



PLATINUM  
LENDING SOLUTIONS



FIRST-TIME  
HOME BUYER  
GUIDE



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## WHY WORK WITH ME?

Your mortgage should feel understandable, strategic, and aligned with your bigger financial goals.

- **Personal guidance**

I help you understand your options in plain language and walk you through each step, from pre-approval to closing.

- **Smart loan strategy**

We will compare programs, payment structures, down payment options, and long-term costs so your loan fits your life - not just the transaction

- **Clear communication**

You will know what is happening, what is needed next, and what to expect before surprises become stressful.

- **Buyer confidence**

My goal is to help you feel prepared, informed, and confident from the first conversation through closing day.

# The Home Buying Roadmap

The process is easier when you know the order of events. Here is the typical path:





## STEP - BY - STEP GUIDE

### **1. Know What You Can Afford**

The purchase price is only one part of your budget. A realistic home buying plan should include principal and interest, property taxes, homeowners insurance, mortgage insurance if applicable, HOA dues, utilities, and maintenance. The goal is not to buy the maximum you qualify for - it is to choose a payment that still lets you live comfortably and keep saving.

### **2. Get Pre-Approved Before You Shop**

A strong pre-approval reviews your income, assets, credit, debt, and available funds before you make an offer.

This helps you shop with confidence and shows sellers you are serious. It also gives us time to identify anything that could slow the process down, such as documentation gaps or credit items that need attention.

### **3. Understand Your Loan Options**

Common first-time buyer options may include conventional loans, FHA loans, VA loans for eligible veterans and service members, and USDA loans for qualifying rural or suburban areas. Each program has different down payment requirements, mortgage insurance rules, credit standards, and property guidelines. We will compare the options side by side so you understand both the monthly payment and the long-term cost.

### **4. Plan for Down Payment and Closing Costs**

Your down payment is separate from closing costs. Closing costs can include lender fees, title and escrow charges, prepaid taxes and insurance, appraisal, recording fees, and other third-party costs. In some cases, seller credits, gift funds, or assistance programs may help reduce the amount needed at closing.

## STEP - BY - STEP GUIDE

### **5. Build a Smart Home Search Strategy**

It is easy to focus on finishes, paint colors, and staging, but location, layout, condition, commute, and resale value matter more. Make a list of must-haves, nice-to-haves, and deal breakers. This keeps your search focused and helps you make a clear decision when the right home appears.

### **6. Make a Strong Offer**

A competitive offer is not just about price. Sellers also look at timelines, contingencies, earnest money, financing strength, and how clean the offer is. Your real estate agent and lending team should work together so your offer is both attractive to the seller and protective of you as the buyer.

### **7. Complete the Home Inspection**

The inspection helps you understand the home condition before you fully commit. It may reveal safety concerns, needed repairs, roof or plumbing issues, electrical concerns, or deferred maintenance. Depending on your contract, you may negotiate repairs, request a credit, accept the home as-is, or choose not to move forward.

### **8. Navigate the Appraisal and Underwriting**

The appraisal is ordered by the lender to confirm the home value supports the purchase price. At the same time, underwriting reviews the final loan file. During this stage, avoid large purchases, new credit accounts, undocumented deposits, or employment changes without talking with your lender first.

### **9. Prepare for Closing**

Before closing, you will receive a Closing Disclosure that outlines your final loan terms, payment, and cash needed to close. Review it carefully and ask questions. On closing day, you sign final documents, funds are transferred, and once recording is complete, the home officially becomes yours.

### **10. Set Yourself Up for Success After Closing**

Before closing, you will receive a Closing Disclosure that outlines your final loan terms, payment, and cash needed to close. Review it carefully and ask questions. On closing day, you sign final documents, funds are transferred, and once recording is complete, the home officially becomes yours.



# Common First-Time Buyer Mistakes to Avoid

## 01 Shopping before pre-approval

You may fall in love with a home before knowing your actual budget or loan options.

## 02 Focusing only on rate

Rate matters, but so do fees, loan structure, mortgage insurance, and the overall strategy.

## 03 Changing finances mid-process

New debt, large transfers, or job changes can delay or jeopardize approval.

## 04 Skipping due diligence

Inspection, appraisal, title, and insurance all help protect you before closing.

## 05 Maxing out the budget

A comfortable payment is better than a stressful one. Leave room for life and maintenance.

# Quick buyer checklist:

- ✓ Check credit and savings
- ✓ Gather income and asset documents
- ✓ Get pre-approved
- ✓ Choose a trusted real estate agent
- ✓ Tour homes within your budget
- ✓ Make a smart offer
- ✓ Complete inspection and appraisal
- ✓ Receive final loan approval
- ✓ Review closing numbers
- ✓ Sign, close, and get your keys



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