

## HOW TO OPEN A CREDIT UNION ACCOUNT

Credit Unions are a great place to keep your money (and a great place to borrow money). At most credit unions you can find free checking, good rates on savings accounts, and loans that are competitive. Sylvania Area Federal Credit is local, so we keep your money (and our attention) in the Sylvania Community where you live.

For some, the prospect of opening an account at a credit union is intimidating. When “eligibility” and “membership” come up, they think that the process is complex – but it is really quite easy.

- Meet the eligibility requirement (this is usually easier than it sounds and we will help you with it)
- Make a small deposit (usually \$5.00) to become a member-owner
- Start using your account

### Step 1: Playing the Field

In order to join the credit union you have to be a part of our credit union’s *field of membership*. That means you have to have some kind of common bond with other members of the credit union.

It’s pretty easy to find a credit union that you are eligible to join. In some cases the fact that you live, work, worship, go to school, or volunteer in a community such as Sylvania confirms your eligibility.

### Step 2: \$5.00 Please

Visit our credit union office and ask for an application. This gives you an opportunity to meet our staff and we can talk to you about our credit union services. To become a member of the credit union you will need to make a modest deposit, which represents your purchase of a share in the credit union. This makes you an owner of the credit union. Your deposit is \$5 and you will need to leave the money in your account at all times – so if your account balance is \$10, you’ll really only have \$5 available to spend (the credit union prevents you from spending the money).

Our MSR (Member Service Representative) will give you a signature card. You will need to provide details about yourself on the account card and you will also receive your account number at this time. Information needed is as follows:

- Social Security Number or Tax ID Number
- Your physical address (where you reside)
- Valid identification such as a driver’s license, passport, or other government-issued ID
- A reason why you’re eligible for credit union membership (we can help you with that)

### Step 3: Chex-Systems and OFAC Reports

Once you have completed the signature account card, we will use the information you provide to run a report through Chex-Systems and OFAC – standard procedure for all members. These reports are a safeguard for both the member and the credit union. A report through Chex-Systems verifies social security number, driver license number, and if a prospective member has any encumbrances in the way of overdraft fees with another financial institution that have not been settled on a previous or current account.

Federal Regulations mandates that we run new members through The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) data base. Anyone opening any type of account with any financial institution is subject to a name search through this reporting system.

The data base is administered by the US Department of the Treasury and enforces economic and trade sanctions based on US foreign policy and national security goals against targeted foreign countries and regimes, terrorists, international narcotics traffickers, those engaged in activities related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and other threats to the national security, foreign policy or economy of the United States.

## STEP 4: Disclosures

A disclosure packet will be given to you. It will include several disclosure brochures which you should read thoroughly. These disclosures tell you about credit union policies and procedures. They also state your rights if you have a problem with your account. These disclosures include: Truth-in-Savings; Funds Availability; Fee Schedule; Membership Account Agreement; and, Privacy Notice. Additionally, an EFT Application/Disclosure is included when an ATM or Debit Card is opened.

## STEP 5: Features and Benefits

Once you have opened your account, you will be advised of the features and benefits afforded you with your new Credit Union account membership such as, Online Banking, 24/7 ATM Service, and SPRIG Mobile Banking that will allow you access to your account anytime, anywhere.

Is my money safe in the credit union? The National Credit Union Administration, commonly referred to as **NCUA**, is the federal government agency that charters and supervises federal credit unions. **NCUA** also operates and manages the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund (NCUSIF). Backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government, NCUSIF insures the accounts of millions of account holders in all federal credit unions and the vast majority of state-chartered credit unions. The **NCUSIF** provides all members of federally insured credit unions with \$250,000 in coverage for their individual accounts. These accounts include regular shares, share draft accounts, share certificates and IRAs. Individuals with account balances totaling \$250,000 or less at the same insured credit union have full **NCUSIF** coverage.

