

Home Buying Roadmap

A step-by-step guide to help you navigate the home buying process.

MS by **Melanie Simmons**



♥ About Me



Hi, I'm Melanie Simmons — a San Antonio-based Realtor, mom, and former healthcare professional with 18 years of experience in the medical field.

I transitioned into real estate to create a career that allowed me to be fully present for my family while still doing what I've always loved: helping people through important life transitions. Real estate gave me the opportunity to combine both — to support, guide, and advocate for others in one of the most meaningful decisions they'll ever make.

I created this guide because I know how overwhelming buying a home or relocating can feel — especially if it's your first time or you're unfamiliar with San Antonio. These resources were designed with heart, experience, and care — to give you clarity, peace of mind, and the confidence to move forward. You're not in this alone.

I love this city, and it's my joy to welcome new homeowners and neighbors here. Whether you're moving across the street or across the country, I'm here to help you make your move with intention, knowledge, and support every step of the way.

Let's create a game plan that works for your life and goals — and get you home.

Reach out anytime. I'd be honored to help.

— Melanie Simmons





Check Your Finances

\$231K

Median Home Price

In San Antonio market

640+

Credit Score

Ideal minimum for best rates

28%

Income Ratio

Maximum housing costs

Get Pre-Approved for a Mortgage



Apply

Submit financial details including:

- Pay stubs (last 30 days)
- W-2 forms (past 2 years)
- Tax returns (past 2 years)
- Bank statements (past 2-3 months)
- Proof of employment history



Review

Lender evaluates finances by checking:

- Credit score and history
- Debt-to-income ratio
- Employment stability
- Available assets for down payment



Receive

Pre-approval letter indicating:

- Maximum loan amount
- Interest rate estimate
- Loan program options
- Valid for 60-90 days typically



Common Types of Home Loans

Understanding your financing options is crucial for your home buying journey



Conventional Loans

Not backed by government, typically require good credit scores (620+) and down payments of 3–20%



FHA Loans

Government-insured loans with lower down payment requirements (3.5%) and more flexible credit score criteria (580+). Many FHA loans qualify for Down Payment Assistance (DPA) programs to help with initial costs (620+)



VA Loans

Available to veterans and service members, offering NO down payment and competitive interest rates




USDA Loans


Zero down payment loans for eligible rural and suburban homebuyers with moderate to low income

Start House Hunting


Must-Haves

- 


Bedrooms/bathrooms

Consider your family size and future needs
- 


Location/school district

Research neighborhood safety and school ratings
- 


Size/layout requirements

Single-story vs. two-story, open concept vs. traditional
- 


Within budget range

Stay within your pre-approved amount
- 


Garage/parking space

Consider the number of vehicles you own
- 

Yard/outdoor space

Think about maintenance requirements
- 


Age and condition of home

New construction vs. established neighborhood
- 


Commute distance

Calculate time to work and important destinations


Nice-to-Haves

- 


Swimming pool

Consider maintenance costs and safety
- 


Updated kitchen

Modern appliances and counter space
- 


Home office space

Dedicated area for remote work
- 


Laundry room

Dedicated space vs. closet setup
- 


Covered patio/deck

Outdoor entertaining options
- 

Walk-in closets

Extra storage space in bedrooms
- 

Energy efficiency features

Solar panels, updated windows, insulation
- 

Smart home technology

Pre-wired security, thermostats, lighting

Make an Offer and Negotiations

Submit Offer

Your agent will help you craft a competitive offer with appropriate price, earnest money amount, and important contingencies to protect your interests.

Negotiations

Be prepared for counteroffers on price, closing timeline, and repair requests. Your agent will advise on negotiation strategies based on current market conditions.

Contract

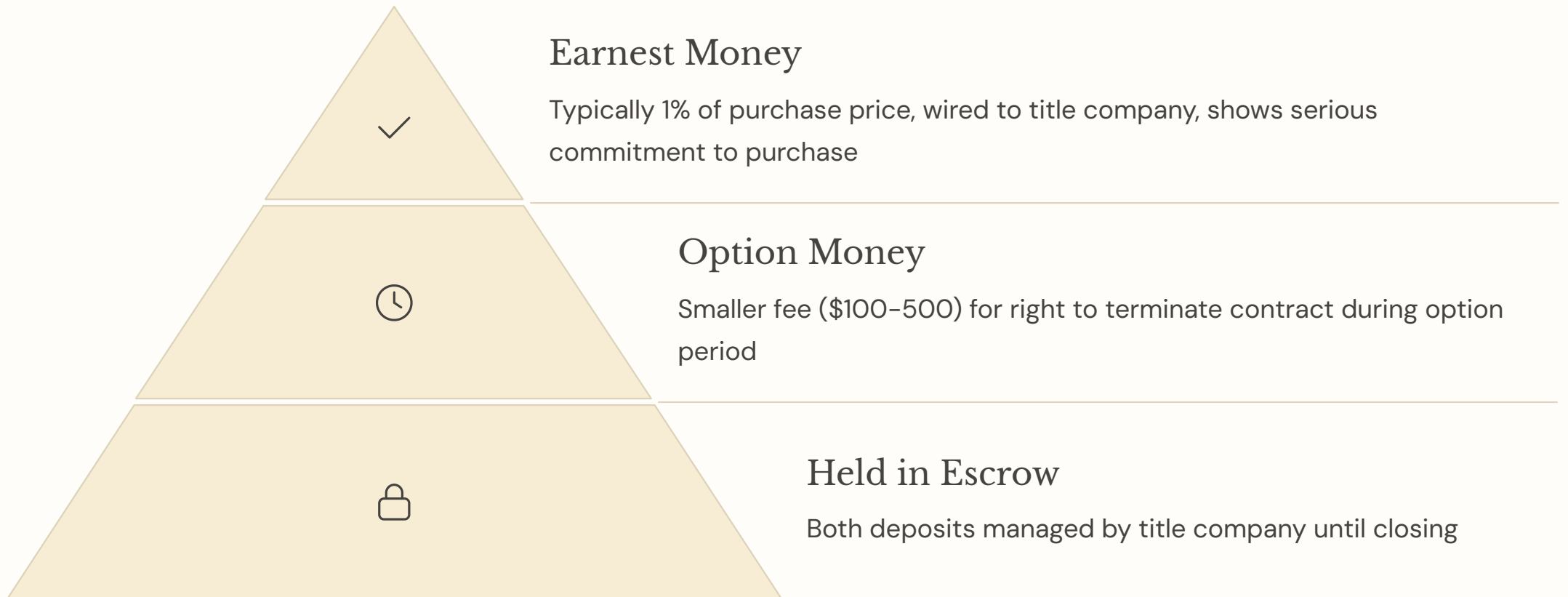
Once all terms are agreed upon, both parties sign the purchase contract which becomes legally binding and starts your option period timeline.

Earnest Money

Typically 1% of purchase price in San Antonio, this deposit shows sellers you're serious and is held in escrow until closing or returned if contract contingencies aren't met.

Understanding Earnest Money & Option Money

Two important deposits in the Texas home buying process:



Both earnest money and option money must be wired to the title company within 1–3 days after contract execution. Earnest money applies toward your down payment at closing.

Inspection and Appraisal

These critical evaluations take place during your option period – typically 7–10 days after contract acceptance.



Home Inspection

\$300–500 out-of-pocket cost



Review Results

Identify needed repairs



Negotiate Repairs

Request seller addresses issues



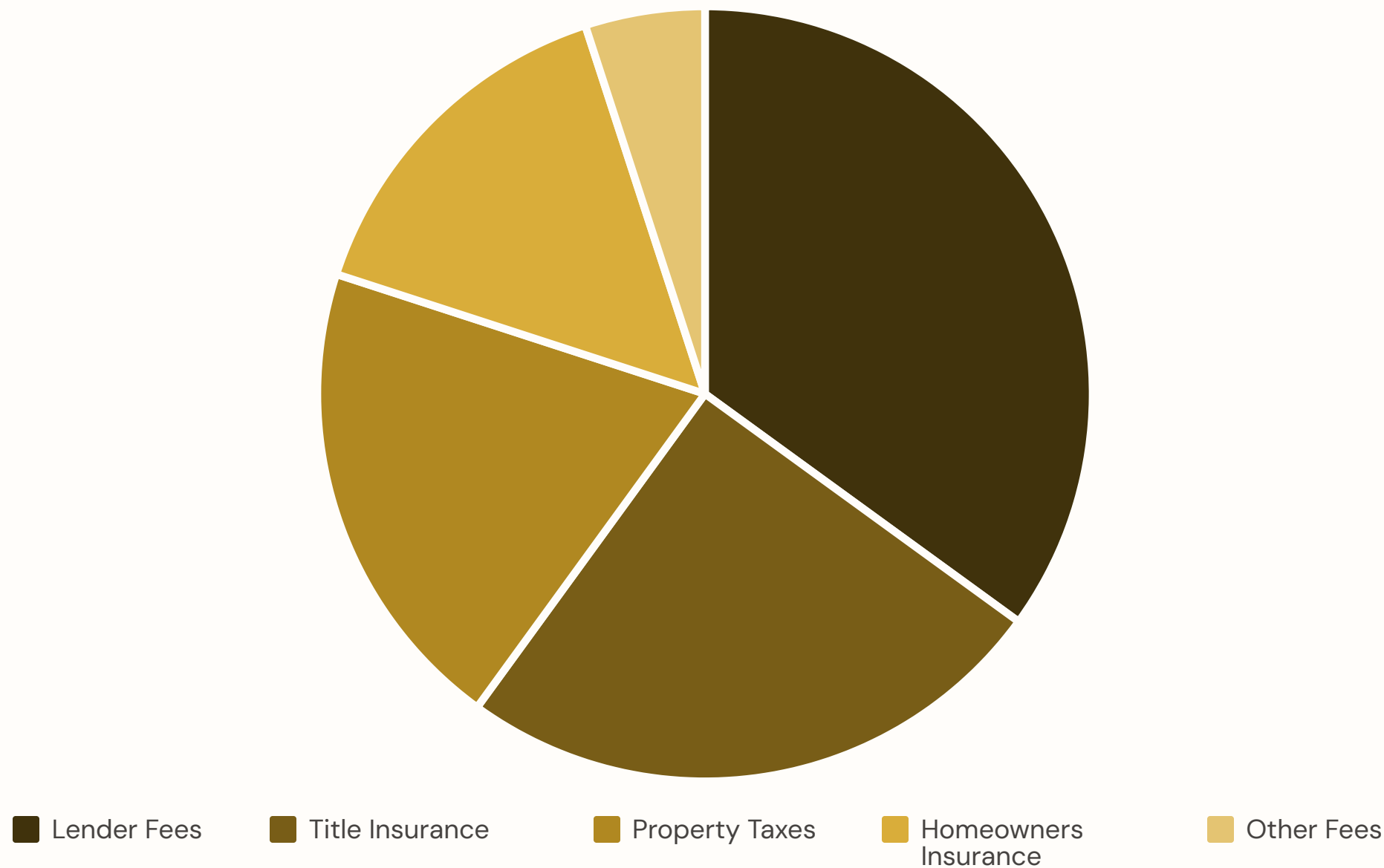
Appraisal

Lender verifies home value




Closing Costs & Final Steps

Closing costs typically range from 2–5% of your home's purchase price. These expenses can be covered through down payment assistance programs, seller concessions during negotiations, or paid out of pocket depending on your financial situation.




Payment options for closing costs:




Down Payment Assistance Programs

Many first-time homebuyer programs in San Antonio offer grants or low-interest loans to help cover closing costs.



Seller Concessions

Negotiate with the seller to pay a portion of your closing costs as part of your purchase offer.



Out-of-Pocket Payment

Plan ahead and save 2–5% of your expected purchase price to cover these expenses directly.



Dos and Don'ts Under Contract



Do: Keep Finances Stable

Maintain credit score and bank balances



Don't: Make Large Purchases

Avoid new cars, furniture or credit cards



Do: Respond Quickly

To lender and agent requests



Don't: Change Employment

Stay in current job until closing



Don't: Open New Accounts

Avoid new accounts, credit lines or undocumented transactions



Don't: Miss Deadlines

Calendar all important dates and requirements



Don't: Have Unexplained Bank Activity

Avoid irregular deposits or withdrawals without documentation

How I'd Love to Help With Your Buying Process

Whether you're a first-time homebuyer or have purchased property before, I'm here to make your home buying journey smooth and successful.



Expert Local Guidance

Navigate San Antonio's diverse neighborhoods with confidence using my in-depth local market knowledge and connections.



Personalized Support

Receive tailored assistance through every step, from financing options to closing details, based on your unique situation and needs.



Strong Negotiation

Benefit from my negotiation skills to secure the best possible price and terms for your new home purchase.



Simplified Process

Enjoy a stress-free experience with clear communication, timeline management, and proactive problem-solving throughout your transaction.