

Your Home Buying Checklist

Presented by:



Are you ready to buy a house?



Before you start getting click-happy with pictures and scheduling house showings, get prepared for the home buying process. Too many people jump into their home search only to find out they can't afford the house they want, or they don't get approved for their mortgage loan because they didn't have the right documentation.

When you start looking for a home, you don't want to find yourself in an awkward situation. Buying a house is already a huge financial decision. Don't add to the stress. Read through our *10-minute* checklist to get a quick look at how to get prepared for buying a home. You can even print it out as a go-to reference.

Contents:

1. Select a Lender & Get Pre-Approved
2. Find Out How Much You Can Afford
3. How to Match Your Needs With a House
4. Mortgage Paperwork: What You Need
5. Making the Right Offer
6. Be Ready for Closing the Deal

Home Buying Checklist

As you start to think about buying a house, make sure you are ready. The buying process (and choosing your future dream home) is an exciting time, so don't let a few obstacles get in your way. Know what to expect and feel confident in what you're doing.



Select a Lender & Get Pre-Approved

Before you begin getting serious with your home search, talk to a few mortgage lenders. Compare and bargain. You want to find a lender who will offer excellent service, a competitive rate, and loan options that meet your needs.

After you've selected a lender, get pre-approved for a loan with them. It'll show you how much you've been approved to borrow and will provide a quick glimpse into what homes you can afford.



Find Out How Much You Can Afford

With a pre-approval letter, you'll have a good glimpse at what price range you can afford, but home ownership comes with a multitude of costs. You'll need to budget in extra expenses before you truly know what you can afford.

Let's break out typical costs by one-time fees and recurring (monthly) expenses:

One Time Fees	Recurring Costs
Down payment	Mortgage payments
Home appraisal	Maintenance costs
Home inspection	HOA (Homeowner's Association) Fees
Termite inspection	Utilities
Origination fees	Home repairs
Closing costs	Lawn care
Moving expenses	

By adding up the amount of each of these expenses, you can easily gauge how much money you'll need in the beginning and from every month moving forward. The last thing you want to do is strain your finances. Be comfortable with your home purchase.

Checklist Continued (pt. 2)



How to Match Your Needs with a Home

Every buyer has different needs. After you know how much you can afford, take into consideration what you need before you buy. Sometimes you might need to make sacrifices depending on what you want and need.

Think about:

Do you need more or less space for your family?

Solution: Focus on in-home amenities (number of bedrooms, baths, etc)

Do you want your children to go to a good school?

Solution: Gather local school information and see which homes are for sale nearby.

Do you want a shorter commute to work?

Solution: Measure the travel time from a home's address to your work with Google Maps.



Mortgage Paperwork: What You Need

When you apply for a mortgage loan, you'll need to provide a lot of information to the bank or lender. It's best to have this ready, so you don't encounter any road blocks during the home buying process.

Here are some typical documents you'll need to share with your lender:

Income Verification	Names & Addresses of employers for 2 years
	W-2s for 2 years
	One to two years of tax returns
	Most recent pay stub reflecting 30 days of income
	Proof of pension income, if applicable
	Social security and disability payments, if applicable
	Dividend earnings
	Bonuses
	Child support earning (optional)
	Alimony or separate maintenance (optional)
Asset Verification	Bank account numbers and balances
	Bank statements for two to three months
	Copy of earnest money deposit
Debt Verification	<i>Information on debts, such as car loans, student loans, credit card debt, etc</i>

Checklist Continued (pt. 3)



Making the Right Offer

The market will always influence how much you should offer on a home, but here are a few factors you should use to base your offer on:

- ☐ Prices of similar homes in the neighborhood
- ☐ Condition of the house
- ☐ What you can comfortably afford (based on pre-approval)

Also consider how long the house has been sitting on the market (for sale) and see if you can get to know the seller's motivations for moving. Someone who is desperate to sell may be more willing to bargain and accept lower offers.



Be Ready for Closing the Deal

Once your offer is accepted you'll need to complete a few more steps to finally make the house yours. If you haven't already provided your income and asset information to your lender, now is the time to provide him with the documentation along with a signed purchase contract. They will submit your application to a loan processor to approve the final documents. During this, you should obtain a homeowners insurance quote. You will need insurance coverage before your loan can close.

After your offer has been accepted, your lender will schedule a home appraisal to make sure the value of the house supports the loan and he will order title insurance. In addition, your real estate agent will schedule a home inspection to ensure there are no significant defects to the property.

Once your loan is approved, your loan processor will schedule the closing (which officially transfers the title of the house to your name). A Good Faith Estimate (GFE) will be mailed to you, which is an itemized list of exact costs. You will need to pay these at closing.

When the closing is scheduled, you will attend it with accompanying parties and receive the keys to your new home!

Want to Know More?

If you'd like to learn more about buying a home, contact The Keith Beatty Team today or download our [Free Guide to Buying a Home in Wilmington, NC](#)! You can read more about our services and home the home buying process at [our blog](#).

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