not include points or other charges.

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## **6. What are Lenders Required by Law to Disclose**

The federal Truth in Lending Act requires lenders to disclose the important terms and costs of their home equity plans, including the APR, miscellaneous charges, the payment terms, and information about any variable-rate feature. And in general, neither the lender nor anyone else may charge a fee until after you have received this information. You usually get these disclosures when you receive an application form, and you will get additional disclosures before the plan is opened. If any term (other than a variable-rate feature) changes before the plan is opened, the lender must return all fees if you decide not to enter into the plan because of the change.

When you open a home equity line, the transaction puts your home at risk. If the home involved is your principal dwelling, the Truth in Lending Act gives you 3 days from the day the account was opened to cancel the credit line. This right allows you to change your mind for any reason. You simply inform the lender in writing within the 3-day

period. The lender must then cancel its security interest in your home and return all fees—including any application and appraisal fees—paid to open the account.

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## **7. What Should You Do In Case the Lender Freezes or Reduces Your Line of Credit**

Plans generally permit lenders to freeze or reduce a credit line if the value of the home “declines significantly” or, when the lender “reasonably believes” that you will be unable to make your payments due to a “material change” in your financial circumstances. If this happens, you may want to:

- \* Talk with your lender. Find out what caused the lender to freeze or reduce your credit line and what, if anything, you can do to restore it. You may be able to provide additional information to restore your line of credit, such as documentation showing that your house has retained its value or that there has not been a “material change” in your financial circumstances. You may want to get copies of your credit reports (go to the Federal Trade Commission’s website, at [www.ftc.gov/freereports](http://www.ftc.gov/freereports), for information about free copies) to make sure all the information in them is correct. If your lender suggests getting a new appraisal, be sure you discuss appraisal firms in advance so that you know they will accept the new appraisal as valid.

- \* Shop around for another line of credit. If your lender does not want to restore your line of credit, shop around to see what other lenders have to offer. You may be able to pay off your original line of credit and take out another one. Keep in mind, however, that you may need to pay some of the same application fees you paid for your original line of credit.

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## **8. Home Equity Loan Application Checklist**

Ask your lender to help you fill out this checklist.

- \* Fixed annual percentage rate
- \* Variable annual percentage rate
- Index used and current value
- Amount of margin
- Frequency of rate adjustments
- Amount/length of discount (if any)

- Interest-rate cap and floor
- \* Length of plan
- \* Draw period
- \* Repayment period
- \* Initial fees
- \* Appraisal fee
- \* Application fee
- \* Up-front charges, including points
- \* Closing costs
- \* Repayment Terms
- \* During the draw period
- \* Interest and principal payments
- \* Interest-only payments
- \* Fully amortizing payments
- \* When the draw period ends
- \* Balloon payment?
- \* Renewal available?
- \* Refinancing of balance by lender?

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## **9. Home Equity Loan Glossary**

### **Annual membership or maintenance fee**

An annual charge for access to a financial product such as a line of credit, credit card, or account. The fee is charged regardless of whether or not the product is used.

### **Annual percentage rate (APR)**

The cost of credit, expressed as a yearly rate. For closed-end credit, such as car loans or mortgages, the APR includes the interest rate, points, broker fees, and other credit charges that the borrower is required to pay. An APR, or an equivalent rate, is not used in leasing agreements.

## **Application fee**

Fees charged when you apply for a loan or other credit. These fees may include charges for property appraisal and a credit report.

## **Balloon payment**

A large extra payment that may be charged at the end of a mortgage loan or lease.

## **Cap (interest rate)**

A limit on the amount that your interest rate can increase. Two types of interest-rate caps exist. Periodic adjustment caps limit the interest-rate increase from one adjustment period to the next. Lifetime caps limit the interest-rate increase over the life of the loan. By law, all adjustable-rate mortgages have an overall cap.

## **Closing or settlement costs**

Fees paid when you close (or settle) on a loan. These fees may include application fees; title examination, abstract of title, title **insurance, and property survey fees; fees for preparing deeds**, mortgages, and settlement documents; attorneys' fees; recording fees; estimated costs of taxes and insurance; and notary, appraisal, and credit report fees. Under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, the borrower receives a good faith estimate of closing costs within three days of application. The good faith estimate lists each expected cost as an amount or a range.

## **Credit limit**

The maximum amount that may be borrowed on a credit card or under a home equity line of credit plan.

## **Equity**

The difference between the fair market value of the home and the outstanding balance on your mortgage plus any outstanding home equity loans.

## **Index**

The economic indicator used to calculate interest-rate adjustments for adjustable-rate mortgages or other adjustable-rate loans. The index rate can increase or decrease at any time. See also Selected Index Rates for ARMs over an 11-year Period ([www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/arms/arms\\_english.htm](http://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/arms/arms_english.htm)) for examples of common indexes that have changed in the past.

## **Interest rate**

The percentage rate used to determine the cost of borrowing money, stated usually as a percentage of the principal loan amount and as an annual rate.

## **Margin**



The number of percentage points the lender adds to the index rate to calculate the ARM interest rate at each adjustment.

### **Minimum payment**

The lowest amount that you must pay (usually monthly) to keep your account in good standing. Under some plans, the minimum payment may cover interest only; under others, it may include both principal and interest.

### **Points (also called discount points)**

One point is equal to 1 percent of the principal amount of a mortgage loan. For example, if a mortgage is \$200,000, one point equals \$2,000. Lenders frequently charge points in both fixed-rate and adjustable-rate mortgages to cover loan origination costs or to provide additional compensation to the lender or broker. These points usually are paid at closing and may be paid by the borrower or the home seller, or may be split between them. In some cases, the money needed to pay points can be borrowed (incorporated in the loan amount), but doing so will increase the loan amount and the total costs. Discount points (also called discount fees) are points that you voluntarily choose to pay in return for a lower interest rate.

### **Security interest**

If stated in your credit agreement, a creditor's, lessor's, or assignee's legal right to your property (such as your home, stocks, or bonds) that secures payment of your obligation under the credit agreement.

### **Transaction fee**

Fee charged each time a withdrawal or other specified transaction is made on a line of credit, such as a balance transfer fee or a cash advance fee.

### **Variable rate**

An interest rate that changes periodically in relation to an index, such as the prime rate. Payments may increase or decrease accordingly.

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## **Special Bonus:**

### **10. Sixty One Ways to Save Money**

Here is a list of tips and ideas that will help you save money in various areas of your life:

#### **Airline Fares**

1. You may lower the price of a round trip air fare by as much as two-thirds by making certain your trip includes a Saturday evening stay over, and by purchasing the ticket in advance.
2. To make certain you have a cheap fare, even if you use a travel agent, contact all the airlines that fly where you want to go and ask what the lowest fare to your destination is.
3. Be flexible, if possible. Consider using low fare carriers or alternative airports and keep an eye out for fare wars.

### **Car Rental**

1. Since car rental rates can vary greatly, shop around for the best basic rates. Ask about any additional charges (extra driver, gas, drop-off fees) and special offers.
2. Rental car companies offer various insurance and waiver options. Check with your automobile insurance agent and credit card company in advance to avoid duplicating any coverage you may already have.

### **New Cars**

1. You can save thousands of dollars over the lifetime of a car by selecting a model that combines a low purchase price with low financing, insurance, gasoline, maintenance, and repair costs. Ask your local librarian for new car guides that contain this information.
2. Having selected a model, you can save hundreds of dollars by comparison shopping. Call at least five dealers for price quotes and let each know that you are calling others.
3. Remember there is no "cooling off" period on new car sales. Once you have signed a contract, you are obligated to buy the car.

### **Used Cars**

1. Before buying any used car:
  - Compare the seller's asking price with the average retail price in a "bluebook" or other guide to car prices found at many libraries, banks, and credit unions.
  - Have a mechanic you trust check the car, especially if the car is sold "as is."
2. Consider purchasing a used car from an individual you know and trust. They are more likely than other sellers to charge a lower price and point out any problems with the car.

### **Auto Leasing**

1. Don't decide to lease a car just because the payments are lower than on a traditional auto loan. The leasing payments may be lower because you don't own the car at the end of the lease.
2. Leasing a car is very complicated. When shopping, consider the price of the car (known as the capitalized cost), your trade-in allowance, any down payment, monthly

payments, various fees (excess mileage, excess "wear and tear," end-of- lease), and the cost of buying the car at the end of the lease. Keys to Vehicle Leasing: A Consumer Guide, published by the Federal Reserve Board and Federal Trade Commission, is a valuable source of information about auto leasing.

### **Gasoline**

1. You can save hundreds of dollars a year by comparing prices at different stations, pumping gas yourself, and using the lowest-octane called for in your owner's manual.
2. You can save up to \$100 a year on gas by keeping your engine tuned and your tires inflated to their proper pressure.

### **Car Repairs**

1. Consumers lose billions of dollars each year on unneeded or poorly done car repairs. The most important step that you can take to save money on these repairs is to find a skilled, honest mechanic. Before you need repairs, look for a mechanic who:

- is certified and well established;
- has done good work for someone you know; and
- communicates well about repair options and costs.

### **Auto Insurance**

1. You can save several hundred dollars a year by purchasing auto insurance from a licensed, low-price insurer. Call your state insurance department for a publication showing typical prices charged by different companies. Then call at least four of the lowest-priced, licensed insurers to learn what they would charge you for the same coverage.
2. Talk to your agent or insurer about raising your deductibles on collision and comprehensive coverages to at least \$500 or, if you have an old car, dropping these coverages altogether. Taking these steps can save you hundreds of dollars a year.
3. Make certain that your new policy is in effect before dropping your old one.

### **Homeowner/Renter Insurance**

1. You can save several hundred dollars a year on homeowner insurance and up to \$50 a year on renter insurance by purchasing insurance from a low-price, licensed insurer. Ask your state insurance department for a publication showing typical prices charged by different licensed companies. Then call at least four of the lowest priced insurers to learn what they would charge you. If such a publication is not available, it is even more important to call at least four insurers for price quotes.
2. Make certain you purchase enough coverage to replace the house and its contents. "Replacement" on the house means rebuilding to its current condition.

3. Make certain your new policy is in effect before dropping your old one.

### **Life Insurance**

1. If you want insurance protection only, and not a savings and investment product, buy a term life insurance policy.

2. If you want to buy a whole life, universal life, or other cash value policy, plan to hold it for at least 15 years. Canceling these policies after only a few years can more than double your life insurance costs.

3. Check your public library for information about the financial soundness of insurance companies and the prices they charge. The July 1998 issue of Consumer Reports is a valuable source of information about a number of insurers.

### **Checking**

1. You can save more than \$100 a year in fees by selecting a checking account with a low (or no) minimum balance requirement that you can, and do, meet. Request a list of these and other fees that are charged on these accounts.

2. Banking institutions often will drop or lower checking fees if paychecks are directly deposited by your employer. Direct deposit offers the additional advantages of convenience, security, and immediate access to your money.

### **Savings and Investment Products**

1. Before opening a savings or investment account with a bank or other financial institution, find out whether the account is insured by the federal government (FDIC or NCUA). An increasing number of products offered by these institutions, including mutual stock funds and annuities, are not insured.

2. To earn the highest return on savings (annual percentage yield) with little or no risk, consider certificates of deposit (CDs) and treasury bills or notes.

3. Once you select a type of savings or investment product, compare rates and fees offered by different institutions. These rates can vary a lot and, over time, can significantly affect interest earnings.

### **Credit Cards**

1. You can save as much as a thousand dollars or more each year in lower credit card interest charges by paying off your entire bill each month.

2. If you are unable to pay off a large balance, pay as much as you can and switch to a credit card with a low annual percentage rate (APR). For a modest fee, RAM Research Corp. (800-344-7714) will send you a list of low-rate cards. You can obtain a list of low-rate cards by accessing "[www.ramresearch.com.cardtrack](http://www.ramresearch.com.cardtrack)" on the Internet.

3. You can reduce credit card fees, which may add up to more than \$100 a year, by getting rid of all but one or two cards, and by avoiding late payment and over-the-credit limit fees.

### **Auto Loans**

1. If you have significant savings earning a low interest rate, consider making a large down payment or even paying for the car in cash. This could save you as much as several thousand dollars in finance charges.

2. You can save as much as hundreds of dollars in finance charges by shopping for the cheapest loan. Contact several banks, your credit union, and the auto manufacturer's own finance company.

### **First Mortgage Loans**

1. Although your monthly payment may be higher, you can save tens of thousands of dollars in interest charges by shopping for the shortest-term mortgage you can afford. On a \$100,000 fixed-rate loan at 8% annual percentage rate (APR), for example, you will pay \$90,000 less in interest on a 15-year mortgage than on a 30-year mortgage.

2. You can save thousands of dollars in interest charges by shopping for the lowest-rate mortgage with the fewest points. On a 15-year, \$100,000 fixed-rate mortgage, just lowering the APR from 8.5% to 8.0% can save you more than \$5,000 in interest charges. On this mortgage, paying two points instead of three would save you an additional \$1,000.

3. If your local newspaper does not periodically run mortgage rate surveys, call at least six lenders for information about their rates (APRs), points, and fees. Then ask an accountant to compute precisely how much each mortgage option will cost and its tax implications.

4. Be aware that the interest rate on most adjustable rate mortgage loans (ARMs) can vary a great deal over the lifetime of the mortgage. An increase of several percentage points might raise payments by hundreds of dollars per month.

### **Mortgage Refinancing**

1. Consider refinancing your mortgage if you can get a rate that is at least one percentage point lower than your existing mortgage rate and plan to keep the new mortgage for several years or more. Ask an accountant to calculate precisely how much your new mortgage (including up-front fees) will cost and whether, in the long run, it will cost less than your current mortgage.

### **Home Equity Loans**

1. Be cautious in taking out home equity loans. These loans reduce the equity that you have built up in your home. If you are unable to make payments, you could lose your home.

2. Compare home equity loans offered by at least four banking institutions. In comparing these loans, consider not only the annual percentage rate (APR) but also points, closing costs, other fees, and the index for any variable rate changes.

### **Home Purchase**

1. You can often negotiate a lower sale price by employing a buyer broker who works for you not the seller. If the buyer broker or the broker's firm also lists properties, there may be a conflict of interest, so ask them to tell you if they are showing you a property that they have listed.

2. Do not purchase any house until it has been examined by a home inspector that you selected.

### **Renting a Place to Live**

1. Do not limit your rental housing search to classified ads or referrals from friends and acquaintances. Select buildings where you would like to live and contact their building manager or owner to see if anything is available.

2. Remember that signing a lease probably obligates you to make all monthly payments for the term of the agreement.

### **Home Improvement**

1. Home repairs often cost thousands of dollars and are the subject of frequent complaints. Select from among several well established, licensed contractors who have submitted written, fixed-price bids for the work.

2. Do not sign any contract that requires full payment before satisfactory completion of the work.

### **Major Appliances**

1. Consult Consumer Reports, available in most public libraries, for information about specific brands and how to evaluate them, including energy use. There are often great price and quality differences among brands.

2. Once you've selected a brand, check the phone book to learn what stores carry this brand, then call at least four of these stores for the prices of specific models. After each store has given you a quote, ask if that's the lowest price they can offer you. This comparison shopping can save you as much as \$100 or more.

### **Electricity**

1. To save as much as hundreds of dollars a year on electricity, make certain that any new appliances you purchase, especially air conditioners and furnaces, are energy-efficient. Information on the energy efficiency of major appliances is found on Energy Guide Labels required by federal law.

2. Enrolling in load management programs and off-hour rate programs offered by your electric utility may save you up to \$100 a year in electricity costs. Call your electric utility for information about these cost-saving programs.

### **Home Heating**

1. A home energy audit can identify ways to save up to hundreds of dollars a year on home heating (and air conditioning). Ask your electric or gas utility if they can do this audit for free or for a reasonable charge. If they cannot, ask them to refer you to a qualified professional.

### **Local Telephone Service**

1. Check with your phone company to see whether a flat rate or measured service plan will save you the most money.

2. You will usually save money by buying your phones instead of leasing them.

3. Check your local phone bill to see if you have optional services that you don't really need or use. Each option you drop could save you \$40 or more each year.

### **Long Distance Telephone Service**

1. Long distance calls made during evenings, at night, or on weekends can cost significantly less than weekday calls.

2. If you make more than a few long distance calls each month, consider subscribing to a calling plan. Call several long distance companies to see which one has the least expensive plan for the calls you make.

3. Whenever possible, dial your long distance calls directly. Using the operator to complete a call can cost you an extra \$6.

### **Food Purchased at Markets**

1. You can save hundreds of dollars a year by shopping at the lower-priced food stores. Convenience stores often charge the highest prices.

2. You will spend less on food if you shop with a list.

3. You can save hundreds of dollars a year by comparing price-per-ounce or other unit prices on shelf labels. Stock up on those items with low per-unit costs.

### **Prescription Drugs**

1. Since brand name drugs are usually much more expensive than their generic equivalents, ask your physician and pharmacist for generic drugs whenever appropriate.

2. Since pharmacies may charge widely different prices for the same medicine, call several. When taking a drug for a long time, also consider calling mail-order pharmacies, which often charge lower prices.

## **Funeral Arrangements**

1. Make your wishes known about your funeral, memorial, or burial arrangements in writing. Be cautious about prepaying because there may be risks involved.
2. For information about the least costly options, which could save you several thousand dollars, contact a local memorial society, which is usually listed in the Yellow Pages under funeral services.
3. Before selecting a funeral home, call several and ask for prices of specific goods and services, or visit them to obtain an itemized price list. You are entitled to this information by law and, by using it to comparison shop, you can save hundreds of dollars.

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