

FROM **DREAM** TO **KEYS**

FIRST-TIME *home* BUYER GUIDE



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REALTOR®

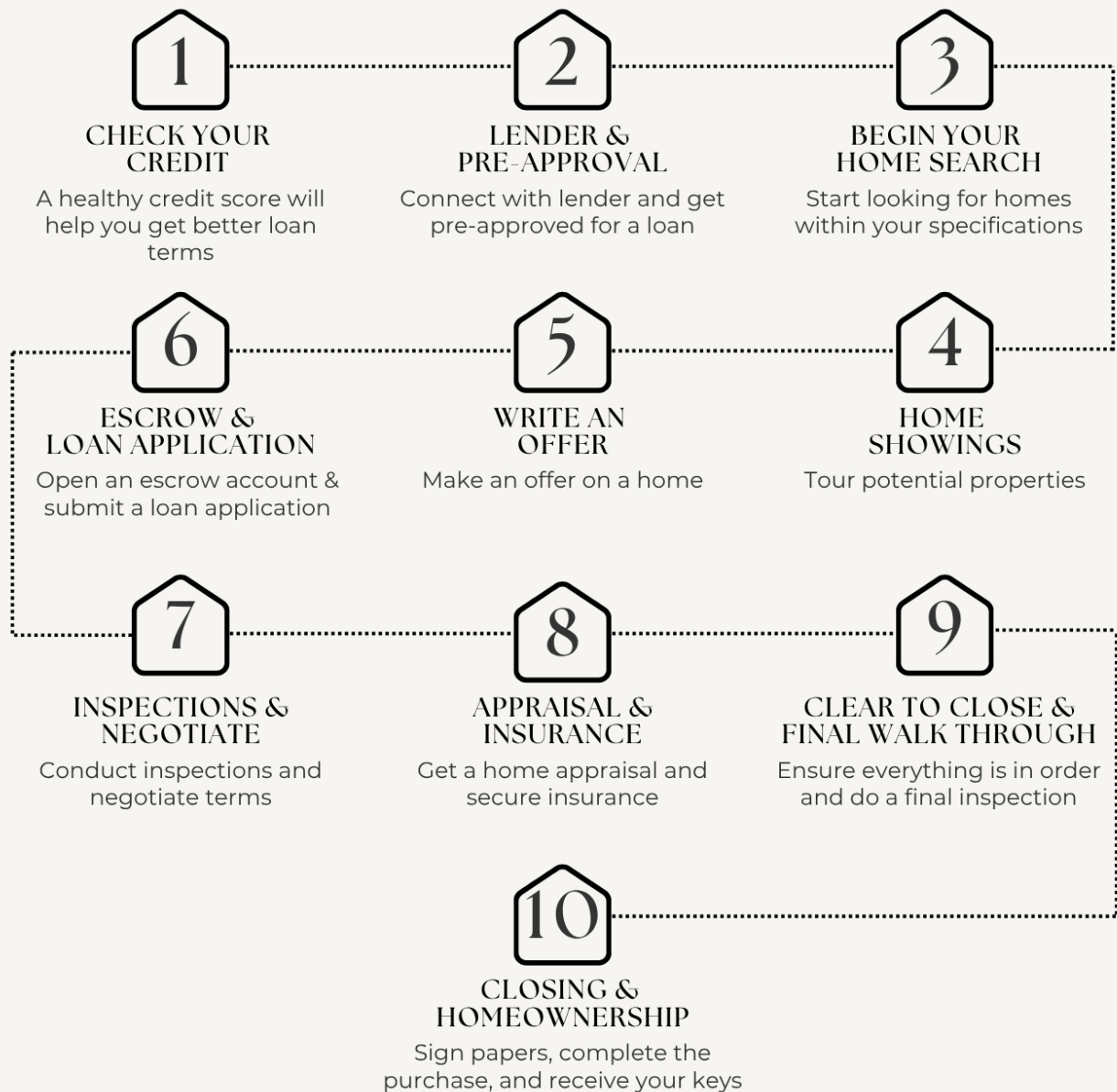
LICENSED IN RI & CT

real



the HOME BUYER

ROADMAP



our signature HOME BUYING PROCESS



1

STEP ONE

CHECK YOUR CREDIT

Step one of the home buying process is all about understanding where you stand financially. Start by checking your credit score, as it plays a major role in determining your loan options and interest rate. It's also a good idea to review your credit report for any errors and work on improving your score if needed.

2

STEP TWO

LENDER & PRE-APPROVAL

Getting Pre-Approved will give you a clear idea of what you can afford and shows sellers you're a serious buyer. During pre-approval, a lender will review your financial documents to determine how much they're willing to lend you. This process not only helps you narrow down your home search to properties within your budget, but it also strengthens your offer when you're ready to make one.

3

STEP THREE

BEGIN YOUR HOME SEARCH

With your pre-approval ready, we'll start a customized home search. I'll leverage my local knowledge to find properties that match your preferences and budget, while keeping you informed about market trends and neighborhoods. This way, you'll feel confident and supported throughout the process.

4

STEP FOUR

HOME SHOWINGS

Once we've narrowed down your choices, I'll schedule showings for you to visit each property. We'll review the condition, layout, and neighborhood features together. I'll offer expert advice and answer your questions to help you feel confident in your decision.

5

STEP FIVE

WRITE AN OFFER

When you find a home you love, I'll help you make a strong offer. We'll assess the property's value, your budget, and key negotiation points. I'll work with you to craft an offer that maximizes your chances of success and aligns with your goals.

6

STEP SIX

ESCROW & LOAN APPLICATION

Once your offer is accepted, I'll coordinate the opening of the escrow account and keep things on track. I'll also help with the loan application, ensuring all documents are submitted on time. My aim is to make the process smooth and stress-free.

7

STEP 7

INSPECTIONS & NEGOTIATIONS

Once the contract is signed, we'll schedule inspections to check the property's condition. If any issues arise, I'll negotiate with the seller for repairs or resolutions. I'll ensure your interests are fully represented throughout this process.

8

STEP 8

APPRAISAL & INSURANCE

A professional appraiser will evaluate the property to ensure its value matches the loan amount. I'll also help you secure homeowner's insurance to protect your investment.

9

STEP 9

CLEAR TO CLOSE & FINAL WALK-THROUGH

We'll coordinate with the lender and title company to make sure all documents are complete and there are no issues before closing. I'll also arrange a final walk-through to confirm that the seller has met any agreed-upon repairs or conditions.

10

STEP 10

CLOSING & HOMEOWNERSHIP

Congratulations! At closing, you'll sign the final documents, pay any remaining costs, and get the keys to your new home. This is the exciting moment you officially become a homeowner.





1

CHECK YOUR CREDIT

credit READINESS

Step one of the home buying process is all about understanding where you stand financially. Start by checking your credit score, as it plays a major role in determining your loan options and interest rate. It's also a good idea to review your credit report for any errors and work on improving your score if needed.

HOW TO CHECK YOUR CREDIT

You can check your credit for free using tools like Credit Karma, Credit Sesame, or by visiting AnnualCreditReport.com, which gives you free access to your reports from all three major credit bureaus—Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion—once per year. When reviewing your report, look for any errors, unfamiliar accounts, or late payments that could be hurting your score. Catching and correcting these early can make a big difference when it's time to apply for a mortgage.

WHY YOUR CREDIT SCORE MATTERS

Your credit score is a key factor in determining what kind of mortgage loan you can qualify for—and how much it will cost you over time. Most lenders require a minimum score of 620 for conventional loans, while FHA loans may allow for scores as low as 580 with a larger down payment. That said, the higher your score, the more favorable your loan terms will be. A strong credit score could help you secure a lower interest rate, lower monthly payments, and reduced mortgage insurance premiums, which adds up to significant savings over the life of your loan.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SCORE

If your score isn't quite where you want it to be, don't panic—there are steps you can take to improve it. Start by making all payments on time, keeping credit card balances below 30% of your limits, and avoiding opening new accounts in the months before applying for a mortgage. If you have collections, late payments, or high utilization, addressing those issues now will pay off later. Many lenders also offer credit-building advice or can recommend resources to help. A little work on your credit today can lead to better loan options and more buying power when you're ready to purchase your home.



2

LENDER & PRE-APPROVAL

FINANCING

PREPARING FOR YOUR HOME LOAN

Before you officially begin your home search, I always recommend to begin with talking to a lender and getting pre-approved. A lender will be able to answer all of your questions regarding finances and give you a clear understanding of the exact price range you will be pre-approved for and an estimate of the expenses to expect.

UNDERSTANDING PRE-APPROVAL

WHAT IS PRE-APPROVAL?

A pre-approval letter from a lender indicates your estimated borrowing capacity. It strengthens your negotiating position when making offers.

FACTORS LENDERS CONSIDER:

- Credit score
- Income
- Debt-to-income ratio
- Employment history
- Assets

BEFORE YOU GET PRE-APPROVED

IMPROVE YOUR CREDIT SCORE:

- Check your credit report for errors
- Pay bills on time and avoid excessive debt
- Limit new credit inquiries
- Consider paying down high-interest debt

SAVE FOR A DOWN PAYMENT:

- Set a realistic savings goal
- Consider utilizing down payment assistance programs if available
- Explore options like FHA loans with lower down payment requirements



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR MORTGAGE LENDER

Q. WHAT WILL MY FEES AND PAYMENTS BE?

Get details on payments, rates, closing costs, and down payment

Q. WHAT TYPES OF MORTGAGE TERMS DO YOU OFFER?

Explore fixed, adjustable, FHA, and VA loans.

Q. WHAT CREDIT QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU REQUIRE?

Understand the credit score and financial criteria needed

Q. DO YOU OFFER MORTGAGE POINTS?

Ask about points to lower interest rates and benefits.

Q. WHAT IS THE INTEREST RATE AND APR?

Get details on interest rates and annual percentage rate (APR)

Q. DO YOU OFFER A MORTGAGE RATE LOCK?

Check if you can lock in your interest rate to avoid market changes

COMMON LOAN TYPES *and qualifications*

CONVENTIONAL	For most borrowers. Down payment can range from 3%-20% down depending on borrower qualifications	Credit score generally required: 620 or higher
FHA Federal Housing Administration	For borrowers with no or lower credit scores and down payments	Credit score generally required: 580 or higher
VA Department of Veterans Affairs	For veterans and eligible military members.	Credit score generally required: 580 or higher
USDA U.S. Department of Agriculture	For borrowers in rural areas	Credit score generally required: 640 or higher.
ADJUSTABLE-RATE	For borrowers who expect short-term homeownership or believe interest rates will decrease.	People planning short-term ownership or expecting income increases may consider ARMs.



BEGIN YOUR HOME SEARCH

find your DREAM HOME



START TOURING HOMES IN YOUR PRICE RANGE

Time to start shopping! We will take notes on all the homes we visit. It can be hard to remember all the details of each home, so take pictures or videos to help you remember each home, and review the notes you have written. Once we have found THE house for you, we will present an appropriate offer based on recent sales and current buyer activity in the area, as well as the value of the property in its current condition. Negotiations may take place after the offer is presented.



TIP:

We will make sure to check every little detail of each house

- Test the plumbing
- Test the electrical system
- Open and close the windows & doors to make sure they work properly

Evaluate the neighborhood and surrounding areas

- Are the surrounding homes well maintained?
- How much traffic is on the street?
- Is it conveniently located to schools, shopping, restaurants, & parks



During home showings, stay organized and attentive. Use these tips to capture key details and evaluate the property effectively, helping you make a well-informed decision.

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- A modern bedroom interior featuring a large bed with a tufted headboard and footboard, white bedding, and several pillows. The bed is flanked by two wooden nightstands, each with a lamp and a mirror. A large, textured, cylindrical pendant light hangs above the bed. The room has light-colored walls and a light wood floor.

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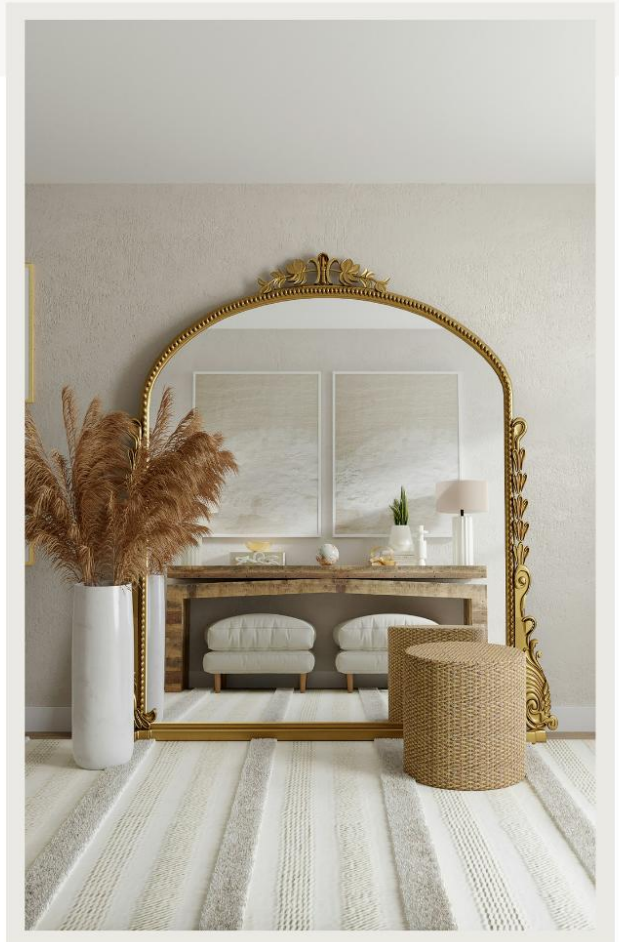
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MAKING AN OFFER

crafting A WINNING OFFER

STRATEGIES TO A WINNING OFFER

- OFFER A COMPETITIVE PRICE
- PAY IN CASH
- LIMIT CONTINGENCIES
- INCLUDE AN ESCALATION CLAUSE
- INCREASE YOUR EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT
- OFFER A FLEXIBLE CLOSING DATE
- COVER SOME SELLER COSTS
- REMOVE NON-ESSENTIAL REQUESTS
- BE READY TO ACT FAST



AFTER YOU SUBMIT AN OFFER

THE SELLER COULD...

WE CAN THEN...

1

- ACCEPT THE OFFER 🤝
- DECLINE THE OFFER 🗨️
- COUNTER THE OFFER

2

- ACCEPT THE OFFER 🤝
- DECLINE THE OFFER 🗨️
- COUNTER THE OFFER

3

YOU CAN NEGOTIATE AS MUCH AS NEEDED UNTIL YOU REACH AN AGREEMENT OR SOMEONE DECIDES TO WALK AWAY

6

ESCROW & LOAN APPLICATION

navigating ESCROW AND SECURING YOUR LOAN

- ① **Offer Acceptance:** Once your offer is accepted, you move into escrow.
- ② **Escrow Process:** A neutral third party keeps the funds until all sale conditions are met.
- ③ **Submit Loan Application:** Complete your loan application and provide all required documents.
- ④ **Loan Underwriting:** The lender reviews your finances and the property's value.
- ⑤ **Final Approval:** Once verified, the lender gives final approval for closing.

7

INSPECTIONS & NEGOTIATE

key HOME INSPECTIONS

Inspections are an essential part of buying a home. A professional inspector checks the property for issues like structural damage, plumbing, or electrical problems. This helps you understand the property's condition and negotiate any necessary repairs or price changes with the seller, ensuring you make an informed decision before buying.



TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

- General Home Inspection
- Pest Inspection
- Radon Inspection
- Mold Inspection
- Sewer and Septic Inspection
- Chimney Inspection
- Lead-Based Paint Inspection
- Asbestos Inspection
- HVAC Inspection
- Roof Inspection

A TYPICAL INSPECTION PERIOD IS 10
CALENDAR DAYS EXCLUSIVE OF
WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS.

APPRAISAL AND INSURANCE



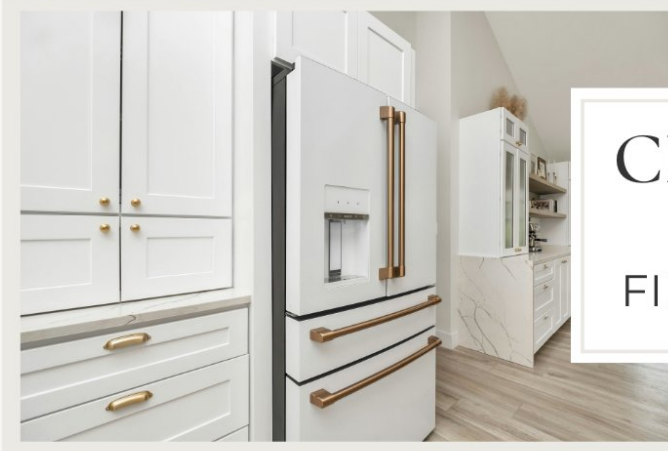
PROPERTY TITLE SEARCH

A property title search is the process of examining public records to determine the legal ownership and any outstanding liens or encumbrances on a property. It is performed during the home-buying process to ensure clear ownership and address any issues before the sale. It is typically done by a title company or real estate attorney.

HOME OWNERS INSURANCE

You'll need insurance for the new home before closing. This will protect against things like fire, storms, and flooding. Homeowner's insurance is important because it provides financial protection against losses or damage to your property, liability coverage, is often required by mortgage lenders, and provides peace of mind.

CLEAR TO CLOSE & FINAL WALK THROUGH



CLEAR TO CLOSE *and* FINAL WALK THROUGH

AS YOU APPROACH THE CLOSING OF YOUR HOME PURCHASE,
THERE ARE A FEW FINAL STEPS TO COMPLETE.

1

FINAL LOAN APPROVAL

First, you need to ensure that all financial documents and conditions are met for the "clear to close" from your lender. This means your mortgage has been fully approved, and you're ready to sign the final paperwork.

|

2

FINAL WALK THROUGH

Next, you'll conduct a final walk-through of the property. This typically happens a day or two before closing and allows you to confirm that any agreed-upon repairs have been completed and the home is in the expected condition.

Take your time during this walk-through to ensure everything is in order. Once satisfied, you'll proceed to closing, where you'll sign the necessary documents and officially become the owner of your new home.

SCHEDULING

your move

AFTER SIGNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Finalize Home Mortgage•Schedule Home Inspection•Declutter! Sort through every drawer, closet, cupboard & shelf, removing items you no longer need or like. Donate or sell items that are in good condition•Get copies of medical records and store them with your other important documents•Create an inventory of anything valuable that you plan to move•Get estimates from moving companies
4 WEEKS TO MOVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Give 30 days notice if you are currently renting•Schedule movers/moving truck•Buy/find packing materials•START PACKING
3 WEEKS TO MOVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Arrange appraisal•Complete title search (Title company will do this)
2 WEEKS TO MOVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Secure Home Warranty•Get quotes for home insurance•Schedule time for closing•Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable)•Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc.•Minimize grocery shopping•Keep on packing
1 WEEKS TO MOVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Obtain certified checks for closing•Schedule and attend a final walkthrough•Finish packing•Clean•Pack essentials for a few nights in new home•Confirm delivery date with the moving company. Write directions to the new home, along with your cell phone number



Closing Day A GUIDE TO THE FINAL STEP

As you prepare for closing day, here's a quick guide to the final steps. Follow this checklist to ensure a smooth transition into your new home and get ready to receive your keys!



CLOSING DISCLOSURE:

Receive at least three days before closing. Compare with your Loan Estimate

GATHER DOCUMENTS:

- ID
- Insurance
- Bank Statements
- Other Paperwork

HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE:

Obtain a policy and provide proof to your lender

STAY IN CONTACT:

Keep in touch with your agent, lender, and closing agent.

ANTICIPATE COSTS:

Be prepared for additional expenses like taxes, HOA fees.

FINAL WALK-THROUGH:

Inspect the property 24 hours before closing.

CERTIFIED FUNDS:

Confirm the amount needed and arrange for a certified check or wire transfer.

CLOSING DAY:

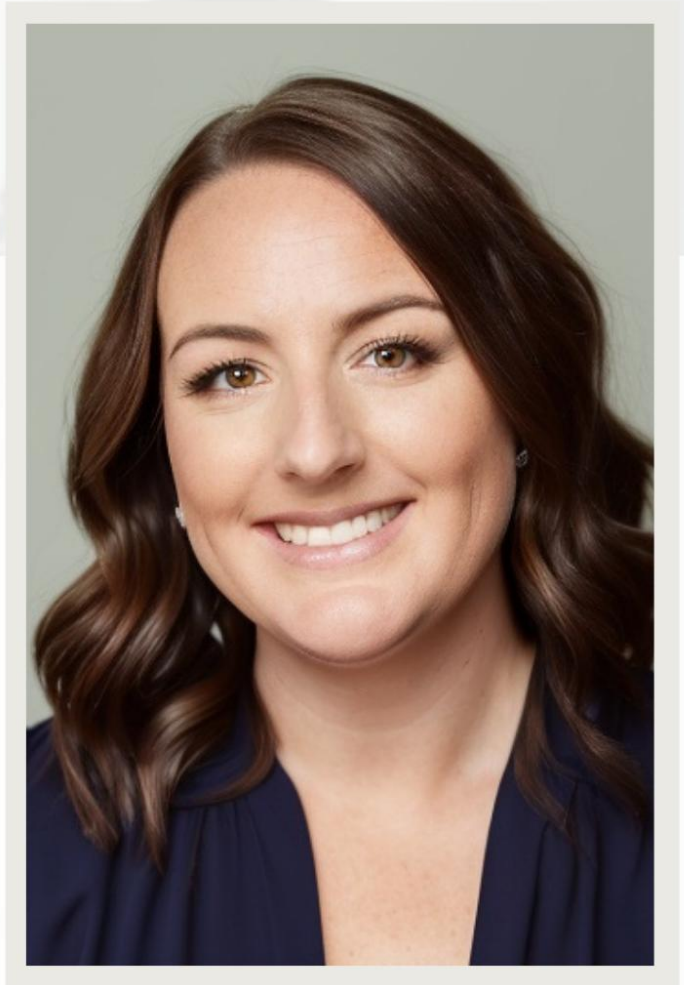
Review documents, ask questions, sign to finalize the purchase, and receive your keys.



Thank you for choosing me to be a part of your home-buying journey! I'm here to guide you every step of the way, from start to finish. If you have any questions or need further assistance, don't hesitate to reach out. Your dream home is just around the corner, and I'm excited to help you find it!

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