THE COMPLETE

Home Buyer Checklist

A clear, practical guide from financial preparation through mortgage closing and move-in.

5

STAGES

From preparation to keys

BEFORE YOU SHOP

Build a complete monthly housing budget.

DURING ESCROW

Expect income, assets, credit, and employment to be checked again.

BEFORE SENDING FUNDS

Independently verify all wiring instructions.

01 BEFORE PREAPPROVAL — FINANCIAL PREPARATION

- [ ] Review all three credit reports and dispute inaccurate information.
- [ ] Pay every account on time and avoid applying for new credit.
- [ ] List recurring monthly debts and confirm minimum payments.
- [ ] Build a complete housing budget with taxes, insurance, HOA dues, utilities, and maintenance.
- [ ] Separate home purchase funds from emergency savings.
- [ ] Keep at least two months of bank statements and document large deposits.

02 BEFORE HOUSE HUNTING — MORTGAGE PREAPPROVAL

- [ ] Gather photo identification and Social Security information.
- [ ] Collect recent pay statements and two years of W-2s when requested.
- [ ] Prepare federal tax returns if self-employed, commissioned, or otherwise required.
- [ ] Provide current bank, retirement, and investment statements.
- [ ] Document gift funds or assistance before money is transferred.
- [ ] Compare estimated payment, cash to close, mortgage insurance, and loan terms.
- [ ] Receive a reviewed preapproval and confirm the expiration date.

03 WHEN SHOPPING
HOME SEARCH AND OFFER

- [ ] Choose a real estate agent who understands your target area.
- [ ] Separate essential needs from preferred features.
- [ ] Research property taxes, insurance, HOA rules, and potential repairs.
- [ ] Review recent comparable sales before deciding on an offer.
- [ ] Understand the earnest money deposit and every contract deadline.
- [ ] Discuss inspection, appraisal, financing, and other contingencies before signing.

04 AFTER OFFER ACCEPTANCE
ESCROW AND LOAN REVIEW

- [ ] Send the signed contract and deposit receipt to your loan team.
- [ ] Schedule an independent home inspection within the contract period.
- [ ] Review seller disclosures and order specialized inspections when appropriate.
- [ ] Select homeowner's insurance and provide the policy information.
- [ ] Respond promptly to underwriting document requests.
- [ ] Review the appraisal and address any loan or property conditions.
- [ ] Keep income, employment, assets, debts, and credit stable.

05 FINAL WEEK
CLOSING AND MOVE-IN

- [ ] Review the Closing Disclosure and compare it with your Loan Estimate.
- [ ] Confirm the final amount needed and independently verify wiring instructions.
- [ ] Complete the final walk-through before signing.
- [ ] Bring approved identification and follow settlement instructions.
- [ ] Wait for confirmation that the loan has funded and ownership has recorded.
- [ ] Secure keys, utilities, insurance records, and important home documents.
- [ ] Create a maintenance plan and rebuild your emergency reserve.

PROTECT YOUR APPROVAL UNTIL CLOSING

KEEP DOING

- [ ] Pay every account on time
- [ ] Keep employment and income steady
- [ ] Save updated financial records
- [ ] Maintain funds needed for closing
- [ ] Ask your loan officer before a major change

AVOID CHANGING

- [ ] Open or close credit accounts
- [ ] Finance a vehicle, furniture, or appliances
- [ ] Change jobs, hours, or pay structure
- [ ] Move money without a clear paper trail
- [ ] Co-sign debt or make unexplained cash deposits

Planning note. This checklist is educational and does not replace instructions or deadlines from your lender, real estate agent, or settlement professional. Programs, timelines, and requirements vary by borrower and property.

START WITH ACCURATE NUMBERS

Build your plan with an experienced loan professional.

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NOTES & QUESTIONS