

 

# **BCU becomes first credit union to give back $1M in HomeAdvantage Cash** **Rewards to members in a single year**

BCU reaches milestone of $5 million in cumulative Cash Rewards

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**** [**](http://link.mediaoutreach.meltwater.com/ls/click?upn=HDsQsBvd8BdjtXCMRKdB40t0T55VoPicVPq6PyH1Qr1VjvaN6Qp5Nf1P1fDNCIC1KcRpOWIHaINJq3srUJ6DLMxBWOiQaSjdL4Jsfra2z3NtGr3SY49ENbGwZflSBiMmBYDRQQiivjx61Mo6Ujzg7GngLKXFQwsiARHKOySZ0sZ2svRXuZgZoadE7vDDeAHgWtzJ_6kTYXAm7F-2BGkKXO3g9FG7U8FcCPJoPH4Vs7sHVVQA0exfAs8EzD-2FTHHjgst92755WBbq0Tjsr7vX0By8KDmflOPtuiULxPTpEOmMwhxSStqMWRdh5-2FAxHDgD-2BAKonWJdKb-2BDCul39A7odUTUiOaSZhITLhytYmYqyQz1f5w-2BwxzVWc9c4sovdrqs2AxBDyRHzTfvNnUiJT8jdZXNBw1ABPWVvkoVi0-2BRqJN6TleIROk4HdAnA84xAkMqkAYPO5UIh8TJzFSYMJ7kkdI7TgjxEOlAYe61ogu1s8Sdk1Mfr1XCgR8EjoJ-2BC-2BIqWnCowUI5s9Xrld3O2ag5rEDhA4dBsuFtKPfACE3yFFFP8bWxhDoiRqAJ0O7BxmeZ0GH5WBmYqVcYWHPnhpU0NFurUKvPAA-3D-3D)

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**SCOTTSDALE, AZ** – BCU has become the first credit union to save its members more than $1 million in a single year through CU Realty’s HomeAdvantage® program. These savings come in the form of HomeAdvantage Cash Rewards, which BCU members earn at closing when members use the turnkey real estate program to buy or sell their home. BCU met this unprecedented milestone in 2020, which is even more impressive considering the strains that credit union mortgage teams faced that year with refinance transactions and remote working environments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BCU celebrates its 10-year anniversary as a HomeAdvantage partner this month. In addition to delivering $1 million in one year, the credit union also reached the threshold of $5 million in cumulative Cash Rewards. Only two other credit unions in the United States have achieved this milestone. The Illinois-based credit union is one of the nation’s top 100 credit unions with nearly 300,000 members across the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

The HomeAdvantage turnkey real estate marketing platform helps credit unions earn more of its members’ mortgage business. When BCU members use HomeAdvantage to buy a home, an impressive 80 percent of those applicants stay with the credit union for financing, and members earn an average Cash Reward of $1,771 per transaction.

“We are so excited to be able to talk about helping our members save $5 million and that $1 million of that was in 2020 alone. I truly believe there are members who would not have been able to buy a home without this program since, most of the time, they use the cash reward to reduce closing costs or out-of-pocket expenses,” said Bob Pondelicek, BCU Senior Director, Real Estate Sales and Service.

**A Turnkey Solution to Increase Purchase Mortgage Volume**BCU became a HomeAdvantage partner in 2011 with the goal to increase its purchase mortgage volume and provide a valuable service and savings to members. Since then, BCU has closed more than $578 million in purchase mortgage loans through the program, including $136 million in 2020 alone.

“One of the big reasons that BCU partnered with HomeAdvantage was to come up with a turnkey solution to help support our purchase money strategy. Before then, we didn’t have a formal strategy to grow this part of our business,” said Pondelicek.

The HomeAdvantage platform works to attract and convert homebuyers and sellers into the credit union’s pipeline using property listings, research tools, a network of professional real estate agents and cash-back bonuses as enticement. On the back end, a powerful command center nurtures those leads until they are ready to make a move and delivers reports on progress.

HomeAdvantage’s three-pronged lead nurturing formula works to keep enrolled members engaged until they are ready for a mortgage.

* Email drip campaigns deliver personalized real estate content to member inboxes;
* Personal outreach occurs via phone, text and chat from the HomeAdvantage Member Concierge team; and
* A network of HomeAdvantage-certified real estate agents work with members to buy a home, while keeping the credit union’s brand and mortgage programs top-of-mind.

Based in Chicago and serving members across the U.S. and Puerto Rico, BCU particularly appreciates the national reach of the HomeAdantage platform. “We have a large population of members in a variety of states, and the HomeAdvantage program offers the right solution to help all of our prospective buyers nationwide,” said Pondelicek. HomeAdvantage expanded its service area from 28 states to 49 states this year.

**Pivoting to Thrive During 2020**Like many companies, BCU had to quickly pivot in 2020. The credit union broke their purchase mortgage records last year, even while their team worked remotely and was overwhelmed with refinance transactions, by prioritizing purchase mortgage leads.

“We implemented a couple of different strategies that played a big role in our success. First, we created an expedited channel for purchases. When somebody called us, we got them right into the hands of a dedicated loan officer and then on to our processing agent,” said Pondelicek. “We also created a priority queue with our member relations team. If somebody called in for a different reason but would show interest in a pre-approval, we had another expedited route to capitalize on that opportunity.”

The valuable home buyer resources and home buyer nurturing that are central to HomeAdvantage became even more important in 2020 and filled the gap in member outreach for BCU as well as many other credit unions. CU Realty also pivoted by expanding its role and adding features to better support its more than 120 credit union partners.

“We were able to help be a conduit for our credit union partners during this strained time,” said Deborah Jones, Director of New Business Development at CU Realty Services. “The HomeAdvantage nurturing system includes co-branded email campaigns that keep the credit union in the forefront and nurtured members even when CU staff were struggling to keep up with touchpoints. We actually made outbound calls for some of our partners to get their members registered. Because we wanted to ensure that the members stayed with the credit union for their financing, we partnered homebuyers with agents earlier in the process. This also helped ease the increased stress that members felt last year when buying a home during the pandemic.”

**Goal-Oriented Focus on Enrolling Members**“One of the keys to success for BCU is they have support of HomeAdvantage from the top down and strong leadership of a great team who are very much interested in giving back to the members and holding those loans by retention,” said Jones.

A team-focused, goal-oriented approach keeps BCU’s staff motivated and focused on HomeAdvantage and their purchase mortgage business year round.

The credit union trains every level of staff who interact with members to comfortably discuss the program. BCU also sets annual goals and has frequent contests and awareness campaigns to keep all levels of their team engaged in the program.

BCU also uses Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to identify potential homebuyers early in the home buying process, before they connect with a real estate agent who could direct them to another lender. Year-round marketing ensures that members know of BCU’s purchase mortgage offerings and the benefits of HomeAdvantage.

“Having a consistent focus on the program and setting expectations early on in the year has been one of the key reasons why we’ve had this level of success with HomeAdvantage,” said Pondelicek.

“In these uncertain times, it is heartening to know that HomeAdvatage is helping so many credit unions members achieve their homeownership dreams,” said Mike Corn, co-founder of CU Realty Services. “It is impressive what BCU accomplished in 2020, especially while navigating the refinance boom and a global pandemic. Making home ownership more rewarding is truly why we founded CU Realty Services two decades ago, and BCU has really shared in that vision.”

Twelve credit unions across the United States, including BCU, have earned membership in CU Realty’s exclusive Million Dollar Club. BCU became one of the club’s inaugural members when it reached its first $1 million milestone in February 2017 and is the third credit union to reach the $5 million milestone

**ABOUT CU REALTY SERVICES, LLC**CU Realty Services provides real estate services to credit unions across the nation, helping them increase their purchase mortgage business. The CUSO works with more than 120 credit unions and mortgage CUSOs in 24 states to offer its turnkey real estate marketing platform, HomeAdvantage. Through the program, credit union members can search for homes, research neighborhoods, calculate costs of homeownership, connect to experienced real estate agents and qualify to earn HomeAdvantage Cash Rewards. By offering this program to members, credit unions are able to attract, identify and engage more home buyers, and consequently close more loans. To learn more, please visit [www.curealty.com](http://link.mediaoutreach.meltwater.com/ls/click?upn=1OZqX4zsj-2BNvmWxcGHD8ftFJeYEAbir-2B6swQ0tjhPjnXeTD8woo2AGw-2FphrKMeqziqiS_6kTYXAm7F-2BGkKXO3g9FG7U8FcCPJoPH4Vs7sHVVQA0exfAs8EzD-2FTHHjgst92755WBbq0Tjsr7vX0By8KDmflOPtuiULxPTpEOmMwhxSStqMWRdh5-2FAxHDgD-2BAKonWJdKb-2BDCul39A7odUTUiOaSZhITLhytYmYqyQz1f5w-2BwxzVWc9c4sovdrqs2AxBDyRHzTfvNnUiJT8jdZXNBw1ABD4JoLMWelyQVMPcDO1B8LeDpdJStZZ1CbFktXY6sw2-2BOx9FW2CBTwsnuWkH5q4gUG-2FmyYZOdVh30uTY3WuriTmcz0ogHWz6VNp-2BOzUh1QrEv6JXC0bSkh5LwnmRJxVl0zff5CjiNWPApZ8SugmC5yLp0QovCAo7LfX-2BcX6JVtUaDKW4jXiLV6E9db7xnZKtog-3D-3D).

**ABOUT BCU**BCU is a purpose-driven organization that empowers people to discover financial freedom. At $4.4B in assets, it’s also one of the fastest-growing credit unions in the last four decades. Both not-for-profit and member-owned, the credit union is driven by the commitment to provide extraordinary service for nearly 300,000 members across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. BCU members enjoy access to financial services and well-being programming that inspire confidence through the brand promise “Here Today For Your Tomorrow”. Lifetime membership is offered to employees and families of America’s best workplaces and those living or working in Chicago-area communities. For more information, visit [www.bcu.org.](http://link.mediaoutreach.meltwater.com/ls/click?upn=HDsQsBvd8BdjtXCMRKdB48KGC-2BI5E-2Bs1rYZ-2Fuf0Yfk0-3DKOC__6kTYXAm7F-2BGkKXO3g9FG7U8FcCPJoPH4Vs7sHVVQA0exfAs8EzD-2FTHHjgst92755WBbq0Tjsr7vX0By8KDmflOPtuiULxPTpEOmMwhxSStqMWRdh5-2FAxHDgD-2BAKonWJdKb-2BDCul39A7odUTUiOaSZhITLhytYmYqyQz1f5w-2BwxzVWc9c4sovdrqs2AxBDyRHzTfvNnUiJT8jdZXNBw1ABBF3fB-2B8jg0mMi6KQFAlv49MgdHiiBH-2BcAC94yEXgk6TYl3gqbmjWAxzVHDKu7-2FtNzPPKxtKNKibEf934KKSbREl-2BYLG76mHs6RuCHjfKME7YrcyyajWaUtg4GZpJC9yV3CfQX7Rv0SDgJ8DHKBI1d0WHjHPyzvPAFgjUZLfQ5hphCB0MUy4ubh57pWoAS0kvQ-3D-3D)

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