



**WICHITA
FEDERAL**
CREDIT UNION



FAQs for Freedom 1st Website

Why is Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union and Wichita Federal Credit Union merging?

This merger represents a strategic partnership between two financially robust credit unions designed to benefit our members, employees, and the communities we serve. By combining our efforts, we can enhance access to products and services while maintaining the personalized attention our members have come to expect.

What will the merged credit union be known as?

The resulting Credit Union will operate under the "Wichita Federal Credit Union" name and brand. The resulting credit union will reflect both credit unions' shared values and vision—the aligned commitment to offer personalized financial products and services to our members and support our communities.

How Would This Merger Benefit Members?

Members will benefit in several ways from the merger, including:

Increased Member Access

A larger branch footprint would provide members with easier access to services. Through this partnership, Wichita Federal Credit Union has expanded its field of membership to align with the Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union field of membership:

- Persons who live, work, worship, or attend school in and businesses and other legal entities located in Butler, Cowley, Harvey, Sedgwick, or Sumner Counties, Kansas.
- Members of record as of September 21, 2006.
- Spouses of persons who died while within the field of membership of this credit union; employees of this credit union; members of their immediate family or household; and organizations of such persons.

Expanded Products and Services

As a larger organization, we would achieve greater efficiencies, allowing us to offer an even more robust range of services to meet members' needs. More convenient branches and specialized staff would be available, improving your member experience.

More Responsive to Evolving Financial Needs

In a highly competitive financial services industry, combining the best of both institutions would enable us to continue enhancing the member experience, whether using our digital banking services or visiting a branch.

Enhanced Electronic Banking Services

This partnership would enable us to continually assess and improve our technology solutions, making it easier to provide leading-edge digital banking services to our members.

Community Impact

We are committed to making a positive impact on the communities we serve. We'll continue to raise money for local not-for-profit organizations, encourage employees to get involved in our branch communities, offer members financial education options, and participate in local community events. Our combined resources will increase our ability to support local initiatives and foster economic growth throughout Butler, Cowley, Harvey, Sedgwick, and Sumner Counties.

More Branch Locations

We would eventually have four branches to serve members, providing easier in-person access for those who live on McConnell Air Force Base but would like to have access when they are not on base.

What is the timeline for the merger and integration?

We have made significant progress in the merger process; however, a few essential steps remain. While this timeline is subject to change, we anticipate the following schedule if everything continues smoothly:

-July of 2025:

- We received official approval for the merger from the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA).

-September of 2025:

- Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union members participated in a Special Membership Meeting to vote on the proposed merger with Wichita Federal Credit Union, and the majority voted in favor of the merger.

-Remainder of 2025 into 2026:

- We will work to combine the systems and operations of the two organizations.

How will the merger impact Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union and Wichita Federal Credit Union employees?

There will be a combined staff of both credit unions and no job losses. Both organizations will continue to serve members as usual as they prepare to integrate their systems fully by late 2025 or early 2026.

Will the merger impact accounts and services?

For Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union members, there will be no changes to accounts, loans, or online banking access until the Summer of 2026. There will be no changes to accounts, loans, or online banking access for Wichita Federal Credit Union members. While we cannot provide specifics regarding changes at this early stage, we assure you that we will bring forward the best product offerings from both credit unions. Freedom 1st members can expect improved products and digital banking solutions.

Will my accounts continue to be insured?

Your credit union deposits will remain federally insured by the NCUA (National Credit Union Administration), meaning you will have up to \$250,000 in protection for an individual membership. The NCUA also provides additional, separate insurance coverage for deposits held in different ownership categories, such as individual accounts, joint tenancy accounts, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs), and trust accounts.

How will this merger impact my insured funds, especially if I have combined deposits above \$250,000? What if I have Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union and Wichita Federal Credit Union accounts?

Members' accounts will continue to be fully insured by the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund (NCUSIF) up to at least \$250,000 per individual after the merger. While we understand that insurance provides important peace of mind, it's worth noting that no depositor has ever lost a penny on insured accounts at any federally insured credit union in the United States. This is especially true given the exceptional financial strength of both Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union and Wichita Federal Credit Union.

If a member has more than \$250,000 in accounts across both credit unions, there are options for additional share insurance coverage. The National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund (NCUSIF) provides separate additional insurance for various accounts and ownership structures, such as individual accounts, joint accounts, individual retirement accounts (IRAs), and trust accounts. If you have funds exceeding \$250,000 and would like the peace of mind that comes with additional insurance, we encourage you to reach out to a team member as we approach the legal merger date or shortly thereafter. They can help you explore resources to structure your accounts to maximize your share insurance above \$250,000. A great resource for members to consult now is the [NCUA's Share Insurance FAQ](#).

Additionally, there are special rules regarding mergers that benefit members. For instance, member accounts from both Wichita Federal Credit Union and Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union will be separately insured for six months after the legal merger date. In the case of Certificates of Deposit (CDs), they will continue to be separately insured based on the earliest maturity date after the six-month period. In the case of a share certificate that matures within the six-month grace period that is renewed at the same dollar amount, either with or without accrued dividends having been added to the principal amount, and for the same term as the original share certificate, the separate insurance applies to the renewed share certificate until the first maturity date after the six-month period. A share certificate that matures within the six-month grace period that is renewed on any other basis, or that is not renewed, is separately insured only until the end of the six-month grace period. This provides our members ample time to work with a team member to determine the best insurance coverage to meet their needs.

Will the branches remain open?

Yes, all branches will remain open.

When can Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union members start using Wichita Federal Credit Union branches?

The Wichita Federal Credit Union branches will not be available to Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union members until after the data conversion in 2026.

When can Wichita Federal Credit Union members start using the Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union branches?

Wichita Federal Credit Union members will not have access to the branch until after the data conversion in 2026. Additionally, they would need to have access to McConnell Air Force Base to access the branch.

What will happen to the Board of Directors?

The Board of Directors of Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union will voluntarily dissolve. The Board of Directors of Wichita Federal Credit Union will remain.

Who will lead the credit union?

Ronda Posch, current President & CEO of Freedom 1st, plans to retire after 36 years of service. Therefore, Ashley Bautista, President & CEO of Wichita Federal Credit Union, will lead the newly combined organization.

Are both institutions financially strong?

Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union and Wichita Federal Credit Union are financially robust and secure. Both credit unions have capital that exceeds the regulatory standards for "well-capitalized" credit unions and consistently operate under the definition of "safe and sound" practices. Additionally, we maintain a strong liquidity position and a balanced loan-to-deposit ratio. The strong financial health of both institutions has reinforced the Board's and leadership's decision to merge.

Is Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union being acquired by Wichita Federal Credit Union?

No, this is a merger, with both credit unions uniting as one and combining the best of both into a single organization. The discussions and decisions leading to this point have been entirely collaborative, with the unanimous support of both boards of directors (composed of Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union and Wichita Federal Credit Union members) and their respective leadership teams. We are both excited about the potential of what we can achieve together.

About Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union (Freedom 1st) – Freedom 1st was chartered in April 1957 as McConnell AFB FCU. In 1988, the name was changed to Freedom 1st Federal Credit Union. The field of membership includes persons who live, work, worship, or attend school in and businesses and other legal entities located in Butler, Cowley, Harvey, Sedgwick, or Sumner Counties, Kansas.

About Wichita Federal Credit Union (WFCU) – Wichita Municipal Federal Credit Union was chartered in May 1940 to serve the municipal employees of the City of Wichita. In 2006, the name was changed to Wichita Federal Credit Union. The field of membership includes persons who live, work, worship, or attend school in and businesses and other legal entities located in Butler, Cowley, Harvey, Sedgwick, or Sumner Counties, Kansas.

Questions?

If you have additional questions, please send them to questions@wichitafcu.com. News and updates about the merger will be posted on this web page.