



FREE GUIDE

Home Buyer's Guide

Pre-approval, down payment help, touring, offers and closing, explained step by step.

Questions in English or Spanish · Hablamos español

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Your home buying roadmap

Buying a home follows a clear set of steps and deadlines. This guide walks you through each one so you know what is coming, what to have ready, and where you can save money along the way.

1

Talk strategy

Set goals, budget and timing, and sign a written buyer agreement before touring.

2

Get pre-approved

Choose a lender and get a pre-approval letter so your offer is taken seriously.

3

Plan your down payment

Learn your loan options and whether you may qualify for assistance.

4

Tour homes

Search, tour and compare homes and areas that fit your list.

5

Make an offer

Write a strong offer on the purchase contract and deposit earnest money.

6

Inspections and disclosures

Inspect the home, review the seller's disclosures, and negotiate repairs.

7

Appraisal, loan and title

Your lender appraises and finalizes the loan while title and escrow (or an attorney) prepare closing.

8

Close and get your keys

Final walkthrough, sign, fund, record the deed, and move in.

How I help along the way

- A home search on realsanchez.com that sends you new listings matching your list
- Recent comparable sales so you know what a home is worth before you offer
- Every contract deadline tracked for you, from offer to keys
- Moving to another state? I can connect you with a trusted agent there
- Help in English or Spanish at every step

Deadlines, forms and customs vary by state and by contract. This guide describes the process in general terms; your agent and your signed contract set the details for your purchase.

Steps 1–2: Strategy and pre-approval

Start with a plan

We start with a short call or meeting about your goals: price range, the areas you like, must-haves, and your ideal move date. Before touring homes, you will usually sign a written buyer agreement that explains how your agent works for you and how they are paid. Everything in it is negotiable, so ask questions until it is clear.

Get pre-approved before you shop

A pre-approval means a lender has reviewed your income, assets and credit and tells you how much you can likely borrow. Sellers take offers with a solid pre-approval letter much more seriously, and it keeps your search focused on homes that fit your budget.

- Recent pay stubs and W-2s (or two years of tax returns if self-employed)
- Two to three months of bank statements
- Photo ID and Social Security number or ITIN
- Information on debts, such as car loans, student loans and credit cards

Save money: compare at least two or three lenders. Ask each for a Loan Estimate on the same day and compare the interest rate, the APR and the lender fees side by side.

Protect your approval

- Do not open new credit cards or finance a car or furniture
- Do not change jobs without talking to your lender first
- Do not move large sums of money without a paper trail

Step 3: Down payment and help paying for it

You may need less than you think. Down payment requirements depend on the loan program, and some loans for eligible buyers require little or no down payment. Your lender can tell you exactly what applies to you.

Loan type	Good to know
Conventional	Low down payment options exist for qualified buyers; mortgage insurance may apply with less than 20% down.
FHA	Flexible credit guidelines; mortgage insurance applies.
VA	For eligible veterans and service members; often no down payment.
USDA	For eligible properties in qualifying rural areas; income limits apply.

Down payment assistance (DPA)

Many states, counties and cities offer down payment assistance programs, and some lenders offer their own. Programs, income limits and amounts change often, so check current options with an approved lender when you get pre-approved. Some programs require a homebuyer education class, which is often available online.

Plan for these costs too

- Earnest money, a good-faith deposit made after your offer is accepted and usually credited toward your purchase at closing
- Inspection costs
- Closing costs: lender, title, escrow or attorney fees, and prepaid taxes and insurance
- Homeowners insurance, plus HOA dues if the home is in an HOA

Save money: you can ask the seller to pay part of your closing costs (a seller concession). Whether it makes sense depends on the market and the home, and I will tell you honestly when it does.

Step 4: Touring homes

Set up a home search at realsanchez.com and you will get new listings that match your list. When you find homes you like, your agent schedules the showings and shares what they know about each property and its area.

Touring checklist

- Location: commute time, nearby shopping, parks and highways
- Lot and orientation: sun exposure affects comfort and energy bills
- Heating and cooling system: age, and ask for service records
- Roof, windows and water heater age
- Pool or spa: equipment condition and any required safety barrier
- HOA: monthly dues, rules, and what the HOA covers
- Utilities: providers, and whether the home uses sewer or septic, city water or a well

New construction

Builders use their own contracts, and the sales office works for the builder. Bring your agent to your first visit so you have someone representing you. Builders may offer incentives tied to their preferred lender; compare those offers against outside lenders before you choose.

Save money: look at the full monthly cost, not just the price: the payment, taxes, insurance, HOA dues and utilities. Two homes at the same price can cost very different amounts each month.

Step 5: Making an offer

Your offer is written on a purchase contract, usually a standard form used in your state. Your agent prepares it with you and explains every section before you sign.

What your offer includes

- Price and how you will pay (loan type, down payment)
- Earnest money amount and who holds it (often a title, escrow or attorney's office)
- Closing date
- Contingencies, such as inspection, appraisal and financing
- Any seller concessions toward your closing costs
- Items that stay with the home, like appliances or window coverings
- Your pre-approval letter

Negotiating

The seller can accept, reject, or counter your offer. In a balanced market there is often room to negotiate on price, concessions and repairs. In a competitive market, a clean offer with a strong pre-approval and a reasonable timeline can make the difference. Recent comparable sales show you what the home is worth.

Save money: price is only one part of the offer. Concessions, repairs, and a home warranty paid by the seller can all reduce what you pay.

After acceptance: the clock starts

Once both sides sign, your earnest money is deposited and the contract deadlines begin. Missing a deadline can put your earnest money at risk, so keep a calendar of every date.

Step 6: Inspections and disclosures

Most contracts give you an inspection or due-diligence period to investigate the home. During that time you can inspect, review disclosures, and ask the seller to make repairs or give a credit. If you are not satisfied, you can usually cancel within that period under the terms of your contract.

Inspections to consider

- General home inspection: roof, structure, plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling
- Wood-destroying insect (termite) inspection
- Pool and spa inspection
- Sewer line scope; septic inspection for homes on septic
- Well water testing for homes on a private well
- Radon, mold or other tests where common in the area

Read the disclosures

Sellers in most states must disclose known problems with the home, often on a state disclosure form. Review it carefully along with any insurance claims history, HOA documents, and the title report. Homes built before 1978 also require a federal lead-based paint disclosure. If something concerns you, raise it before your inspection period ends.

IF YOU'RE BUYING IN ARIZONA

- The standard contract is the Arizona REALTORS® Residential Resale Purchase Contract.
- The default inspection period is 10 days after acceptance. Repair requests go on one form called the BINSR.
- The seller delivers the Seller's Property Disclosure Statement (SPDS) early in escrow.
- A neutral escrow company handles closing.

Steps 7–8: Appraisal, title and closing

Appraisal and loan approval

Your lender orders an appraisal to confirm the home's value supports the loan. If it comes in low, your contract may give you options, such as renegotiating, paying the difference, or canceling. Keep sending your lender any documents they ask for right away.

Title, escrow or attorney

Depending on the state, closing is handled by a title or escrow company, a closing attorney, or both. They hold funds, check the title for liens and other recorded items, prepare the closing documents, and record the deed. Who pays which closing costs is set by your contract and local custom.

Wire fraud warning: criminals send fake emails with new wiring instructions. Before wiring any money, call your title, escrow or attorney's office at a phone number you already know, not one from an email.

Closing day

- Final walkthrough shortly before closing to confirm condition and agreed repairs
- Sign loan and closing documents
- The lender funds the loan and the deed is recorded with the county
- You get your keys

After you move in

- Re-key the locks and change garage and gate codes
- Set up utilities and change the HVAC filter
- Keep your closing documents in a safe place

Quick glossary

Contingency

A condition in the contract, such as inspection, appraisal or financing, that must be met for the sale to move forward.

Due-diligence or inspection period

The time the contract gives you to inspect and investigate the home.

Earnest money

Your good-faith deposit, usually credited toward your purchase at closing.

Disclosure

The seller's written statement about the condition and history of the home.

Title report or commitment

A report of liens, easements and other items recorded against the property.

Escrow

A neutral party that holds funds and documents until closing.

Seller concession

Money the seller agrees to put toward your closing costs.

Closing

The day the loan funds, the deed records, and the home becomes yours.

Moving to another state? I can connect you with a trusted agent where you are going and stay in touch to make sure you are well taken care of.

This guide is general information about the home buying process. It is not legal, tax or lending advice. Laws, contracts, deadlines and customs vary by state; always rely on your signed contract, your agent and your lender.



Ready when you are

Whether you are buying this year, just starting to plan, or moving to another state, I am happy to answer questions in English or Spanish. No pressure, just straight answers.

Search homes: realsanchez.com/listing

Schedule a free consultation: realsanchez.com/schedule-a-free-consultation

Moving out of state? Ask for a referral: realsanchez.com/contact

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