Your Home Buying Partner
EDUCATION • TOOLS • MORTGAGE GUIDANCE
A Clearer Path to Homeownership

Homebuying Timeline

The full roadmap from early planning to your first month as a homeowner.

Work through the phases in order. Check off each task as you complete it. Not every buyer moves through these at the same pace — use this as a guide, not a deadline.

Phase 1 · Early Planning (12+ months out)

- [ ] Decide why you want to buy and what homeownership means to you
- [ ] Estimate a rough price range and target area
- [ ] Review your credit reports from all three bureaus
- [ ] Start saving toward a down payment and closing costs
- [ ] Begin tracking your monthly income and expenses

Phase 2 · Financial Preparation (6–12 months out)

- [ ] Improve your credit score: pay on time, lower balances, avoid new credit
- [ ] Build a down payment fund in a separate savings account
- [ ] Estimate closing costs and reserves you will need
- [ ] Gather documents: W-2s, tax returns, pay stubs, bank statements, ID
- [ ] Set a realistic monthly housing budget (not just the mortgage payment)

Phase 3 · Pre-Approval (1–3 months out)

- [ ] Compare two to three lenders, not just the first one you find
- [ ] Submit a complete application and get a pre-approval letter
- [ ] Understand your loan type, rate, and estimated closing costs
- [ ] Lock in your target price range based on the pre-approval

Phase 4 · Home Search

- [ ] Choose a buyer's agent who represents your interests
- [ ] Define your must-haves, nice-to-haves, and deal-breakers
- [ ] Tour homes and take notes using the Home Tour Worksheet
- [ ] Research neighborhoods, schools, commute, and resale factors

Phase 5 · Making an Offer

- [ ] Review comparable sales with your agent before deciding on a price
- [ ] Decide your offer terms and your walk-away point in advance
- [ ] Submit a written offer with your pre-approval letter
- [ ] Provide earnest money if your offer is accepted

Phase 6 · Contract to Closing (30–60 days)

- [ ] Schedule inspections during your contingency period
- [ ] Respond to inspection findings (negotiate repairs or credits)
- [ ] Cooperate with appraisal and underwriting requests promptly
- [ ] Secure homeowners insurance and provide it to your lender
- [ ] Review your Closing Disclosure at least three days before closing
- [ ] Complete a final walkthrough of the property

Phase 7 · First 30 Days as a Homeowner

- [ ] Set up utilities, change locks, and forward your mail
- [ ] Keep copies of all closing documents and warranties
- [ ] Build a home maintenance schedule and emergency repair fund
- [ ] Avoid new debt; let your finances settle after closing

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