

HomeEquity Bank TM 

CBA SENIORS CODE

HomeEquity Bank Annual Report

2022



A New Chapter **at HomeEquity Bank**

A Message from Our President and CEO



With plans firmly in place to build on our new customer-centric commitment, 2023 promises to be another banner year for the bank. I'm more inspired than ever to keep working to uphold and honour the principles of the Seniors Code while providing Canadians 55 and over with innovative financial planning solutions so they can enjoy a financially secure retirement in the home they love.



At HomeEquity Bank, the customer is at the very core of everything we do, and we take great pride in having built an organization that consistently delivers on our mission to champion for those 55 and over.

With this in mind, we were incredibly excited to announce our acquisition by Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan last summer. We welcomed a talented and diverse new Board of Directors in August 2022 who have already had a powerful impact in our work as supporters of, and advocates for, the "Seniors Code".

With their support, we launched our new "Customer Experience Vision and Ambition", a major investment across the organization focused on strengthening subject-matter expertise and accountability in every department, setting new standards, streamlining processes, and expanding our repertoire of training resources on fraud and elder abuse. We see these investments in our customers as an extension of our award-winning culture that will enhance our understanding of our customers so we can do even more to empower them to enjoy a financially secure retirement on their terms.

But, for us, being a fully customer-centric organization doesn't end there, because a secure retirement depends on more than just your finances. As the only bank in Canada dedicated to serving Canadians 55 and over, for 36 years, we continue to speak up about societal trends and issues impacting this demographic.

Accordingly, we celebrated our first-ever Home Care Heroes Awards in 2022 on Personal Support Workers Day. It was a moment to uplift the crucial work of personal support workers while igniting conversations among media about the reality that only 12 per cent of Canadians who want to age in place can afford the in-home care they'd require to do so.

As more Canadians recognize the emotional, as well as the financial, value of their homes, it's important for us to continue to challenge stereotypes about the reverse mortgage category and what it means to age and retire in Canada.

With plans firmly in place to build on our new customer-centric commitment, 2023 promises to be another banner year for the bank. I'm more inspired than ever to keep working to uphold and honour the principles of the Seniors Code while providing Canadians 55 and over with innovative financial planning solutions so they can enjoy a financially secure retirement in the home they love.

Steven Ranson
President & CEO, CPA, CA

Annual Report Overview

HomeEquity Bank is proud to be Canada's only bank solely dedicated to serving Canadian homeowners 55 and over. We live our passion for helping Canadian homeowners enjoy retirement on their terms daily, in everything we do. We're pleased to share the third edition of the HomeEquity Bank Seniors Code Annual Report and our continuing efforts to uphold, embody and advocate for the principles of the Seniors Code across many of our activities this year.

HomeEquity Bank boasts a strong culture of fiscal and regulatory responsibility. As Canada's only bank solely dedicating to serving Canadian homeowners 55 and over, we are excited to share our 2022 Seniors Code Report, highlighting our organizational efforts to ensure regulatory compliance and better serve aging Canadians.

This is paramount for us as a Schedule 1 Canadian bank, which prioritizes the security and comfort of older Canadians, as we continue to create awareness, build public trust, and provide our valued clients with a peace of mind that they are choosing a secure financial solution.

Shyam Nagarajan,
Senior Vice President and Chief Risk Officer



Here's what you'll find inside:

- The Seniors Code **Explained**



- **Seven Principles** of the Seniors Code



- A Word From Our **Seniors Champion**



- **Bringing the Code to Life** at HomeEquity Bank



The Seniors Code Explained

In July 2019, the Canadian Bankers Association (CBA) released its Code of Conduct for the Delivery of Banking Services to Seniors, known as the Seniors Code, or the Code. As a member bank, HomeEquity Bank was quick to adopt the Seniors Code.

Codes of conduct like the Seniors Code are non-legislated commitments that CBA member banks make to the public. Compliance with the Seniors Code among CBA members is overseen by The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC).

The Seniors Code focuses on seven principles intended to guide banks in the delivery of banking products and services to Canada's seniors, classified as those over 60, including the application of relevant accessibility standards.

Under the Seniors Code, each CBA member bank is required to designate a representative from management to promote the interests of seniors. HomeEquity Bank selected **Yvonne Ziomecki-Fisher, our Executive Vice President, Marketing and Sales**, to assume the role of Seniors Champion, which she has held since the Code's introduction. Yvonne continues to provide passionate leadership in upholding the Seniors Code and promoting awareness of issues impacting older Canadians.

In 2022, Yvonne was instrumental in engaging with subject matter experts and organizations representing this age group in our culture and everyday lives, including appearing on the Marilyn Denis Show to discuss Canadians' desire to age in place. She is eager to continue this work both within and outside HomeEquity Bank as Seniors Champion, especially given the uncertain financial future ahead for 2023.

Seven Principles of the Seniors Code

HomeEquity Bank is committed to abiding by the 7 principles set out in the Code. Banks will:

01

Establish and implement appropriate policies, procedures, and processes to support the Code

02

Communicate effectively with seniors

03

Provide appropriate training to our employees and representatives who serve seniors

04

Make appropriate resources available to customer-facing employees and representatives to help them better understand matters relevant to seniors' banking needs

05

Endeavour to mitigate potential financial harm to seniors

06

Take into account market demographics and the needs of older Canadians when proceeding with branch closures

07

Publicly disclose the steps they have taken to support the principles set out in the Code

A Word From Our **Seniors Champion**

” *Being customer-centric means listening and understanding.*

“Our passionate team continues to bring deep expertise and knowledge to every opportunity to uplift, educate, and advocate for Canadians 55 and over. This year set a new bar for what we can achieve for them.

We have spent years building a framework of respect and dignity that guides the actions of our team and the way we operate as an institution, which is why I’m so confident about our ability to realize our customer-centric commitment. It’s a value we have woven into our fabric.

Being customer-centric means listening and understanding. I had many rich conversations in 2022 that reminded me no one person’s retirement will look exactly the same, and everyone deserves to live with dignity and respect. Every insight we gain informs not just how we operate, but also how we position ourselves in the industry and society.

Last May, Pattie Lovett-Reid joined HomeEquity Bank as our first-ever Chief Financial Commentator. The perspective, experience and energy Pattie brings to the role and our initiatives have been inspirational in our efforts to uplift retirement-aged Canadians and uphold the standards of the Seniors Code.

She and the rest of our team consistently helped move the needle by providing an informed and refreshed outlook on retirement that is in line with how this demographic sees themselves. And I know we are just beginning.

Canadians 55 and over are some of the most vibrant and dynamic members of our communities, and advocating for their needs thoughtfully and with integrity is at the heart of my role. For 2023, I’m looking forward to bringing our customer-centric approach to all our communications and advocacy so we can continue to redefine what it means to age in today’s world.”



Our Seniors Champion
Yvonne Ziomecki-Fisher

Executive Vice President,
Marketing & Sales

Bringing the Code to life at HomeEquity Bank

01

Establish and implement appropriate policies, procedures and processes to support the Code

Since day one, HomeEquity Bank has prioritized designing our products and services exclusively for Canadians 55 and over to provide a customer experience that feels personal and tailored to them.

We continue to orient our policies, procedures, and communications to resonate with and reflect the unique needs of this demographic while asking: How could we continue to enhance the products and services we provide to Canadians 55 and over? What could we do to ensure our demographic feels seen and understood by us?

This includes:

- Incorporating the principles of the Seniors Code into the Bank's Regulatory Compliance Management Framework
- Maintaining policies and procedures for adding Power of Attorney (POA) to client accounts
- Creating robust fraud policies to manage and mitigate risk
- Complaint handling process designed to ensure an objective and fair complaint resolution
- An Incident Management Process to report, investigate, and remediate complaints

New in 2022

Our world continues to change. Over the last decade, the way we bank has evolved significantly, as have our collective attitudes towards retirement. In 2022 we saw how quickly people's financial situations can change and the effects of an increasingly global and more uncertain world. We continue to stand tall in supporting our clients across every facet of the organization.

In June 2022, HomeEquity Bank launched a new Complaints Management System and Complaints Resource Centre to ensure consumer complaints are managed in an effective and timely manner. In addition to training sessions that are mandatory annually for customer-facing employees, all team members can access the online learning modules through the online resource centre at any time.

HomeEquity Bank also engages with our customer reviews on Google and Trustpilot to ensure transparency, accountability, and continual improvement to the customer experience.

Bringing the Code to life at HomeEquity Bank

02

Communicate effectively with seniors

Trust is the foundation on which we build every customer relationship. Our customers trust our team to communicate with them clearly and accurately, and we prepare our employees to do so.

- Our **clear language policy** ensures all Bank communications are customer-focused: clear, simple, and honest, while promoting understanding of the Bank's products and services.
- Our mortgage specialists ensure that, where possible, communications such as application documents, annual statements or marketing materials are made available to customers in **large print** or **braille**.
- Our website meets **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines** (WCAG) 2.0 at level AA, and our employees are available to walk customers through online activities should they require assistance.

We continue to enhance our communications to ensure all our customers feel comfortable and confident when banking with us, which informed initiatives for key customer-facing communications in 2022.

More Web Accessibility Improvements

- In 2022, HomeEquity Bank made several website updates to enhance accessibility for customers with impaired vision:
 - ✓ Improved colour-contrasting of website buttons
 - ✓ Added alt tags (or "alt attributes," "alt descriptions") to website image tags to provide a text alternative for website navigation
 - ✓ Updated metadata descriptions to be compliant with Google requirements and improve function for screen-reading devices



Newly Redesigned Annual Statements

Since January 2022, HomeEquity Bank customers have been receiving new, easier-to-read annual statements, redesigned based on their feedback and recommendations, to help ensure our clients fully understand the status of their reverse mortgage.

Our redesign included a simplified summary of mortgage details organized into clear sections: Account Summary, Closing Balance, and Interest Rate Information. We also added a Cover Letter that explains the information covered in the new Annual Statement and a new FAQ section that answers key questions about the statement and interest rates.

Looking Forward: Creating a Customer-Centric Organization

In 2022, we launched our “Customer Experience Vision and Ambition”, as part of our journey to create a truly customer-centric organization.

HomeEquity Bank conducted extensive analysis of partner/client operations and processes across the organization to inform a multi-year strategy that will elevate the experience we offer to customers at every step.

Our Customer Experience Vision: Deliver an easy and timely experience with one voice, one hand.

The initiative includes investment in enhanced training, performance management, communications standards, and access to tools to help simplify processes, build subject-matter expertise and accountability, and create an even better client experience.

Bringing the Code to life at HomeEquity Bank

03

Provide appropriate training to our employees and representatives who serve seniors

New team members have six weeks upon joining to complete one-time and annual training sessions to ensure they are prepared to meet the needs of our customers. Training covers our fraud policies and incident management processes, our clear language policy, protecting client privacy, and our complaint handling procedures.

New team members must also complete mandatory CHIP Hero training to ensure they fully understand the Seniors Code and its principles within 60 days of joining. This training includes:

- ✓ Understanding the Seniors Code principles
- ✓ Our Power of Attorney (POA) process
- ✓ Spotting financial abuse and scams
- ✓ When and how to escalate if financial abuse or scams are suspected
- ✓ Communicating effectively with our 55 and over customer base

Customer-facing employees must retake the CHIP Hero training annually.

Recognizing Elder Abuse: Show Me the Fraud

The amount of phone, email and social media scams targeting Canadians 55 and over has increased significantly since the pandemic. On our website, we provide blog and video resources to provide customers, partners, and employees the information they need to protect themselves and loved ones from fraudsters and scammers.

In 2022, HomeEquity Bank provided an enhanced elder abuse training program, in partnership with Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, for Client Relations and Contact Centre teams.

Facilitated by fraud prevention consultant Laura Proctor, Show Me the Fraud included an extensive overview of the different types of frauds targeting older Canadians and how fraudsters choose targets, to help customer-facing employees keep HomeEquity Bank clients safe.

The session covered: how fraudsters target victims, the impact of COVID-19, top frauds by number of reports and by dollar loss, different types of scams such as investment, romance, and grandparent scams, and how to report fraudsters and scammers.

FP Canada's Financial Planning Week

We go beyond keeping ourselves educated because it's important that any professional who serves this demographic does so with the same understanding and respect.

At FP Canada's Financial Planning Week in November 2022, HomeEquity Bank sponsored educational sessions for financial planners and industry professionals about leveraging home equity and the unique needs of Canadians 55 and over.

04

Make appropriate resources available to customer-facing employees and representatives to help them better understand the banking needs of seniors

We supplement training with additional tailored resources for client-facing employees, on our employee intranet site, which includes:

- ✓ HomeEquity Bank Power of Attorney (POA) process
- ✓ Independent Legal Advice (ILA) process
- ✓ Clear language policy
- ✓ How employees can facilitate client requests for Braille or large-print documents
- ✓ Online training modules for continual reference
- ✓ Complaints Resource Centre to support our complaint-handling activities
- ✓ The Seniors Code

HEB Talks

We encourage our employees to continue enhancing their skills while increasing their understanding of our clients, our business and the global economic landscape that affects our industry.

HEB Talks is an internal speaker series designed to provide education, inspiration, expert advice, and first-person experiences to empower our employees in their roles and lives.

- Bruce Sellery from Credit Canada covered valuable financial literacy habits and skills with "Why Smart People Do Dumb Things with Their Money". These skills include learning how to select the correct financial solution for each person's unique needs, something we try to help our clients do on a daily basis.
- Patricia Lovett-Reid shared her personal experiences in a chat about "The Power of Momentum", highlighting the importance of people making the right choices to help them achieve their potential.
- "The Story of Boomerang", from RBCx Senior CX Strategist Anelynda Mielke-Gupta, which highlights the shared experiences of Canadians 55 and over to combat loneliness.

Bringing the Code to life at HomeEquity Bank

05

Endeavour to mitigate potential financial harm to seniors

As the only bank in Canada dedicated to serving Canadians 55 and over, HomeEquity Bank takes an active role in mitigating potential financial harm to seniors, whether they're banking with us or not.

As part of our commitment to protecting older Canadians from financial harm, HomeEquity Bank actively creates and facilitates resources throughout the year to help educate our clients and the public on important topics related to financial wellbeing.

Financial Literacy & Self-Empowerment

HomeEquity Bank's First Chief Financial Commentator

Financial expert and media personality [Pattie Lovett-Reid joined HomeEquity Bank in May 2022](#) as the Bank's first-ever Chief Financial Commentator. Lovett-Reid lends her perspective and extensive knowledge on demographic trends, real estate, financial planning, budgeting, ageing in place and more to a range of HomeEquity Bank initiatives.

Whether in her financial advice column on the CHIP Reverse Mortgage blog, as a financial expert in the media, or delivering keynote speeches at events like the ZoomerShow 2022, she provides accessible advice and a fresh outlook on "managing your finances while living the retirement you deserve".

Building Financial Resilience with Credit Canada

- **How to Help Canadians Manage Money in Uncertain Times:** Seniors Champion Yvonne Ziomecki-Fisher represented HomeEquity Bank on Credit Canada's Financial Literacy Month panel at the Canadian Club to discuss the realities of Canadians 55 and over, sponsored by HomeEquity Bank.
- **Financial Readiness Kit for Canadians 55 and Better:** A digital toolkit, freely available on Credit Canada's website, to help people gain peace of mind with proactive financial planning, presented by Credit Canada, and sponsored by HomeEquity Bank.

Creating a Library of Online Financial Literacy Resources

HomeEquity Bank continued to build on our catalog of informational and educational materials available to the public on our website and social channels including:

- **“Retire Savvy, Retire Happy – In the Home You Love”** (Apr 13 and Sept 14, 2022): These webinars were originally broadcast live on Apr 13 and Sept 14 and remain free to access any time on our **YouTube channel**.
- **“Should You Choose a Variable or Fixed-Rate Mortgage Right Now”** (July 2022): Guest blog from personal finance writer Michelle Bates.
- **Home Run – The Reverse Mortgage Advantage (2021)**: An easy-to-read guide on financially secure retirement, co-authored by HomeEquity Bank CEO Steve Ranson and Executive Vice President Yvonne Ziomecki-Fisher.
- **Catch the Scam (2020)**: An educational video series on spotting and preventing the most common scams developed in response to the growing financial threats faced by older Canadians.



Managing your finances while living the retirement you deserve.”

– Pattie Lovett-Reid,
HomeEquity Bank's Chief Financial Commentator

Bringing the Code to life at **HomeEquity Bank**

06

Take into account market demographics and the needs of seniors when proceeding with branch closures

This is not applicable to HomeEquity Bank, as we do not have branches.

07

Publicly disclose the steps we have taken to support the principles set out in the Code

In keeping with the Code's **seventh principle** we have documented our progress against our 2022 initiatives and shared in this report, in addition to posting this information in the Seniors Code section of our website.



Other initiatives we've undertaken to uphold, embody and advocate **for the spirit of the Seniors Code**

Now, more than ever, Canadians 55 and over are embracing the many benefits of ageing in place and are looking for ways to enjoy freedom they deserve in retirement. At the same time, ageism and media bias play a role in preventing this demographic from living the retirement they want.

We're committed to using our position to help shift the public narrative about what it means to age in our world while raising awareness about the unique issues that retired or retiring Canadians face, because being secure in retirement doesn't end with financial health.

Celebrating Home Care Heroes for Personal Support Workers Day 2022: HomeEquity Bank created our very own awards to acknowledge the vital work that thousands of Personal Support Workers (PSWs) provide for Canadians who want to age in-place, because access to at-home care is a crucial part of retiring at home.

Accompanying the awards announcement were results from a [new Ipsos survey](#) of Canadians 45 and up about at-home care in Canada that paint a troubling picture:

- ✓ 95 per cent of Canadian adults aged 45 and up want to age in place for as long as possible
- ✓ 12 per cent report having enough room in their budget for in-home care, which can cost between \$150 and \$600 per day
- ✓ 23 per cent say they would sacrifice food and living expenses to afford home support to allow them to age in-place

HomeEquity Bank's Home Care Heroes Award gave Canadians the opportunity to nominate a PSW who has made a positive impact in their life or the life of someone they love to shine a light on the importance of PSWs. Three winners received \$2,500 each to acknowledge their important work and contributions.

Ads that break stereotypes: The cheeky tone of HomeEquity Bank's national advertising campaign continued in 2022 with the spots [Sore Back](#) and [Consultation](#), offering fresh perspectives on retirees while pointing out real pressures to younger generations.

Other initiatives we've undertaken to uphold, embody and advocate **for the spirit of the Seniors Code**

Retiring S*nior Time to retire the word "Senior" this National S*niors Day: Pattie Lovett-Reid teamed up with HomeEquity Bank in the second year of its **National Seniors Day** campaign, an ongoing call to action to disrupt the cultural perception of the word "senior," encouraging Canadians to rethink their use of the term to describe the demographic.

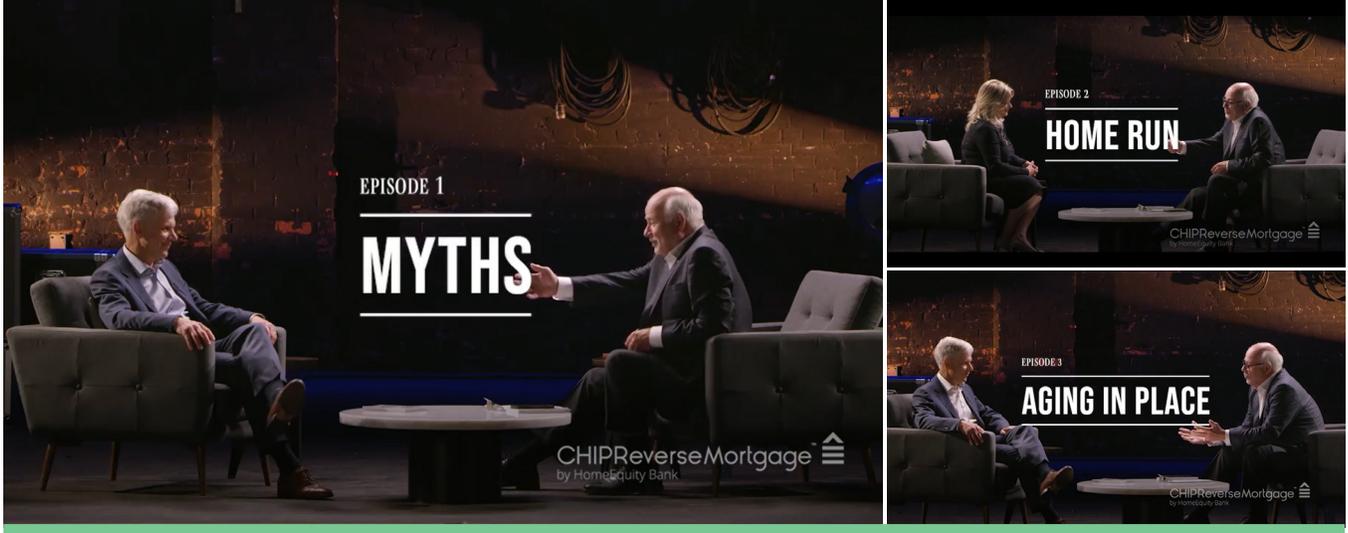
In 2021, a **new study** found Canadians 55 and over do not universally embrace "senior", with only half of respondents (52%) positively associating with it. Based on research conducted in 2019 on **age bias in the media**, HomeEquity Bank made a commitment to stop using the word "senior" in marketing for, or communications with this age group.

Peter Mansbridge in Conversation with HomeEquity Bank

HomeEquity Bank CEO Steven Ranson and Executive Vice President Yvonne Ziomecki-Fisher sat down for a series of conversations with renowned Canadian author and journalist Peter Mansbridge. Across the four-episode web series, they discuss topics impacting retired and retiring Canadians and address common misconceptions regarding the CHIP Reverse Mortgage.

Peter Mansbridge sat down with HomeEquity Bank experts in:

- **Episode 1: (Nov 2, 2021):** Myths with HomeEquity Bank CEO Steven Ranson
 - ✓ Peter Mansbridge and Steven Ranson address some of the common myths around the CHIP Reverse Mortgage - a financial solution with growing popularity amongst Canadian homeowners aged 55 and over.
- **Episode 2 (Dec. 2, 2021):** Home Run with HomeEquity Bank Executive Vice President Yvonne Ziomecki-Fisher
 - ✓ An exploration into the key takeaways from the book, "Home Run: The Reverse Mortgage Advantage", including how to retire securely and comfortably if you're house rich and cash poor, how to talk to family about money, and much more.



- **Episode 3 (Feb. 24, 2022):** Ageing in Place with HomeEquity Bank CEO Steven Ranson
 - ✓ A candid discussion about the challenges of aging in place, the importance of talking to family, and the financial solutions that can help empower Canadians 55 and over stay where they're most comfortable.
- **Episode 4 (May 17, 2022):** Financial Alternates with HomeEquity Bank Executive Vice President Yvonne Ziomecki-Fisher
 - ✓ A deep dive into financial alternatives that can help Canadians 55 and over enjoy a secure and comfortable retirement, including the CHIP Reverse Mortgage.

Living & Ageing in Style: Interior Designer Merle Bettner joined HomeEquity Bank's Vivianne Gauci to discuss redefining retirement aspirations, financing your retirement, and retiring the word 'senior.'

Partnerships

HomeEquity Bank partners with organizations and subject matter experts to take a proactive role in helping to better serve our customers. These include:

- The Royal Canadian Legion
- Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP)
- Booming Encore
- YMCA of Greater Toronto, The Bright Spot
- Homes for Heroes

Final Observations

HomeEquity Bank is incredibly proud of its continuing role in honouring the principles of the Seniors Code.

Canadians 55 and over want to live retirement on their terms. This important and growing demographic can continue to place their trust in HomeEquity Bank to deliver compassionate and expert advice, and a market-leading financial solution that helps them to achieve their goals. We look forward to working closely together with all of our customers in helping them plan for and enjoy a financially secure retirement in the home they love.



HomeEquity Bank 

[@HomeEquityBank.ca](https://www.homeequitybank.ca)