

Home Buying Checklist

Checklist · 28 items · 9 sections

Buying a home is one of the biggest decisions you'll make. This step-by-step home buying checklist walks you through every stage from figuring out your budget and getting pre-approved to closing day, so nothing gets missed. Once you're under contract, the Home Inspection Checklist and Home Appraisal Checklist cover due diligence. After closing, the Move-In Checklist and Moving Checklist take you the rest of the way.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/home-buying-checklist>

FINANCIAL PREP

- Calculate how much home you can afford: use a home affordability calculator
HIGH
Experts recommend housing costs be no more than 28% of gross monthly income
- Check your credit score: aim for 620+ (740+ for best rates)
HIGH
- Calculate your debt-to-income (DTI) ratio: aim for under 43%
HIGH
- Start saving for a down payment (3–20% of purchase price)
HIGH
- Budget for closing costs (typically 3–6% of home price)
HIGH
- Research first-time buyer programs, grants, and down payment assistance

MORTGAGE PRE-APPROVAL

- Get pre-approved for a mortgage from at least 2–3 lenders
HIGH
- Gather documents: pay stubs, W-2s, bank statements, tax returns
HIGH
- Compare mortgage types: 30-year fixed, 15-year, FHA, VA, USDA
HIGH
- Compare interest rates, fees, and loan terms from each lender
HIGH

FINDING YOUR AGENT

- Interview and hire a licensed real estate agent

HIGH

HOUSE HUNTING

- Define your must-haves: location, size, bedrooms, school district
- Research neighborhoods: crime, schools, commute, future development
- Tour at least 10 homes before making an offer
- Check flood zone status and HOA rules for each property

MAKING AN OFFER

- Make a competitive offer based on comparable sales (comps)
- Include contingencies: inspection, financing, and appraisal
- Negotiate price, repairs, and closing cost contributions

HIGH

HIGH

HIGH

INSPECTION & APPRAISAL

- Hire a licensed home inspector: attend the inspection
- Review inspection report: negotiate repairs or price reduction
- Lender orders a home appraisal: ensure value meets purchase price

HIGH

HIGH

HIGH

BEFORE CLOSING

- Get homeowner's insurance quotes and choose a policy
- Do a final walk-through 24 hours before closing
- Review Closing Disclosure: compare to original Loan Estimate

HIGH

HIGH

HIGH

CLOSING DAY

- Wire down payment and closing costs to escrow/title company

HIGH

- Sign all closing documents: bring valid ID

HIGH

- Receive keys: you're a homeowner!

HIGH

AFTER CLOSING

- Change locks and update address with USPS, banks, and DMV

HIGH