

Your First-Time Home Buyer Checklist

Buying your first home is a big step, and it goes smoothly when you take it one stage at a time. Check things off as you go, and reach out any time you want a second set of eyes.

1. Get money-ready

3 TO 6 MONTHS BEFORE YOU SHOP

- ☐ Pull your free credit reports at annualcreditreport.com and dispute any errors
- ☐ Pay down credit card balances and avoid opening new credit
- ☐ Gather 2 years of W-2s and tax returns, 30 days of pay stubs, and 2 months of bank statements
- ☐ Save for your down payment **and** closing costs (often about 2% to 5% of the price)
- ☐ Keep an emergency cushion for after you move in

2. Explore your loan options

BEFORE YOU TOUR HOMES

- ☐ Talk with 2 to 3 lenders and compare their Loan Estimates side by side
- ☐ Ask about FHA, conventional, VA (if eligible) and USDA loans
- ☐ Ask about **down payment assistance**, including CHFA programs in Colorado
- ☐ Get a full **pre-approval letter**, not just a pre-qualification
- ☐ Choose a comfortable **monthly payment**, including taxes, insurance and any HOA dues

Good to know: You don't need 20% down. Many first-time buyers put down 3% to 5%, and eligible veterans and service members may put down nothing with a VA loan.

3. Define your home

YOUR WISH LIST

- ☐ List your must-haves vs. nice-to-haves
- ☐ Pick 2 to 3 neighborhoods that fit your commute and lifestyle
- ☐ Check school districts if they matter to you
- ☐ Decide whether you're open to new construction, resale, or both
- ☐ Have your own agent with you from the very first model-home visit

4. Shop smart

TOURING AND OFFERS

- ☐ Review and sign a written buyer agreement with your agent before touring
- ☐ Tour in person or by video, and take notes and photos
- ☐ Look closely at the roof, windows and siding. Colorado hail is real
- ☐ Review recent comparable sales before writing an offer
- ☐ Write a strong, clean offer with deadlines you can meet

From offer to keys

5. Under contract

USUALLY 30 TO 45 DAYS TO CLOSING

- ☐ Deliver your **earnest money** on time
- ☐ Schedule the home inspection right away
- ☐ Consider a **radon test** and a **sewer line scope**; both are common in Colorado
- ☐ Meet the inspection objection deadline in your contract
- ☐ Review the title commitment and any HOA documents
- ☐ Get homeowner's insurance quotes early and compare hail deductibles
- ☐ Lock your interest rate with your lender
- ☐ Answer lender requests quickly and send every document they ask for

Don't rock the boat: Until you close, don't change jobs, open new credit, finance furniture, or move large sums of money without asking your lender first.

6. Closing day

THE FINISH LINE

- ☐ Review your **Closing Disclosure** at least 3 business days before closing
- ☐ **Call the title company** at a known number to verify wire instructions. Never trust emailed changes
- ☐ Do the final walkthrough
- ☐ Bring a valid photo ID and your certified funds or wire confirmation
- ☐ Sign, celebrate, and get your keys!

7. After you move in

SETTLING IN

- ☐ Change or re-key the locks
- ☐ Set up utilities and update your address
- ☐ Save your closing documents in a safe place
- ☐ Start a home maintenance fund, about 1% of the home's value per year

Ready for your own game plan?

Book a free strategy call and we'll map out your next steps together.

Call or text
720-301-5413

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