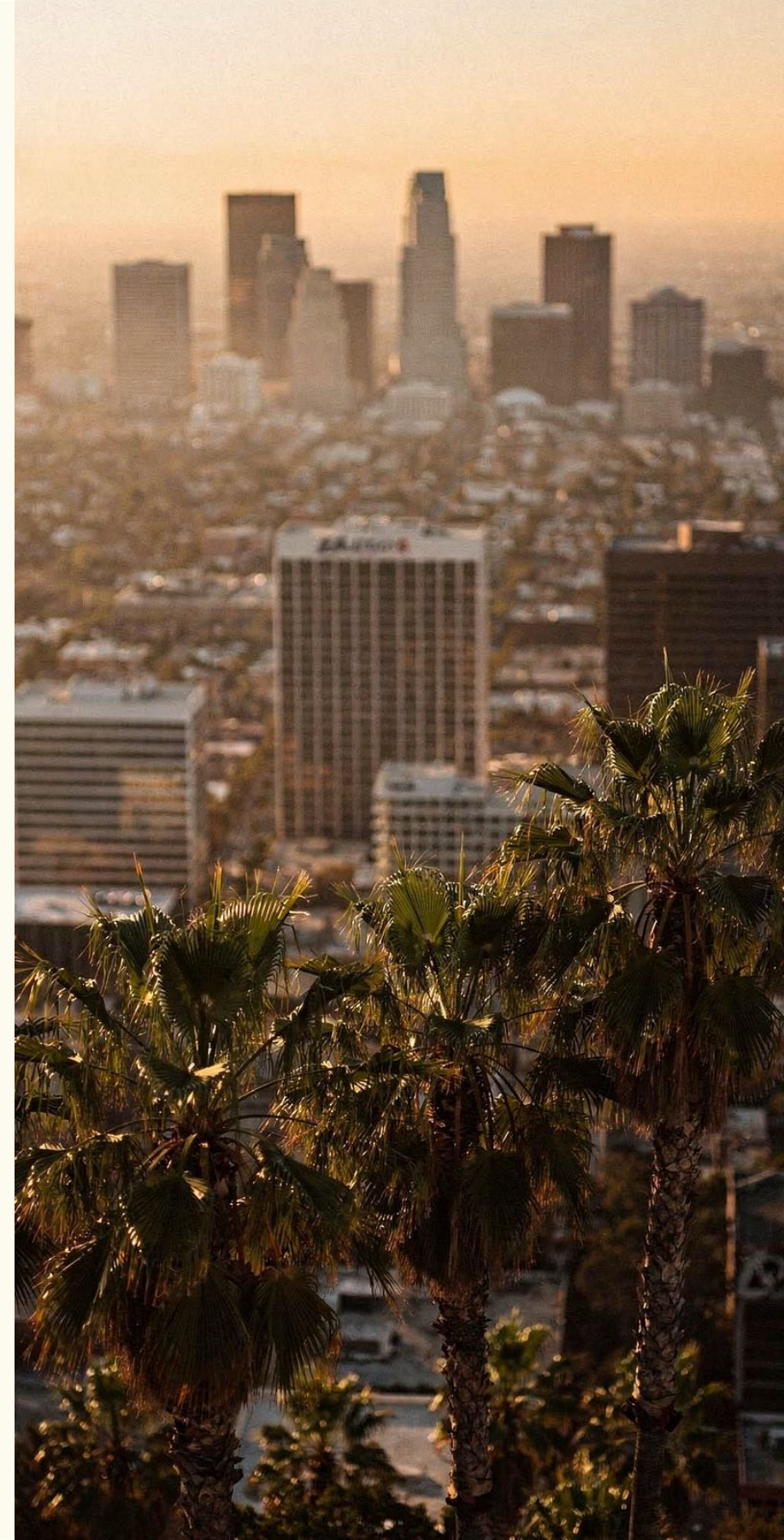




The Los Angeles Home Buyer's Guide

Your Complete Roadmap to Finding, Buying & Owning Your Dream Home in LA

Created exclusively for future Los Angeles homeowners



The Los Angeles Home Buyer's Guide

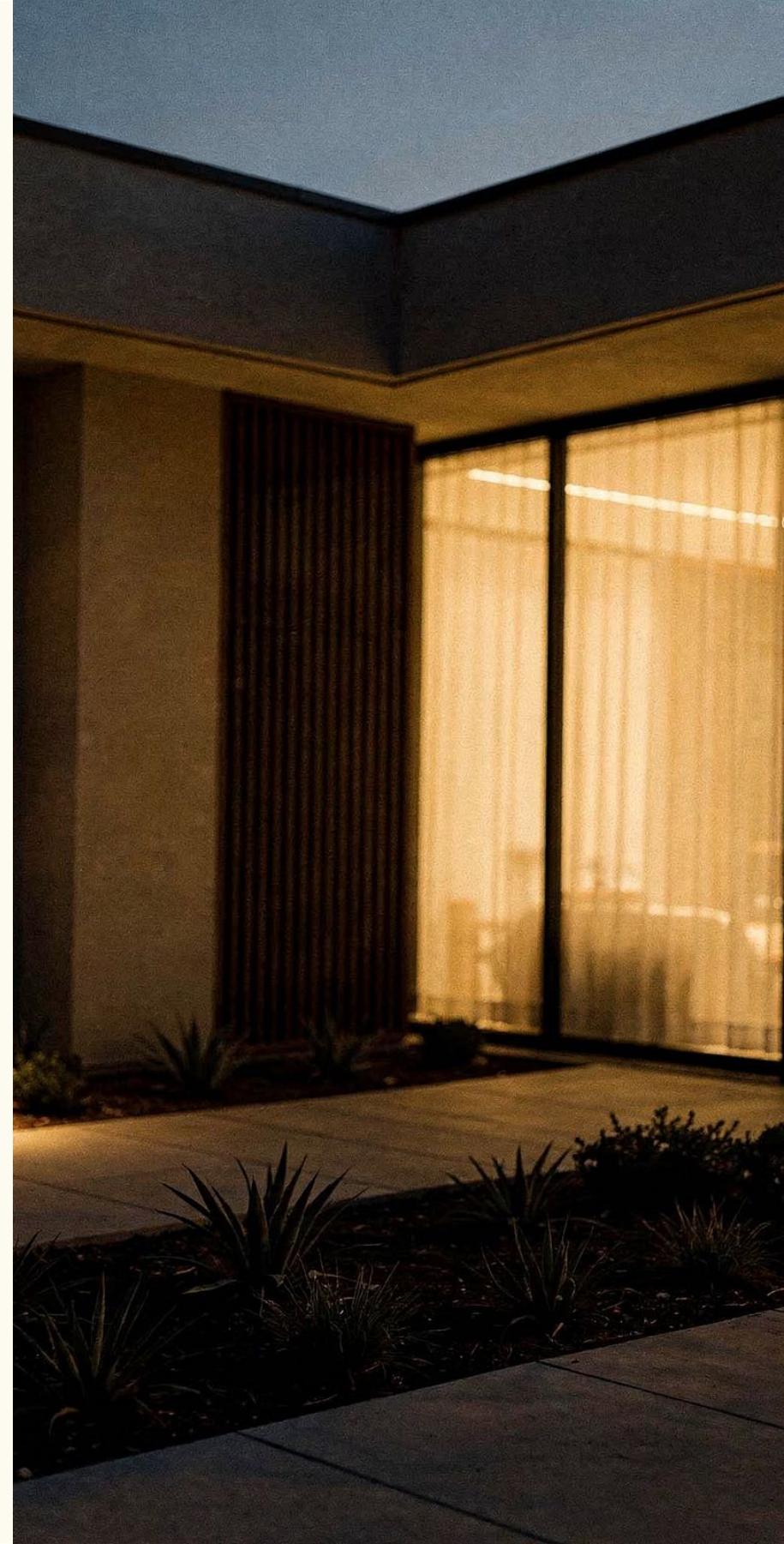
Everything You Need to Know Before You Buy in the City of Angels

A Step-by-Step Resource for First-Time & Move-Up Buyers

Buying a home in Los Angeles is one of the most exciting — and most significant — financial decisions you'll ever make. This guide was created to make sure you walk into that process informed, empowered, and ready to win.

📍 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

🏠 RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE RESOURCE



Welcome &... Why LA?

Why Los Angeles?

Los Angeles isn't just a city — it's a lifestyle. From sun-soaked Malibu beaches to the tree-lined streets of Pasadena, the creative energy of Silver Lake to the luxury enclaves of Beverly Hills — LA offers a neighborhood for every dream.



Climate

284+ days of sunshine per year. Outdoor living is a year-round reality.



Economy

One of the world's largest economies — tech, entertainment, healthcare, logistics & fashion.



Diversity

The most culturally diverse major city in the United States.



Education

World-class schools, plus UCLA, USC, and Caltech.



Appreciation

LA real estate has historically appreciated strongly — a powerful wealth-building tool.



Lifestyle

Beaches, hiking, dining, arts, sports, and entertainment — all in your backyard.

 **Bottom line:** Buying a home in LA isn't just a purchase — it's an investment in one of the greatest cities on Earth.

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Step 1

Know Your Why & Set Your Goals

Before you look at a single listing, get crystal clear on your *why*.

Ask Yourself

- Why buy now instead of continuing to rent?
- Long-term residency, investment, or both?
- What's my ideal lifestyle — walkable, suburb, or beachside?
- How long do I plan to stay?
- What are my non-negotiables vs. nice-to-haves?

Lifestyle Questions

- 🏠 Children & school districts?
- 🚗 How important is commute time?
- 🐕 Pets? (Some HOAs restrict pets)
- 💻 Work from home — dedicated office?
- 🌳 Outdoor space, pool, or large yard?

✅ **Pro Tip:** Write down your Top 5 Must-Haves and Top 3 Deal-Breakers before you ever talk to an agent. This saves you hours of searching.

Step 2

Understand Your Finances

In Los Angeles, financial preparation is everything. Homes here regularly receive multiple offers — often over asking. Buyers who show up prepared win.

Credit Score

- 740+ = Best mortgage rates available
- 700–739 = Good rates, slight adjustments
- 620–699 = Conventional, higher rates
- Below 620 = FHA or specialty loan

Debt-to-Income Ratio (DTI)

Lenders want total monthly debts (including mortgage) no more than 43–45% of gross income. Lower DTI = stronger profile.

Down Payment by Loan Type

Conventional	3–5%
FHA Loan	3.5%
VA Loan (Veterans)	0%
Jumbo (Luxury)	10–20%
All-Cash	100%

 **Closing Costs:** Typically 2–3% of purchase price. On a \$900,000 home, expect \$18,000–\$27,000. **Reserves:** Lenders want 2–6 months of payments in savings after down payment.

 **LA Reality Check:** Median home price is typically \$800,000–\$1.2M+. Precise financial planning gives you a real advantage in a competitive market.

Step 3

Get Pre-Approved for a Mortgage

In LA, a **pre-approval letter is not optional** — it's your ticket to having your offer considered at all. Sellers won't take you seriously without one.

PRE-QUALIFICATION



CREDIT CHECK
SOFT PULL



INCOME VERIFICATION
SELF-REPORTED



STRENGTH
WEAK



SELLER CONFIDENCE
LOW

PRE-APPROVAL



HARD PULL



VERIFIED WITH DOCUMENTS



STRONG



HIGH

Always get a full pre-approval — not just a pre-qual.

Step 3 — Continued

Documents & Mortgage Types

Documents You'll Need

-  Last 2 years of tax returns (W-2s/1099s)
-  Last 2–3 months of bank statements
-  Last 30 days of pay stubs
-  Photo ID & Social Security number
-  Self-employed: business returns & P&L

Types of Mortgages in LA

- **Conventional** — Standard conforming loan
- **FHA** — Lower down, easier credit, requires MI
- **VA** — Zero down for eligible military
- **Jumbo** — Above ~\$1.1M conforming limit
- **ARM** — Lower initial rate, adjusts later
- **Interest-Only** — Common in high-cost markets

 **Pro Tip:** Shop 2–3 lenders. Even a 0.25% difference on a \$900,000 loan can save you \$40,000+ over the life of the loan.

Choose Your Los Angeles Neighborhood

Los Angeles is not one city — it's dozens of unique communities stitched together. Choosing the right neighborhood is as important as choosing the right home.

Beach Cities & Coastal

Santa Monica's walkability, Venice's bohemian "Silicon Beach," family-friendly Manhattan Beach, and affordable Hermosa & Redondo.

Westside

Ultra-luxury Bel Air, Brentwood & Pacific Palisades, arts-driven Culver City, and affordable Mar Vista / Palms.

Central LA

Hipster-chic Silver Lake & Echo Park, historic Los Feliz near Griffith Park, and stately Hancock Park.

Beach Cities & Coastal

Santa Monica's walkability, Venice's bohemian "Silicon Beach," family-friendly Manhattan Beach, and beautiful Hermosa & Redondo Beach.

Westside

Ultra-luxury Bel Air, Brentwood & Pacific Palisades, arts-driven Culver City, and affordable Mar Vista / Palms.

Central LA

Hipster-chic Silver Lake & Echo Park, historic Los Feliz near Griffith Park, and stately Hancock Park.

Step 4 — Continued

More LA Communities

San Fernando Valley

Sherman Oaks & Studio City offer great schools and suburban feel. Woodland Hills & Calabasas have larger lots and gated communities. Burbank is an entertainment hub.

SGV & Eastside

Pasadena's historic architecture, museums, and Rose Bowl. Alhambra & San Gabriel offer diverse communities, excellent food, and affordable entry points.

South Bay

El Segundo & Hawthorne feature growing tech corridors, more affordable pricing, and strong appreciation.

✅ **Pro Tip:** Visit neighborhoods at different times and on weekends before deciding. Coffee shop traffic at 8am on a Tuesday feels very different than a Saturday night.



Step 5

Partner with the Right Agent

This is the single most important decision you'll make in the homebuying process.



Highly Competitive

Many homes receive 5–15+ offers.



Fast-Moving

Good homes go into escrow in 3–7 days.



Complex

LA-specific rules and local knowledge matter enormously.



High-Stakes

A 7 or 8-figure decision in most cases.

Step 5 — Continued

What to Look For in an Agent

The Right Agent Will

- Know which neighborhoods fit your goals and budget
- Have relationships with listing agents — intel before Zillow
- Write winning offers without overpaying
- Negotiate repairs, credits, and closing costs
- Navigate disclosures and hazard zones
- Be a calm, expert voice when it gets stressful

Look For

-  Hyperspecific neighborhood expertise
-  Proven buyer representation track record
-  Strong lender relationships
-  Same-day communication, every day
-  Competitive offer experience
-  Transparent — never inflates expectations

 **Remember:** In California, the seller typically pays both agents' commissions. Working with a great buyer's agent costs you nothing — and saves you enormously.



Step 6

The Home Search

Now the exciting part begins. Here's how homes are found in LA.

MLS (Multiple Listing Service)

The primary database where agents list homes. Your agent sets up real-time alerts the moment a matching home hits the market.

Off-Market / Pocket Listings

Many LA luxury and high-demand homes sell *before* they hit Zillow or Redfin. Agent relationships are how buyers access these.

Public Platforms

Zillow, Redfin, and Realtor.com are great for browsing — but often 24–72 hours behind the MLS. Your agent's access is always more current.

Step 6 — Continued

What to Consider on Every Tour

- Location & Surroundings

Traffic patterns, freeway proximity, noise, neighbors.

- Natural Light

Which direction does the home face? North-facing can be darker.

- Condition

Move-in ready, cosmetically outdated, or a major fixer?

- Layout & Flow

Can furniture fit? Is the floor plan functional?

- Lot & Parking

Size, slope, privacy. Garage, driveway, or street parking matters a lot in LA.

- HOA

Does one exist? What are the monthly dues and rules?

⚠️ **LA-Specific Watch-Outs:** Hillside homes may have fire zone restrictions. Some areas are in flood zones. Older homes may have unpermitted additions. Your agent helps spot these red flags early.



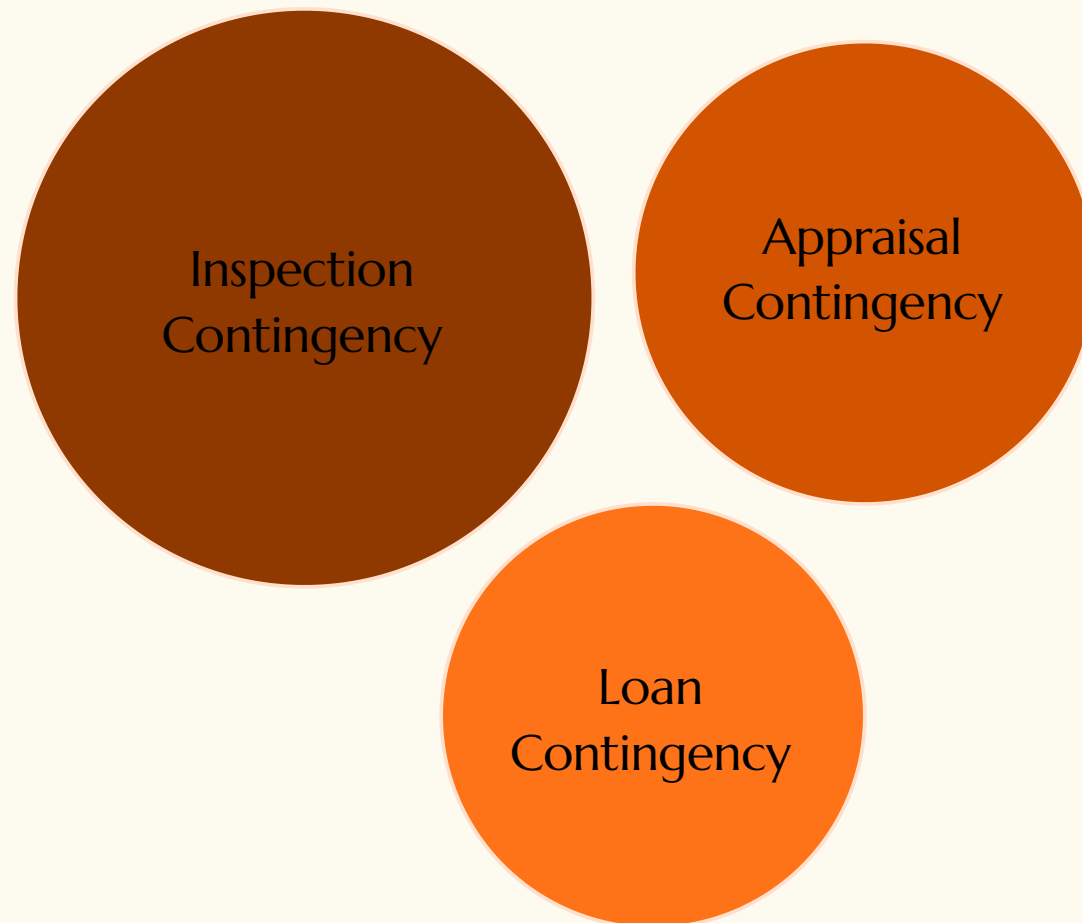
Step 7

Making an Offer

In Los Angeles, writing a winning offer is both a science and an art. The California Residential Purchase Agreement (RPA) includes several key components.

- **Purchase Price** — What you're offering to pay
- **Earnest Money Deposit** — 1–3%; shows good faith
- **Down Payment & Loan Terms** — Financing structure
- **Contingencies** — Conditions for the sale to proceed
- **Close of Escrow Date** — Typically 21–30 days in LA
- **Inclusions/Exclusions** — What stays with the home
- **Seller Concessions** — Closing cost coverage or credits

The Three Key Contingencies



Step 7 — Continued

Strategies for Winning

→ 💪 Escalation Clause

Your offer automatically increases above competing offers up to a max.

→ 🕒 Shorter Close of Escrow

Sellers love speed; 21 days beats 30 days.

→ 📄 Proof of Funds

Show cash is ready; don't make them wonder.

→ 💌 Personal Letter

A heartfelt, legal note about why you love their home (use carefully).

→ 🔓 Releasing Contingencies Early

High risk; only with expert agent guidance.

→ 🏦 All-Cash or Bridge Loan

The ultimate competitive advantage.

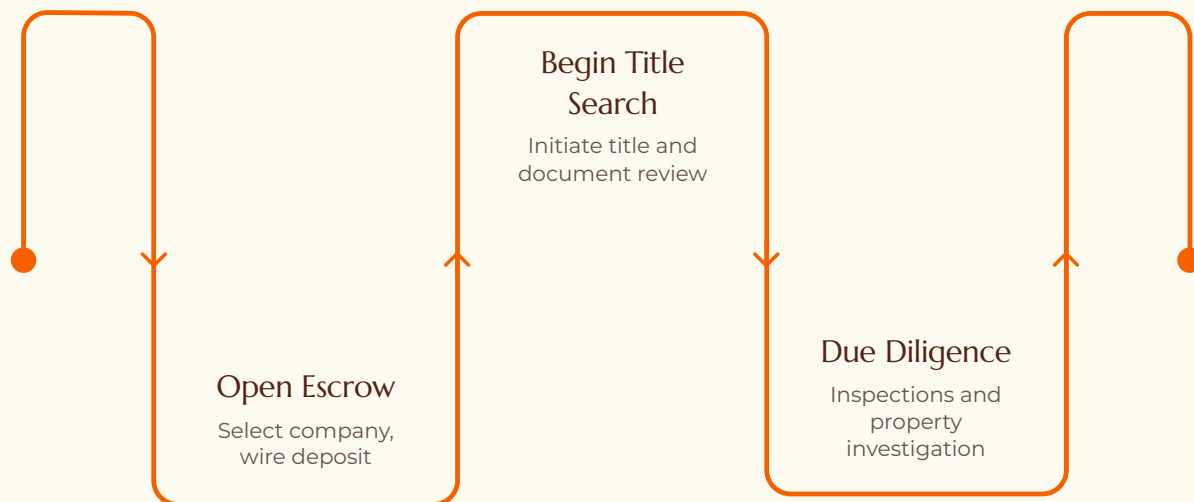
📌 **Remember:** Highest price doesn't always win. Terms, speed, and certainty often matter just as much to a motivated seller.



Step 8

Escrow & Due Diligence

Once your offer is accepted — congratulations! You enter **escrow**, a neutral third-party process where all conditions are completed before funds transfer.



The due diligence period is your window to investigate the property thoroughly before fully committing.



Step 8 — Inspections

Key Inspections in LA

Inspection Type	Why It Matters
General Home Inspection	Overall condition — roof, HVAC, plumbing, electrical
Pest/Termite Inspection	Required by most lenders; common in Southern California
Sewer/Drain Scope	Critical for older LA homes; can reveal costly issues
Chimney Inspection	If home has a fireplace
Pool & Spa Inspection	If applicable
Foundation Inspection	Especially important for hillside or older homes
Roof Inspection	Separate from general if roof is aging
HVAC Inspection	Standalone evaluation of heating and cooling

Step 8 — Disclosures & Options

Disclosures & Your Options

Seller Disclosures You'll Review

- Transfer Disclosure Statement (TDS)
- Seller Property Questionnaire (SPQ)
- Natural Hazard Disclosure (NHD)
- Lead paint (homes built before 1978)
- HOA documents (if applicable)
- Permits and prior work disclosures

After Inspections, You Can

1. **Accept as-is** — Proceed with no changes
2. **Request Repairs** — Fix items before close
3. **Request Credit** — Price reduction instead
4. **Renegotiate Price** — If issues are major
5. **Cancel** — Walk away with EMD returned

✔ **Pro Tip:** In a seller's market, extensive repair requests can kill a deal. A skilled agent negotiates credits strategically — getting you money back without losing the home.

Step 9

Appraisal & Final Loan Approval

If you're financing, your lender orders an independent appraisal — typically after the inspection period. A licensed appraiser determines the home's fair market value based on recent comparable sales. The lender will only lend based on the *appraised value*, not the purchase price.

At or Above Price

Great news. Move forward as planned.

Below Price

A "low appraisal." Negotiate seller down, pay the gap out of pocket, or cancel (if contingency in place).

Repairs Requested

FHA/VA loans require conditions met before funding. Seller typically handles these.

Step 9 — Continued

"Clear to Close"

Your lender's underwriting team reviews everything before issuing final approval:

- Final income verification
- Asset confirmation
- Title report
- Appraisal report
- Any updated documentation

Once approved, you receive a **"Clear to Close" (CTC)** — the green light to schedule your signing appointment.



Avoid This Mistake

Do NOT make large purchases, open new credit cards, or change jobs during the loan process. It can cause your financing to fall apart days before closing.

Step 10

Closing Day — It's Officially Yours!

The final steps before you get your keys and become a Los Angeles homeowner.

1

Final Walk-Through

24–48 hours before close: verify repairs done, same condition, inclusions present, no new damage.

2

Signing Appointment

Sign loan documents, escrow/title docs, deed transfer, and final disclosure. Takes 1–2 hours. Bring photo ID.

3

Funding

Your lender wires funds to escrow. Down payment and closing costs are confirmed.

4

Recording

The county records the new deed in your name — the official legal moment you become the owner.

5

Keys!

Once recording is confirmed, you get your keys. You're now a Los Angeles homeowner.

Step 10 — Costs

Your Closing Costs Breakdown

Cost	Typical Range
Loan Origination Fee	0.5–1% of loan
Appraisal Fee	\$600–\$1,200
Title Insurance (Lender)	\$500–\$1,500
Owner's Title Insurance	\$1,000–\$3,000
Escrow Fee	\$2,000–\$4,000
Prepaid Interest	Varies
Homeowner's Insurance (1 yr)	\$1,200–\$3,500
Property Tax Proration	Varies
HOA Transfer Fee	Varies

Bonus

What to Do After You Get Your Keys

Congratulations, you're a homeowner! Here's what to handle immediately after closing.



Change All Locks

You don't know who has copies of the current keys.



Forward Mail

Update USPS, banks, employer, and subscriptions.



Locate Shutoffs

Water main, gas valve, circuit breaker panel.



Document Everything

Photos/video of every room before move-in.



Contact Utilities

Set up gas, electric, water, internet, trash.

Bonus — Ongoing

First 30 Days & Beyond

Within the First 30 Days

-  Confirm homeowner's insurance is active
-  File for Homestead Exemption (Prop 19 benefits)
-  Pest control contract — important in SoCal
-  Build a maintenance fund: ~1% of home value/year
-  Find go-to contractors: plumber, electrician, HVAC, landscaper

Ongoing Homeownership in LA

- **Property Taxes** — Due November 1st & February 1st
- **HOA Dues** — Pay monthly to avoid liens
- **Proposition 13** — Tax capped at 2% annual increase
- **Refinancing** — If rates drop 0.5–1%, it may make sense



Meet Your Real Estate Dream Team

Buying a home in Los Angeles involves more people than most buyers expect. Over the next pages, we'll introduce everyone who plays a role — and exactly what they do.

The Dream Team

Your Advocates & Representatives



Buyer's Agent (Your Advocate)

Role: Represents YOU exclusively — guiding neighborhood selection, search, offer strategy, negotiations, due diligence, and closing.

How Paid: Commission from the seller (typically 2–2.5%).

Why They Matter: Their connections, negotiation, and local knowledge can be the difference between winning and losing — and between overpaying or getting a deal.



Listing Agent (Seller's Agent)

Role: Represents the seller. Markets the property, reviews offers, and negotiates on the seller's behalf.

Key Point: They work for the seller — not you. Do not share sensitive information with them directly.

The Dream Team

Financing & Transaction



Mortgage Lender / Loan Officer

Evaluates your profile, issues pre-approval, structures your loan, and manages financing through underwriting and funding. Includes banks, brokers, and credit unions. A great lender saves you thousands through rate and fee comparison.



Escrow Officer

A neutral third party managing the transaction from acceptance to close. Holds earnest money, coordinates parties, and ensures conditions are met. In California, escrow is handled by licensed escrow companies — not attorneys.



Title Company

Researches ownership history to ensure a clean title transfers to you. Identifies liens or legal issues. Title insurance protects you and your lender from future claims — a one-time fee at closing.

The Dream Team

Inspectors & Evaluators

1

Home Inspector

Conducts a thorough visual inspection — roof, foundation, HVAC, plumbing, electrical — with a written report. Works for YOU; hire independently.

2

Pest Inspector

Inspects for termites, dry rot, and fungus. Required by most CA lenders. Section 1 (active) vs. Section 2 (likely future) conditions.

3

Appraiser

Independent, licensed professional hired by your lender to confirm fair market value. You cannot choose them — assigned randomly for neutrality.

4

Specialists

Foundation (hillside homes), pool/spa, chimney, and environmental (mold, asbestos, lead paint in older homes) inspectors as needed.

The Dream Team

Administration & Records

HOA Management Company

If applicable, manages the homeowners association. Provides HOA documents, financials, meeting minutes, and rules during escrow — you'll review these carefully during due diligence.



County Recorder (LA County)

The government body that officially records the transfer of ownership. Once your deed is recorded, you are legally the owner.

LA Real Estate Terminology

The essential vocabulary every Los Angeles buyer should know — from financing terms to California-specific laws and competitive market language.



Loan & Financing Terms

- **ARM**

Loan with a fixed initial rate (5–7 yrs) that then adjusts with the market.

- **Fixed-Rate Mortgage**

Rate stays the same for the entire term (15 or 30 years).

- **Conventional Loan**

Not government-backed; needs better credit and higher down payment.

- **FHA Loan**

Government-insured; allows 3.5% down with lenient credit.

- **VA Loan**

Zero-down for eligible veterans and active military.

- **Jumbo Loan**

Exceeds ~\$1.1M conforming limit; stricter underwriting.

- **Bridge Loan**

Short-term loan to buy a new home before selling your current one.

- **PMI**

Insurance when you put down less than 20%; removable at 20% equity.

- **DTI**

Total monthly debt ÷ gross monthly income; measures affordability.

- **LTV**

Loan amount vs. appraised value; lower = better rates.

- **Pre-Approval**

Lender commitment of max loan based on verified income & assets.

- **Clear to Close (CTC)**

Loan fully approved; transaction can proceed to funding.

Escrow & Offer Terms

- **Escrow**

Neutral third party managing funds, docs, and conditions until close.

- **EMD**

Good-faith deposit (1–3% in LA) applied to purchase at close.

- **Contingency**

Condition that must be satisfied: inspection, appraisal, loan.

- **Inspection Contingency**

Lets buyer review reports, negotiate repairs, or cancel.

- **Appraisal Gap**

Difference when a home appraises below the offered price.

- **Due Diligence**

Post-acceptance period to investigate through inspections & research.

- **Close of Escrow (COE)**

The date the property officially transfers to the buyer.

- **Offer Acceptance**

Seller formally accepts, creating a binding contract.

- **Seller Concessions**

Seller pays part of buyer's closing costs or repair credits.

- **Under Contract / In Escrow**

Offer accepted; property off the active market.

- **Walk-Through**

Final visit 24–48 hrs before close to confirm condition.

- **AS-IS Sale**

Seller won't make repairs; buyers may still inspect.

Market, Title & California Terms

- **MLS**
Private agent database — the most comprehensive, current listing source.
- **Pocket Listing**
Off-market home not on the MLS; requires agent connections.
- **Comps**
Recently sold similar homes used to determine market value.
- **Days on Market (DOM)**
How long a home has been listed; high DOM signals issues.
- **Back on Market (BOM)**
Listing returned to active after a deal fell through.
- **Seller's Market**
Demand exceeds supply; common in LA. Homes sell fast, often above list.
- **Buyer's Market**
Inventory exceeds demand, giving buyers more power.
- **Multiple Offers**
Two+ buyers bid simultaneously; common in LA.
- **Title Insurance & Prelim**
Protects against ownership claims; prelim shows liens & issues.
- **TDS & NHD**
Seller defect disclosure & required hazard-zone report (fire, flood, fault).
- **HOA, Dues & CCRs**
Association rules (\$100–\$2,000+/mo) governing property use.
- **Prop 13, 19 & Homestead**
2% annual tax cap, transferable tax base, and primary-residence protection.

Why Smart LA Buyers Work
With Jose Blandon

You Deserve an Agent Who Knows How to Win.

Los Angeles is not a forgiving market. Homes move fast. Competition is real. The difference between finding and losing your dream home — or buying at the right price versus overpaying — often comes down to one thing: **who is in your corner.**



Meet Your Expert

Jose Blandon — Your LA Real Estate Expert



My mission is simple: I treat every client the way I'd want my own family treated. That means honest counsel, elite-level preparation, and an absolute commitment to getting you the best outcome possible.

— *Jose Blandon*

The Difference

What Sets Jose Blandon Apart



Deep Local Knowledge

30 living and working in LA real estate — beach cities to the Valley, Eastside to Hancock Park.



Speed & Responsiveness

Available, responsive, proactive. Clients always know what's happening.



Data-Driven Strategy

Offers backed by real market analysis — comps, DOM trends, seller motivation.



Negotiation That Works

Hundreds of transactions — knowing when to be aggressive and when to be strategic.



Industry Relationships

Top listing-agent ties mean knowing about homes before they hit the MLS.



Full-Service Support

From first conversation to keys and beyond — lenders, inspectors, contractors.

By the Numbers

A Proven Track Record

[X]+

Homes Represented

Transactions closed

100%

Client Satisfaction

5-Star Reviews

[X]+

Neighborhoods Served

LA Communities

\$1M

Average Sale Price

Across portfolio

30

Years in LA Real Estate

Local expertise

Testimonials

What Clients Say

“

Found us our dream home in [neighborhood] in under 3 weeks, and got us \$25,000 under asking. We had been searching for months.

— *[Client Name, Neighborhood]*

”

“

As first-time buyers in LA, we were terrified. [Your Name] made the entire process feel manageable and even fun. We closed with confidence.

— *[Client Name, Neighborhood]*

”

“

We had a complicated situation — selling one home and buying another at the same time. [Your Name] coordinated everything flawlessly.

— *[Client Name, Neighborhood]*

”



Ready to Start Your LA Homebuying Journey?

Let's talk. No pressure. No sales pitch. Just an honest conversation about your goals and how I can help.

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<https://www.instagram.com/thejoseblandon/>

🎁 Free Consultation Offer

Book a complimentary 30-minute "Home Buying Strategy Session" — I'll review your goals, answer your questions, and build a custom game plan for your search.

Your Dream Home in Los Angeles Is Waiting.

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. In Los Angeles real estate, that step is a conversation.

Whether you're 6 months away or ready to move next week — reaching out costs nothing and changes everything. This guide was created for you, so that when the moment comes, you are *ready* to move with confidence, clarity, and the right team behind you.

Jose Blandon | *Los Angeles Real Estate Specialist*

eXp Realty | DRE# 01967645

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