

**FOR RELEASE: 10:00 A.M. WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1999
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE PUBLISHES CONSUMER BROCHURE
ABOUT SHOPPING AND NEGOTIATING FOR THE BEST MORTGAGE**

The federal Interagency Task Force on Fair Lending has published a brochure for consumers, "Looking for the Best Mortgage: Shop, Compare, Negotiate." The brochure notes that shopping around for a home loan or mortgage is similar to shopping for a car -- consumers should obtain information on all costs of the loan and negotiate for the best deal.

The brochure describes how comparing and negotiating interest rates, fees and other payment terms may help consumers get the best financing and possibly save thousands of dollars, whether it's a home purchase, a refinancing, or a home equity loan. It advises consumers to:

- Obtain information from several lenders.
- Make sure to obtain all important cost information.
- Negotiate for the best deal.

For example, the brochure notes that on any given day, lenders and brokers may offer different prices for the same loan to different consumers, even if consumers have the same loan qualifications. These different prices may result because loan officers and brokers often are allowed to keep some or all of the difference between the lowest available price and any higher price that the consumer agrees to pay. This compensation arrangement helps explain why it is important for consumers to ask questions about costs and negotiate for the best deal. The brochure contains a worksheet consumers can use to compare costs while shopping. The worksheet lists commonly charged fees and closing costs and includes a useful list of questions consumers may wish to ask lenders when they shop for a loan.

The free publication outlines common sources for home loans and explains the difference between rates, points, and fees. The brochure highlights some of the laws that protect consumers from unfair lending practices. It also emphasizes that even consumers with past credit problems should shop around and negotiate for the best deal. Finally, the brochure includes a mortgage loan shopping form that consumers can use to record loan data quoted by two or more lenders or brokers and then compare that data to help identify or negotiate the best deal.

The members of the Interagency Task Force include the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of the Treasury, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Federal Housing Finance Board, Federal Reserve Board, Federal Trade Commission, National Credit Union Administration, Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and Office of Thrift Supervision.

Copies of the brochure, "Looking for the Best Mortgage: Shop, Compare, Negotiate," are available from the following agency sources:

Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009 or the Center's web site at <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov>.

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(interagency mortgage brochure--2/10/99)

Department of Housing and Urban Development: The Department's web site at <http://www.hud.gov>. Media contact -- Peggy Johannsen, Public Affairs Specialist, Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20410; 202-708-0685.

Department of Justice: The Department's web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov> or contact Jane Dyer, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Housing and Civil Enforcement Section, P.O. Box 65998, Washington, D.C. 20035; 202-514-4744.

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation: The FDIC's web site at <http://www.fdic.gov/publish/coaffpr.html> or the FDIC's Public Information Center, 801 17th Street, NW, Room 100, Washington, D.C. 20434; 800-276-6003 or 202-416-6940. Media contact: Jay Rosenstein, 202-898-7303.

Federal Reserve Board: The Board's web site at <http://www.federalreserve.gov> and from Publications, Stop 127, Federal Reserve Board, 20th & C Streets, NW, Washington, D.C. 20551; 202-452-3245.

Federal Trade Commission: The FTC's web site: <http://www.ftc.gov> and from the FTC's Consumer Response Center, Room 130, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20580; 202-FTC-HELP (202-382-4357); TDD for the hearing impaired 202-326-2502. Media contact: Howard Shapiro, Office of Public Affairs, 202-326-2176.

National Credit Union Administration: NCUA's web site at <http://www.ncua.gov> or contact Bob Loftus, Director of Public Affairs, National Credit Union Administration, 1775 Duke Street, Washington, D.C. 22134.

Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight: The Office's web site at <http://www.ofheo.gov> or contact Jill Weide, 202-414-3813.

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency: The OCC's web site at <http://www.occ.treas.gov> and from Communications, Mail Stop 3-2, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, 250 E Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20219; 202-874-4700.

Office of Thrift Supervision: The OTS's web site at <http://www.ots.treas.gov> and from Publications, Office of Thrift Supervision, 1700 G Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20552; 202-906-6410 (OTS Publications Hotline).