

# LET'S FIND HOME

YOUR GUIDE TO HOMEOWNERSHIP



# Dear hopeful homeowner—

You're taking the first step towards a huge life milestone: purchasing a home – Congratulations! This guide is your resource for each phase of home buying, including questions to ask yourself, worksheets, and checklists that will make this process as seamless as possible. Let's get started, shall we?!



## STEP ONE

# Considerations for Buyers



### JOB & INCOME

Do you have a stable job and income? Are you staying in this line of work? What are your expenses, savings, and debts?

### CREDIT SCORE

A credit score of 620 is typically required for conventional loans, while FHA loans have more flexibility depending on down payment.

### DOWN PAYMENT

Depending on loan type, your down payment can range from 0%-20% of the purchase price.

### CLOSING COSTS

Closing costs range from 2-6% of the loan amount. Other fees include inspection and appraisal costs.

### LONG TERM PLANNING

Do you plan to stay in this location? Do you foresee major life changes? Consider how your career, family, and lifestyle might evolve over time.

### ONGOING COSTS

As a homeowner, your budget should factor in your monthly mortgage payments, property taxes, homeowner's insurance, & maintenance costs (roughly 1%-2% of purchase price per year).

## STEP TWO

# Choosing Your Agent

Choosing a real estate agent that you'll work alongside to buy your home is a big decision! Your agent should have a deep understanding of your goals, your market, and a track record for working diligently on behalf of their clients. Use the agent interview questions on the next page to find the right agent to represent you. These are a few benefits you can expect from a great agent-



## THE VALUE OF A BUYER'S AGENT

- Exclusive representation
- Network of trustworthy lenders
- Advice on market conditions
- Management of transaction deadlines
- Access to off-market listings
- Terms negotiated in your favor
- Identifying property potential and red flags
- Recommended service providers
- Protection from overpaying
- Decoding legal jargon
- Managing offer submission
- Ensuring smooth closing process

# Agent Questionnaire

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE HELPING CLIENTS LIKE ME?

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WHAT SETS YOU APART FROM OTHER AGENTS?

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DO YOU SPECIALIZE IN ANY PARTICULAR NEIGHBORHOODS OR PROPERTY TYPES?

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HOW DO YOU HELP BUYERS COMPETE IN THIS MARKET?

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WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS?

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WHAT IS YOUR FEE STRUCTURE OR COMPENSATION REQUIREMENTS?

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WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED COMMUNICATION STYLE?

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IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

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## STEP THREE

# Debt to Income Ratio

### WHAT IS DTI?

Your debt-to-income (DTI) ratio helps you assess your financial health and your ability to take on new debts, like a mortgage.

### WHY IS DTI IMPORTANT?

Your DTI ratio helps determine your eligibility for loans and your ability to manage debt.

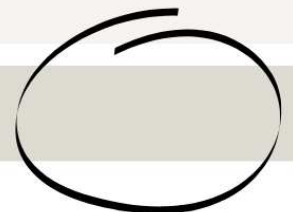
### WHAT RATIO DO I NEED?

Mortgage lenders normally have specific DTI requirements when approving loans and often prefer borrowers to have a DTI ratio below 43% (including the new mortgage payment).

## TIP

A DTI under 36% is great, keep it up!  
A DTI between 37%–43% has room for improvement. A DTI above 45% may pose some challenges. Speak to a lender for advice on qualifying.

RENT	
CREDIT CARD	
CAR + INSURANCE	
PHONE + INTERNET	
UTILITIES	
STUDENT LOANS	
SUBSCRIPTIONS	
FITNESS	
OTHER	
TOTAL EXPENSES	
÷ GROSS INCOME	
DEBT-TO-INCOME %	





## STEP FOUR

# The Mortgage Process



The next step of the home buying process is to understand how much you qualify for by meeting with a local lender and getting a pre-approval letter.

It's important to speak with a few lenders to find the right fit! Grab my lender interview questions on the next page. Plus, I've provided a few trusted lenders below.

Remember that a pre-approval is only valid for 30-90 days, so while you can start reaching out to lenders, you'll want to secure that pre-approval letter closer to when you're ready to buy.

### MY TRUSTED LENDER PARTNERS

*Matt Kelchner*  
*Rocket Mortgage*  
*602.758.3459*

*Eric Steever*  
*Movement Mortgage*  
*602.706.1706*

# Lender Questionnaire

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT TYPE OF LOAN DO YOU RECOMMEND FOR ME AND WHY?

\_\_\_\_\_

DO I QUALIFY FOR DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS?

\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT IS THE INTEREST RATE? WHAT IS THE APR?

\_\_\_\_\_

WILL I PAY MORTGAGE INSURANCE?

\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT WILL MY MONTHLY PAYMENT BE?

\_\_\_\_\_

CAN I LOCK IN AN INTEREST RATE? FOR HOW LONG? WHAT ARE THE FEES?

\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT WILL MY CLOSING COSTS BE?

\_\_\_\_\_

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

\_\_\_\_\_





## STEP FIVE

# Wants vs. Needs



Before we hop into the home search, I advise my clients to create a "Needs" list and a "Wants" list. This will help us to focus on the things that are most important in your future home.

### NEEDS MIGHT LOOK LIKE

- ✓ Enough bedrooms for your family
- ✓ First floor master bedroom
- ✓ Close proximity to work or school
- ✓ Attached two-car garage
- ✓ Yard for children or pets

### NEEDS

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"Needs" are the non-negotiable features. "Wants" are the nice-to-haves, but you can live without or add down the road. Remember you can't change the lot, the location, or the price you paid.

### WANTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE

- ✓ Specific paint or exterior color
- ✓ Fenced-in backyard
- ✓ Specific flooring
- ✓ Kitchen amenities or appliances
- ✓ Walk-in shower or double vanity

### WANTS

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# The Home Search Process



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

Now that you've got your "Wants vs. Needs" list in hand, the fun really begins! I will set you up on an MLS search so you'll receive an email *the minute* a property that fits your criteria hits the market.

## WANT TO DO SOME ONLINE SEARCHING YOURSELF?

- **Use the search filters, but don't go crazy.** Expand your geographic search, and add \$25k - \$50k to your max price.
- **Check Google Street View** if you find something that catches your eye. And if you're local, drive by the property.
- **If a home you like is "pending" or "under contract" don't panic!** Pending contracts fall through occasionally so keep it on your list, especially if it checks all your boxes.
- **Jot down the MLS number & address.** Send this information to your agent, they will call the listing agent(s) to gather pertinent info.

# Home Search Worksheet

WHAT AREA(S) ARE YOU INTERESTED IN?

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WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS/THOSE AREA(S)?

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HOW MANY BEDROOMS, BATHS, SQUARE FOOTAGE?

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DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN? PETS? DO YOU WORK FROM HOME?

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WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE HOME STYLE?

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WHAT ARE THE TOP 5 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN YOUR FUTURE HOME?

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WHAT IS A NON-NEGOTIABLE FEATURE OR ASPECT OF YOUR FUTURE HOME?

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DO YOU PREFER A HOME THAT'S MOVE-IN READY OR ONE YOU CAN RENOVATE?

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ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KEEP IN MIND DURING OUR SEARCH?

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## STEP SEVEN

# Showings

### MY BEST SHOWING TIPS

✓ **Read over your Wants vs. Needs list.** Having this fresh on your mind will help you stay objective and focused.

✓ **Utilize Google Street View.** This is a great way to take a virtual walk around the neighborhood.

✓ **Take pictures and videos.** This will help you to jog your memory later.

✓ **Consider the lot, lot size, and location.** All of these things can't be changed.

✓ **Look past decor & staging.** These things will soon be gone.

✓ **Do an after-dark drive by.** Does the vibe of the neighborhood change at night?

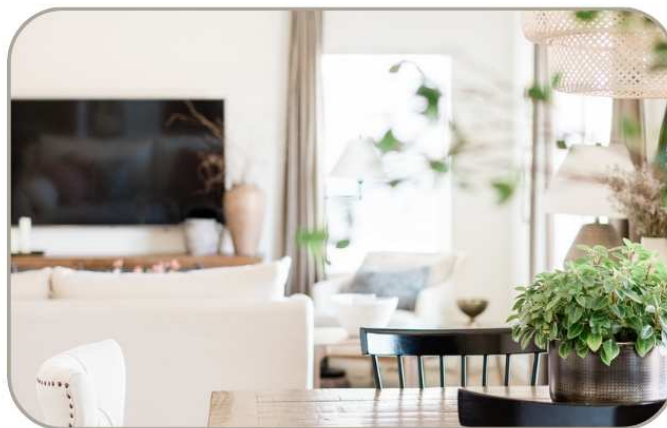
### KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR

✓ **Structural integrity**  
Look for signs of structural integrity. Water damage, cracks in walls or ceilings, sloping floors.

✓ **Noise levels**  
From nearby roads, businesses, airports and railways.

✓ **Roof & water damage**  
Check for leaks near plumbing sources, water stains on the ceiling, or damage to siding, windows, and doors.

✓ **Layout and flow**  
Does the property's layout suit your lifestyle? Would it require renovations? Check room sizes, storage, and flow between rooms.



# Showing Checklist

ADDRESS

PROS

CONS

INITIAL REACTION

YES! MAYBE NO

INTERIOR RATING

EXTERIOR RATING

TOOK PHOTOS & VIDEOS

ADDRESS

PROS

CONS

INITIAL REACTION

YES! MAYBE NO

INTERIOR RATING

EXTERIOR RATING

TOOK PHOTOS & VIDEOS

## STEP EIGHT

# Writing your Offer



So you think you've found "the one" and you're ready to put in an offer. Woohoo!

Let's talk about making an offer that truly stands out. Below are my tried and tested recommendations.

### WRITING A COMPELLING OFFER

**We'll include your pre-approval letter.** This letter shows that you're serious, qualified, and ready to purchase.

**We'll gather information about what the seller is looking for.** Understanding their needs and motivations will be a big part of writing a great offer.

**We'll put your best foot—and price—forward.** In a competitive market, you may only get one shot, so we will make it count! We'll use comps and trends as a guide.

**We'll propose to close quickly.** Offering a shorter closing timeline will signal to the seller we have a serious offer and we're ready to move fast.



### Purchase price

This is the amount you're offering to pay for the home. It's often negotiable, especially if there are multiple offers, the home needs repairs, or if the home has been on the market for a while.

### Earnest money deposit

This is a good faith deposit showing your serious intent to buy. It's typically 1-3% of the purchase price and is held in escrow. If the sale goes through, the deposit is applied to your down payment or closing costs. If you back out without a valid contingency, you might forfeit the deposit.

### Inspection period

Most buyers include a home inspection contingency, allowing time (usually 7-10 days) to hire an inspector to check the home's condition. If major issues are found, we can negotiate repairs or back out of the deal.

### Contingencies

A contingency is a condition that must be met before a buyer and seller can finalize the purchase of a home.

A financing contingency protects you in the case that you are not able to secure a mortgage. If your loan falls through, you can back out without penalty. An appraisal contingency ensures the home appraises for at least the amount of your offer. If it doesn't, you can renegotiate or walk away. An inspection contingency allows you to renegotiate or cancel the offer if the home inspection reveals significant issues.

### Closing costs

These include lender fees, title insurance, taxes, and other costs associated with finalizing the sale. Closing costs can range from 2-5% of the purchase price.

### Closing date

This is the date you and the seller agree to finalize the transaction and transfer ownership. This is usually 30-45 days from when the offer is accepted but can vary based on financing or other factors.

# Inspections & Insurance



## WHAT'S A HOME INSPECTION?

The inspection will uncover any issues in the home that would have otherwise been unknown. You will receive a written report of the inspection. I recommend that you are present for the inspection, so that you may ask any questions.

## WHAT IS THE INSPECTION PERIOD?

Typically, inspection periods can last anywhere from 7 to 30 days. During this time, the buyer has the right to hire a professional to inspect the condition of the home.

## THE INSPECTION REVEALED ISSUES...

If the inspection reveals any issues, the buyer may ask the seller to cover the costs of repairs or ask for a seller credit. The buyer has the right to back out and get their escrow deposit back.

## DO I REALLY NEED AN INSPECTION?

The home may appear to be in perfect shape, but some of the costliest problems are difficult to spot: leaks, termite damage, foundation issues, poor ventilation, faulty wiring, and leaking appliances.

## WHEN SHOULD I SCHEDULE IT?

Schedule all inspections immediately, so if we need to negotiate any repairs we can before the inspection period ends.

## WHAT ABOUT HOME INSURANCE?

Once you have a signed contract, start looking for insurance providers immediately. Your lender will typically require evidence of insurance coverage before they approve your mortgage. Gather multiple quotes!

# Inspections Cheat Sheet

TYPE	ABOUT	AVERAGE COST
STANDARD	The standard home inspection will cover the condition of the home's heating system, central air conditioning system, interior plumbing and electrical systems, roof, attic and visible insulation, walls, ceilings, floors, windows and doors, foundation, basement and structural components.	<b>\$400</b>
ROOF	The roof inspection assesses the condition, age, and integrity of the roof, checking for damage, leaks, and overall durability. This inspection is often required by homeowners' insurance, especially for older homes, to ensure the roof is in good condition and not a liability.	<b>No Cost</b>
WDO	The WDO Inspection is the Wood-Destroying Organism Inspection. Ask your lender if your loan requires any certain inspections such as a WDO inspection.	<b>\$65</b>

## Trusted Inspection Companies

### APEX HOME INSPECTIONS

Jamie Kiefer  
520.460.6373  
[www.apexhomeinspection.org](http://www.apexhomeinspection.org)

### B&M ROOFING

520.460.5332  
[www.bandmroofing.com](http://www.bandmroofing.com)

### SHERMINATOR TERMITE & PEST CONTROL

520.639.6555  
[www.sherminatorpest.com](http://www.sherminatorpest.com)





# We're Under Contract!

Your offer has been accepted — cue the confetti! And while it will be a few more days until you can move in, you're well on your way to closing the deal on your new home. Here's a quick rundown on what happens once your new home is "under contract."

01

## Provide Escrow Deposit

This deposit shows your commitment to buying the property. It is typically held in an escrow account until the closing.

02

## Schedule Inspection

Depending on the results, your agent may negotiate with the seller for repairs or credits. Schedule this immediately!

03

## Finalize Loan Application

Submit your formal mortgage application.

04

## Secure Insurance

You'll need homeowners insurance in place before closing. Your lender may require proof to finalize the loan.

05

## Order Appraisal

Your lender will initiate this to ensure the property's value matches the sale price. If it comes in lower, we'll go back to negotiations!

06

## Title Search

A title company will conduct a title search to ensure there are no liens against the property. You'll also purchase title insurance to protect against unforeseen title problems.

07

## Final Walkthrough

Before the closing date, you'll do a final walk-through of the property to ensure it's in the agreed-upon condition.

08

## Closing Day

Sign documents, pay remaining closing costs and down payment. The title is transferred to you and the keys are exchanged!

# Under Contract Checklist

## Send Escrow Deposit

Escrow deposit: \_\_\_\_\_

Escrow recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

## Schedule Inspections

Date to renegotiate or cancel contract  
due to issues revealed by inspections:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Finalize Loan Application

Start your loan application within 5 days from  
the executed contract date.

During this time it is VERY IMPORTANT not to change jobs,  
make major purchases, or open new credit cards.

## Obtain Home Insurance

Contact insurance companies for quotes before  
the end of the inspection period.

# Important Details

EXECUTED CONTRACT DATE

PURCHASE PRICE

ESCROW DEPOSIT

ESCROW DEPOSIT DUE

LOAN APPLICATION DUE

INSPECTION PERIOD ENDS

ESTIMATED CLOSING DAY



# Closing Time!

We've completed all the pre-closing steps. High five! Here's a quick rundown on what you can expect from the closing process and closing day.

## Loan Approval

After the appraisal and inspection, your lender will finalize your loan. You'll hear the magic words "Clear to close!"

## Review Closing Disclosure

You will receive a closing disclosure from your lender at least three days before closing. It outlines the final terms of your loan, including the interest rate, loan amount, and closing costs. Review it carefully - this will tell you the funds to bring on closing day.

## Arrange Utilities Transfer

Contact utility providers to set up services like electricity, gas, water, and internet for the day of closing or move-in day. *I have a service that can help!*

## Obtain Certified Funds

You'll need to bring certified funds (cashier's check or wire transfer) for your down payment and closing costs. Your closing agent will provide you with the exact amount a few days before closing.





## Down Payment Costs

This is the amount you are contributing toward the purchase price. The exact amount depends on your loan type (often between 3% and 20%).

## Closing Costs

THESE ARE FEES ASSOCIATED WITH OBTAINING YOUR MORTGAGE

- **Loan Origination Fees:** Charged by the lender for processing your mortgage application – typically 0.5%–1% of the loan amount.
- **Discount Points:** These are optional fees paid to lower your interest rate.
- **Appraisal Fee:** This typically costs around \$300–\$500.
- **Credit Report Fee:** The lender charges this for checking your credit, typically \$25–\$50.
- **Underwriting Fee:** Lender charges for evaluating your loan, typically \$400–\$1,000.
- **Title Search Fee:** The cost of a title company researching the property's history to ensure there are no liens or claims – usually \$150–\$400.
- **Title Insurance:** Protects you and your lender against future claims on the property's title – usually 0.5%–1% of the purchase price.
- **Escrow/Settlement Fee:** Paid to the title company or attorney handling the closing – usually \$500–\$1,000.

## Prepays

THESE ARE UPFRONT PAYMENTS FOR FUTURE EXPENSES RELATED TO YOUR PROPERTY

- **Homeowner's Insurance Premium:** You typically pay the first year's premium upfront
- **Property Taxes:** Lenders may require 2–3 months of property taxes to be pre-paid into an escrow account. This ensures funds are available when the tax bill is due.
- **Prepaid Interest:** Interest that accrues on your loan from the closing date until the first mortgage payment, based on the closing date and loan terms.
- **Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI):** If your down payment is less than 20%, you may need to pay upfront mortgage insurance premiums.

## Total Expected Cash to Bring

- On average, closing costs range from **2%–5% of the purchase price of the home**. This includes loan costs, pre-pays, and title fees.
- You will receive a **closing disclosure** from your lender at least three days before closing, detailing the exact amount of cash you need to bring.
- Use a certified check or wire transfer for the funds, as personal checks are typically not accepted at closing.

## ABOUT ME

# What You Can Expect Working With Me

### *I'm Curious*

I want to have a clear understanding of your goals, who you are, and what your home means to you.

### *I'm Committed*

I bring my A-game to every transaction, and I'm committed to achieving the best outcomes for my clients.

### *I'm Proactive*

I'm always one step ahead, anticipating potential roadblocks and finding creative solutions to overcome them.

### *I'm Personal*

I believe in building relationships on mutual respect (and some humor!). I've found this is what leads to the best outcomes!

I LOVE helping first time buyers navigate the journey of becoming homeowners. It would be an honor to represent you in this huge life milestone. Shoot me a message if you have any questions - I'm here to be a resource to you!

A photograph of Meagan Estees, a blonde woman with long hair, wearing a black blazer. She is standing in a modern kitchen with white cabinets and a stainless steel range hood. She is holding a black smartphone to her ear with her right hand and has her left hand on a silver laptop that is open on a granite countertop. She is smiling at the camera.

## Meagan Estees

REALTOR®

520.980.9880

[Meagan@esteeshomesaz.com](mailto:Meagan@esteeshomesaz.com)

[EsteesHomesAz.com](http://EsteesHomesAz.com)

Follow along on Instagram!



# What Clients Are Saying



Where do I begin? Meagan is a genuine human. I can tell authentic people when I see them and Meg was born for this line of work. Professional on every level. We were moving down from Washington state and she was there every step and things were sooo tight with our timeline....she pulled it through and deserves 6 stars. I offer a sincere recommendation for an agent who has obviously put in the work. Thank you Meagan!!!

— **Joe Cox**



Meg is exceptional! Highly recommended. As a single working mother my available times to see homes was typically outside business hours and she never made me feel bad for having her working late evenings or weekends. We looked at tons of homes and my particular criteria never bothered her. She truly wanted me to have the perfect home and did not shy away when negotiating my terms. Very grateful to have worked with her!

— **Casey Young**



Meagan was very nice and friendly from the beginning. Never felt pressured, nor rushed into making any decisions. She was always on time, and working with her was a pleasure! Always went out of her way to help. Thank you for everything!

— **Dianna Londono**



Meagan Estees  
REALTOR  
YOUR AT HOME GIRL



# What Clients Are Saying



Meagan did an excellent job of selling our house during a challenging time in the market. After a horrible experience with a different realtor, she was extremely professional. Her communication is top notch, and she had a great marketing plan that produced multiple offers. We highly recommend her!

— **Annie Fischer**



Meagan helped me purchase an investment property. She was great throughout the transaction. The best part is she answer calls unlike other realtors I have worked with in the past. Love doing business with her.

— **S. Qasim**



We have used Meghan for several transactions from selling our house and buying land. She was so helpful and always there to answer any questions. She's definitely my #1 realtor!!! I would highly recommend her for all your realtor needs!!

— **Kelly Jones**



Meagan Estees  
REALTOR  
YOUR AT HOME GIRL



# The Moving checklist



Prep in Advance (8-6 weeks before)

## Logistics:

- ☐ Set a moving budget
- ☐ Choose a moving company
- ☐ Book movers and truck (if needed)
- ☐ Schedule moving day off work (and for helpers, if applicable)

## Purge and Pack:

- ☐ Declutter ruthlessly (donate, or sell)
- ☐ Gather packing supplies (boxes, tape, labels)
- ☐ Research packing hacks for efficiency
- ☐ Start packing non-essentials in labeled boxes (room by room)

## New Place:

- ☐ Research your new neighborhood
- ☐ Measure doorways and furniture for fit at the new place
- ☐ Schedule utility and internet transfer/installation for new home

Notify of Upcoming Move  
(6-4 weeks before)

## Change of Address:

- ☐ Submit Change of Address (USPS)

## Update Your Contact Information:

- ☐ Work & School
- ☐ Family & Friends

## Utilities & Home Services:

- ☐ Electricity
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Gas
- ☐ Internet, Phone & Cable
- ☐ Garbage removal
- ☐ Lawn service
- ☐ Move-out cleaning

## Finances:

- ☐ Bank & credit unions
- ☐ Credit cards
- ☐ Loan agencies

## Subscriptions & Memberships

- ☐ Gym, clubs & organizations
- ☐ Streaming services
- ☐ Online shopping accounts

## Insurances & Service Providers

- ☐ Homeowner & renters insurance
- ☐ Car insurance
- ☐ Health & dental insurance
- ☐ Life insurance
- ☐ Doctors, Dentists & Veterinarians
- ☐ Accountants
- ☐ Attorneys

## Government Agencies:

- ☐ Update your address with DMV
- ☐ Voter registration
- ☐ Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- ☐ Social Security Administration



# The Moving checklist



## Pack an Overnight Bag (Day Before)

Essentials for your first night

- ☐ Pajamas & change of clothes
- ☐ Toiletries & medications
- ☐ Phone charger & power bank
- ☐ Snacks & drinks
- ☐ Paper towels & toilet paper

## Label an Open First Box (Day Before)

Essential unpacking items

- ☐ Trash bags & cleaning supplies
- ☐ Tools (screwdriver, multi-tool)
- ☐ Flashlight & headlamp
- ☐ Bottled water & snacks
- ☐ Medications
- ☐ Dishes, utensils & paper plates
- ☐ Bedding (sheets, blanket, pillow)

## Notes:

- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....

## Moving Day

Preparation:

- ☐ Have cash on hand for moving crew tips and unexpected costs
- ☐ Clear walkways and driveways for movers' access
- ☐ Disassemble furniture (if not done by movers)

Oversee the Move:

- ☐ Double-check inventory list
- ☐ Direct movers where to place boxes in your new home

Settling In:

- ☐ Unpack your labeled "Open First" box and overnight bag
- ☐ Set up the kitchen and bedrooms first for immediate comfort
- ☐ Make sure all utilities are turned on



BROKERED BY  
**exp**  
REALTY

