

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BUYING YOUR DREAM HOME



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INTRODUCTION

So you're ready to buy your dream home! But between the down payment, researching neighborhoods, getting your finances together, and understanding the process as a whole, it can be tough to know where to start. If this sounds like the boat you're in, then this is the guide for you!

In this ultimate guide to buying your dream home you'll learn about the 9 steps of the home buying process, how to prepare to buy a home and more. In addition to this guide you'll also receive:

- **Dream Home Checklist**
- **Home Buying Process Overview**
- **Budget Worksheet**
- **The DO's and Don'ts of the Home Buying Process**

Go ahead and put the checklist and cheat sheets somewhere visible, like your refrigerator, to remind you of the steps that you need to take and to check off each step as you go.

Now let's get started!



STEP #1

Examine Your Financial Situation

Before you get pre-approved for a home loan, you'll want to take a look at your current financial situation, and see where you need to make preparations and changes, if any, to your budget.

1. Examine your monthly income and expenses

To help examine your monthly income and expenses, use the **custom Budget Worksheet** provided in this ultimate guide.

2. Check out your savings account(s) and

3. Take a peek at your credit report



Don't forget that along with the down payment amount, you'll also need to cover the closing costs. Closing costs generally run about 2% - 3% of the purchase price. The seller will sometimes absorb some or all of the closing costs. Discuss with your real estate agent whether it would be a good idea to ask the seller to pay for any, or all of the closing costs. Also, you may qualify for one of our low down payment programs!

An easy, fun and FREE way to peek at your credit report is by logging onto www.creditkarma.com. This website provides your credit score from Transunion and Equifax instantaneously. It's a great resource to track the transactions on your credit report and to help you improve your credit scores.

And don't forget! You're allowed one free credit report per year from each of the three main credit report companies. Go to www.annualcreditreport.com for this free report.

Note: While you're house hunting, and even during the home loan process, do not apply for any credit cards or open up any new credit accounts, until after your home loan has funded and recorded. Doing so could impact your credit score and debt to income ratios negatively, as in your home loan may become in jeopardy of being declined. Please talk to me first before making any changes to your financial situation.

STEP #2 Get Pre-Approved

Getting pre-approved is one of the most crucial steps in the home buying process. Why? Because the pre-approval letter represents a conditional commitment from the lender to provide financing for the purchase of a home. That means your loan officer has already reviewed your basic financial documents, ran your credit, and has given their stamp of approval, expressing confidence that you qualify to buy a home.

Many top real estate agents understand the power of the pre-approval, and will only work with you once you have it. Sellers also understand the power of the pre-approval, it shows you're serious, motivated, and have the financing needed to support your offer. This will give you the edge over other competing offers.



NOTE: It's important to note that a pre-approval is not a guarantee that you will be approved for a mortgage; it's conditional due to a variety of factors including: home appraisal, application documentation provided and more.

List of documents needed to start the pre-approval process:

1. Last 30 days of pay stubs
2. Previous two-years' W-2's or 1099's
3. Previous two-years' income tax returns
4. Last 2 months of asset statements, such as bank, investment and retirement accounts
5. Identification document such as driver's license, social security card, passport, voter registration

Call me today and let's get started on your pre-approval!



STEP #3

Dream-Up Your Dream Home

It's time to imagine your dream home. Is it in the sunny suburbs or is it in a lively downtown area? Are you looking for a single-family residence, a condo, townhome, or are you open to all options? How many bedrooms does it have? Does it need a lot of fixing up? Close to work? Is it in a desirable school district(s)? The more details that you provide to your real estate agent, the easier it will be for them to help you find your dream home.

When looking at homes, inspect them closely, write down details, and take photos! Find out the age of the home and if the electrical, plumbing and heating are up to code. Check out the condition of the roof and ask about the local crime rate. These are just a few of the different things that you'll want to know about the home and its location. You can also go online to the city website to learn more about the neighborhood.

Take along the **Dream Home Checklist** so you can take notes as you view homes.



STEP #4 Finding The Right Real Estate Agent

Finding a real estate agent that knows how to communicate, follow up, and listen is a key ingredient to helping you find the home of your dreams. Before you even start shopping for a home, shop for a real estate agent! The right real estate agent will help you find DIAMONDS in the market. Real estate agents don't charge for their house hunting expertise, typically the seller pays the commission for both of the real estate agents (both buyer and seller side), once the home has been purchased.



The real estate agent's job is to listen to your needs, and help you find what you're looking for in a home. They'll compile a list of properties that match your specific criteria and will provide objective, useful information on each of the properties to help you make an informed decision. When you're ready to make an offer, they will help negotiate price and give insight on market trends so that you can make a reasonable offer. In addition, the agent will arrange inspections, help you understand important paperwork, and stay up to date on pertinent timelines. For most people buying a home doesn't happen every day, but real estate agents handle these transactions all of the time, so take advantage of their knowledge and experience.

If you need help finding a real estate agent, please ask me! I work with the best of the best, and would be able to make some referrals.



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STEP #5 Making an Offer On Your Dream Home

Once you've found the home of your dreams, it's time to make an offer.

There are three potential outcomes when making an offer:

1. **The seller accepts the offer**
2. **The seller counteroffers**
3. **The seller rejects the offer and no deal can be made**

Making an Offer

To ensure that you're making the right offer, one that the seller will likely accept, get the help of your real estate agent to do some research beforehand. If you think there are potentially many homebuyers interested in the property, conduct your research quickly, and get your offer in before it's too late.

Here is a list of items that you should consider researching before making an offer:

1. **Find out why the seller is selling.** This will reveal the seller's situation: do they want to get out quick, or can they afford to wait for the ideal offer? This may be hard to find out as the listing agent will likely not want to disclose this information.
2. **Analyze the market.** If it's a buyer's market, there will be fewer competing offers and a higher likelihood that the seller will be flexible on price and terms. If it's a seller's market, the seller can get choosy with price and conditions and will probably entertain multiple offers.
3. **Ask your real estate agent for a comparable market analysis.** This report compares similar properties in configuration, age and location to the home you want to buy. Use this to gauge the price to offer.
4. **Determine the number of days the home has been on the market.** The longer a home has been on the market, the more flexible a seller may be in terms of price and conditions.

Counteroffers

So let's say that in general the seller finds your offer suitable, but doesn't like the proposed sales price or the requested closing date. You'll receive a written counteroffer explaining the changes the seller would like to see made before they will accept. You can accept, reject, or make another counteroffer. Every time either party makes a counteroffer, the other side is free to accept, reject, or counteroffer once again.

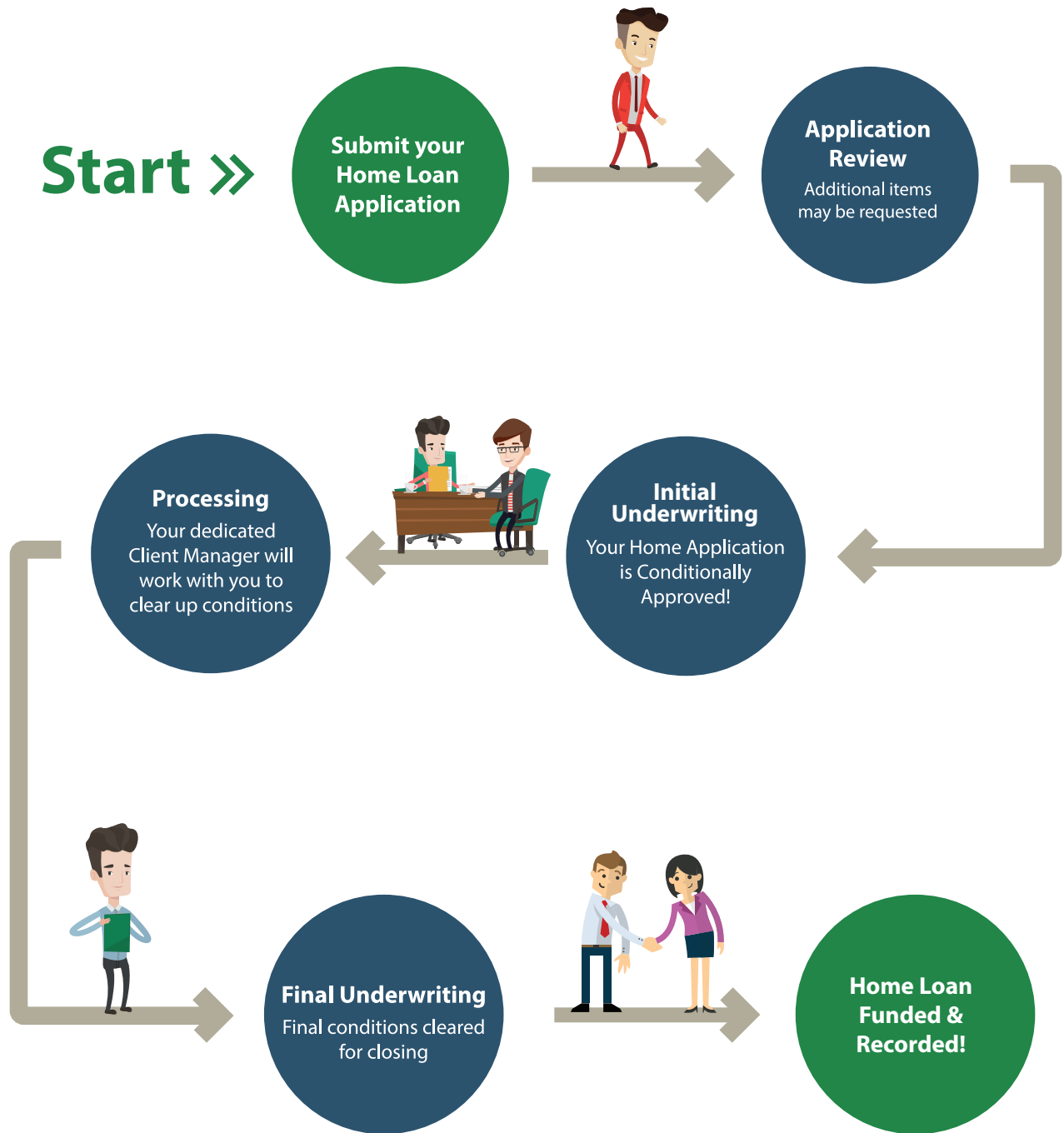
Offer Accepted!

Once one of the parties accepts, the offer becomes a legal contract. At this point your real estate agent will ask that you send escrow your good faith deposit (earnest money deposit) so that escrow can be opened. The amount that you send to escrow is determined in advance by you and your real estate agent before submitting your offer to the seller. Be sure to go over the earnest money deposit stipulations thoroughly with your real estate agent.



STEP #6

The Home Loan Process



STEP #7

Get A Home Inspection

Home inspections are a very important part of the home buying process and are highly recommended. The buyer is in charge of hiring a home inspector to come out and inspect the property. The inspection is not designed to criticize every minor problem or defect in the home, but is intended to report on major damage or serious problems that require repair to the structure of the home: plumbing, electrical, air conditioning and heating, ventilation, roof and foundation of the home. If serious problems are found, the inspector should recommend that a structural engineer or some other professional inspect the property as well.

The seller may be willing to negotiate completion of repairs or a credit for repairs, or you may decide that the home will take too much work and money. A professional inspection will help you make a clear-headed decision.

In choosing a home inspector, consider one that has been certified as a qualified and experienced member by a trade association.



STEP #8

Closing



Once all the conditions of your home loan have been met, your loan documents will be sent to escrow for you to sign. Once signed, you'll be required to wire the remaining "cash to close" amount to escrow. The "cash to close" amount will be any remaining down payment and closing costs left over after your earnest money deposit and any other credits that are applicable have been deducted.

The result of all your hard work and preparation is coming to a close. Take a deep breath because it's almost over. You will now receive an email, call or text saying; Congratulations your loan has funded and recorded. At this moment you can start jumping for joy and celebrating your victory. You are officially a homeowner! Now it is time to contact your real estate agent and make arrangements to get the keys to your new home.

STEP #9

Moving into Your New Home

CONGRATULATIONS! You have closed on your new home and are ready to move! Think about your move as a series of small projects that you can begin while your home is under contract. Your move will progress as your contract and closing progress. That way, when the day comes to physically move your belongings, most of the details will be taken care of. Most first time homebuyers will give a 30-day notice to their current landlord about 1 - 2 weeks prior to the tentative date that their loan will be funding and recording. About this time is when you should feel pretty confident that your loan will fund and record on time.

Keep record of all of your moving expenses as they may be tax deductible. Many expenses, including house hunting trips are tax deductible.

If you qualify, you may deduct the following expenses:

- 1) Tolls and parking fees on the trip
- 2) Up to 30 days' storage of household goods
- 3) Disconnecting and connecting utilities
- 4) Packing and transporting household goods
- 5) Mileage for use of your own car (or gas and expenses)
- 6) Transportation and lodging for yourself & members of your household while traveling to the new home



Not all moves are tax deductible. Consult a tax advisor or CPA to see if you qualify.

Design and Decorating

Another fun part about buying a new home, is all of the new ways that you will get to design and decorate it. Think about your personal style and find inspiration online and in your favorite catalogs. You can look for unique pieces online or in a local flea market. Your new home is truly a blank slate for you to express yourself and create new memories. I would love to help you get to the final step of the home buying process. Please contact me so that we can get you pre-approved to buy your dream home!

The Home Buying Process



STEP #1

Examine your financial situation



STEP #2

Get Pre-approved



STEP #3

Dream-up your dream home



STEP #4

Find the right real estate agent and house hunt



STEP #5

Make an offer on your dream home



STEP #6

Submit your home loan application



STEP #7

Get a home inspection



STEP #8

Sign loan documents & wire funds to escrow



STEP #9

Move in!

The DON'Ts and DOs During the Mortgage Process

DON'T

- **Change your job, job title, salary, compensation structure or employer** – we must be able to verify this information!
- **Make any large purchases** such as a new car, boat, or appliances until after your loan has funded.
- **Make large deposits** into your bank account or change bank accounts.
- **Apply for a new credit card** or give your personal information to someone who may run your credit report – credit inquiries may have an impact on your credit score.
- **Close credit card accounts** - if you close a credit card account, it may appear that your debt ratio has gone up.

DO

- **Create a file and keep copies** of all your important financial documents including check stubs, W-2s, tax returns, bank and investment account statements, rental agreements, etc.
- **Save up and set money aside** for your down payment. Or if you are receiving gifts to go towards your down payment, talk to your mortgage professional about how to handle.
- **Stay current on existing accounts** – one 30-day notice can cost you
- **Continue to use your credit as normal** - changing your pattern may raise a red flag and negatively impact your credit score.
- **Keep your credit card balances 30% below** their limit during the loan process. If you pay down balances, do it across the board.

Dream Home Checklist

IDEAL PRICE		
# OF BEDROOMS (MIN.)		
# OF BATHROOMS (MIN.)		
GARAGE (# OF CARS)		
LOT SIZE		
AGE OF HOUSE		Existing home
		Custom-built house
		Historic/vintage home
SQ. FT OF HOUSE		
STYLE OF HOUSE		Two story
		Ranch
		Split-level
		Traditional
		Contemporary
		Historical
		Cape Cod
		Townhouse/Condo/Co-op
NEIGHBORHOOD REQUIREMENTS		School district
		Access to public transportation
		Proximity to shopping
		Community services
		Recreation center

HOME SPECIFICS	Large front yard
	Large back yard
	Minimal-upkeep landscaping
	Privacy from neighbors
	Deck-patio
	Pool
	Living room
	Formal dining room
	Eat-in kitchen
	Family room/den
	Home Office
	Laundry room
	Basement
	Dishwasher
	Garbage disposal
	Walk-in closets
	Ceiling fans
	Wall-to-wall carpeting
	Hardwood floors
	Tile floors
	Central air-conditioning
	Hot tub
	Miscellaneous

NOTES:

PROPERTY ADDRESS VIEWED:



DREAM HOME BUDGET WORKSHEET

Net Monthly Income (net = after taxes have been deducted)

Salary, Tips, Wages	
Bonuses	
Dividends & Interest	
Any Other Source of Income	
Self Employed Net Income	
Total Monthly Net Income:	

NOTE - Factoring Your Net Monthly Self-Employed Income: If you are self-employed you would take your gross average yearly income and deduct your gross average yearly business expenses and then deduct what you think you will have to pay, as a percentage of this income, in taxes each year to the IRS & State. You would then divide this amount by 12 to come up with your estimated net monthly income amount. For example, if you made a gross yearly amount of \$100,000 and you had \$20,000 a year in business expenses you would subtract \$20,000 from \$100,000 for a total amount of \$80,000 of income (after business expenses have been deducted). If you think that you would have to pay about 28% of taxes on this amount of income you would multiply \$80,000 x 28% which equals \$22,400. Now subtract the \$22,400 from the \$80,000 of income to get your estimated total yearly net income of \$57,600. Divide \$57,600 by 12 to get your estimated monthly net income amount of \$4,800.

Monthly Expenses

Debt Payments	
Credit Card Bills (minimum payment)	
School Loans	
Car Loans or Leases	
Other Installment Loans	
Variable Expenses	
Electricity / Garbage	
Gas (Heat)	
Water	
Gas (Car)	
Groceries	
Clothing (new & dry cleaners)	
Fixed Expenses	
Car Insurance	
Cell/Phone	
Internet	
Cable TV / Satellite	
Netflix	
Insurance (Health, Dental & Eye)	
Child Care	
Alimony / Child Support	
Miscellaneous	
Savings Investing	
Cash Savings	
IRA / 401K	
Brokerage	
Total Monthly Expenses	

Subtract your total monthly expenses from total monthly net income to come up with the amount that you have left over at the end of each month.

_____ - _____ = _____

How much do you have left over? How much of this amount are you prepared to put towards your housing expenses each month? Is there anywhere in your monthly expenses where cutbacks can be made? Can you pay off any credit card debts, car loans or installment loans?



