

## Monthly Press Release

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### FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE BOARD REPORTS MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Housing Finance Board today reported that the average interest rate on conventional 30-year, fixed-rate, mortgage loans was unchanged at 5.90 percent in February. The average interest rate on 15-year, fixed-rate loans decreased 2 basis points to 5.33 percent in February. These rates pertain to mortgages closed during the February 22-28 period. Typically, the interest rate is determined 30 to 45 days before the loan is closed. Thus, the reported rates depict market conditions prevailing in mid to late January.

The contract rate on the composite of all mortgage loans (fixed- and adjustable-rate) was 5.68 in February down 10 basis points from 5.78 percent during January. The effective interest rate, which reflects the amortization of initial fees and charges, fell 12 basis points to 5.72 percent. The average contract rate on fixed-rate mortgages was unchanged at 5.87 percent during February, while the average contract rate on adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) decreased 38 basis points to 5.24 percent.

Initial fees and charges were 0.28 percent of the loan balance in February, down 13 basis points from 0.41 percent in January. Fifty-nine percent of the purchase-money mortgage loans originated in February were "no-point" mortgages, up from 52 percent in January. The average term was 28.3 years in February, unchanged from 28.3 years in January. The average loan-to-price ratio in February was 74.8 percent, down from 76.1 percent in January. The average loan amount increased by \$2,600 to \$200,400 in February, while the average house purchase price increased by \$11,600 to \$287,300.

The National Average Contract Mortgage Rate for the Purchase of Previously Occupied Homes by Combined Lenders, a popular ARM index, was 5.68 percent based on loans closed in February. This is a decrease of 0.04 percent from the previous month.

Recorded information on this index is available by calling (202) 408-2940. The March index value will be announced on April 26, 2005.

The Federal Housing Finance Board maintains telephone lines that give recorded information on the current value of many of the interest rates reported in this release. That phone number is (202) 408-2624. This recording will be next updated on April 26, 2005.

*Technical note: The data is based on a monthly survey of major lenders that are asked to report the terms and conditions on all conventional, single-family, fully amortized, purchase-money loans closed the last five working days of the month. The data thus excludes FHA-insured and VA-guaranteed mortgages, refinancing loans, and balloon loans. This month's data is based on 9,911 reported loans from 85 lenders, representing savings associations, mortgage companies, commercial banks, and mutual savings banks. The effective interest rate includes the amortization of initial fees and charges over a 10-year period, which is the historical assumption of the average life of a mortgage loan. The data is weighted to reflect the shares of mortgage lending by lender size and lender type as reported in the latest release of the Federal Reserve Board's Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data.*