



1ST CLASS REAL ESTATE
— EXCELLENCE —

Buyer HANDBOOK

A HOME BUYER'S GUIDE

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1ST CLASS REAL ESTATE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PREPARING TO BUY

Getting Started	7
The Home Buying Process	8
Real Estate Terms	9
FAQ's	10

2. FINANCIALS

Getting Pre-Approved	12
Pre-Approval Checklist	13
Financial Must Haves	14
Mortgage Loan Types	15

3. FINDING YOUR HOME

Buyer Questionnaire	17
Picking the Perfect Home	18
The Offer Process	20

4. FINALS STEPS AND CLOSING

Final Steps	22
Things to Avoid	23
Scheduling Your Move	24
What to Bring to Closing	25
Resources	28

Thank you!

A highly motivated and ambitious Realtor, April Johnson greatly values the trust real estate buyers, sellers, investors, and veterans have placed in her to help them achieve their goals in a smooth and fulfilling process. Driven by a strong passion for helping clients achieve their goals of owning a home and building generational wealth, April leverages her extensive knowledge of the local market to guide, advise, and educate her clients, effectively empowering them to make well-informed financial decisions.

As a decorated United States Army Veteran who diligently served her country for over 22 years, April demonstrates great discipline, a sense of duty, great commitment, and loyalty. She has a deep connection to families with a military background, understands how stressful the moving process for the military can be, and is passionate about helping them relocate or settle with ease. With a Master's degree in Acquisition Management, April strives to go the extra mile to help buyers find their dream homes and assist sellers in marketing their properties for top dollar. With a strong passion for Interior design, April is determined to offer buyers valuable insights on revitalizing their living spaces and help sellers with superior staging.

As real estate transactions are associated with many uncertainties and stress, April is determined to take the worry and confusion away. As a people person, April prides herself on connecting with clients, treating them with care and respect, and offering top-notch service. This aspect will assure her clients that she will walk with them from the start to closing and after the transactions and enable her to leave them happy and satisfied. When she is not busy pursuing her clients' goals, April enjoys spending time with her family and friends, volunteering in her community, working out, and reading to keep up with ever-changing market trends. Whether you are looking to buy, sell, or invest in real estate, you can be confident that April won't rest until she turns your real estate dreams into reality.

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preparing
to buy

GETTING STARTED

We start every home buying process with the proper research and preparation. Your checklist for this stage includes the following goals:

- ✓ Determine the type of home you want
- ✓ Determine where you want to live
- ✓ Find a local real estate agent to help you



HOME BUYING PROCESS

1

MEET WITH YOUR AGENT

2

GET PRE-APPROVED

3

FIND YOUR HOME

4

OFFER & ACCEPTANCE

5

ORDER INSPECTION & APPRAISAL

6

PREPARE FOR CLOSING

7

GET YOUR KEYS

HOME BUYER

WORDS YOU SHOULD KNOW

CLOSING COSTS

Taxes, insurance, and other lender expenses paid at the end of the transaction by the seller, buyer, or both.

APPRAISAL

Property and/or land valuation completed by an appraiser who determines the market value - typically 1-4 weeks.

INSPECTION

A visual and mechanical examination of a home to identify defects and assess the home's condition.

DOWN PAYMENT

Is what you typically pay up front for a house in order to close the sale. Usually 3-20% of the purchase price. Not the same as closing costs.

EARNEST MONEY

is a sum of money you put down to demonstrate your seriousness about buying a home

TITLE INSURANCE

Insurance to protect the lender or owner from any claims related to the title of the property. Usually paid for by the buyer.

DEBT TO INCOME

DTI is the comparison of your monthly debt payments to your monthly income before taxes, expressed as a percentage.

CLOSING

Usually a meeting that includes documents, signatures, checks, and everything needed to buy or sell the house.

ESCROW

Funds deposited with a third party and held until a specific date is reached and/or a specific condition is met.

BUYER FAQs

WHAT'S THE FIRST STEP OF THE HOME BUYING PROCESS?

You'll need to get a mortgage unless you're paying cash for a house. To know how much home you can afford, you need to get pre-approved for a loan first.

HOW MUCH MONEY DO I NEED FOR A DOWN PAYMENT?

Usually 3-5% of the purchase price of the house.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BUY A HOME?

Typically around 30 to 45 days after acceptance.

WHAT OTHER FEES ARE THERE, BESIDES THE DOWNPAYMENT?

Mainly loan origination and closing costs at about 2% to 4% of the loan amount. You'll also have to pay for a home inspector, a home warranty, HOA fees, insurance, home maintenance and more.

CAN I BUY AND SELL MY CURRENT ONE AT THE SAME TIME?

Absolutely! Depending on your situation, we'll recommend buying or selling first.

WHAT KIND OF CREDIT SCORE DO I NEED TO BUY A HOME?

A score of 620 or higher can get you better lending terms.

WHEN CAN I EXPECT TO RECIEVE THE KEYS TO THE NEW HOUSE?

You'll get the keys to your new home on closing day once the transaction is complete and fully funded by the title company.

A modern dining room interior featuring a round, dark-colored table with a ribbed pedestal base. Four contemporary chairs with light-colored upholstery and dark legs with gold-colored tips are arranged around the table. On the table sits a vase of pink roses. Three wireframe pendant lights hang above the table. The background includes a dark wall and vertical wooden slats. The floor is made of light-colored wood.

financials
\$\$\$



GETTING PRE-APPROVED

A pre-approval letter in your hands can turn the home offers you make into irresistible invitations. So before you start looking for a home, getting your finances in order is crucial.

Like the first stage of the buying process, shopping for a loan and getting pre-approved are best done a month or two ahead of your home search. Sorting out your finances can take some time; more importantly, the application for mortgage pre-approval takes approximately 45 days.



PRE-APPROVAL CHECKLIST

PROOF OF INCOME:

Provide documentation of your income, such as W-2 forms, tax returns, and pay stubs for the past two years.

EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION:

Provide evidence of stable employment for at least two years, such as a letter from your employer or a verification of employment form.

CREDIT HISTORY:

Your lender will check your credit report to evaluate your creditworthiness, so make sure you have a good credit score and a clean credit history.

ASSETS:

You'll need to provide documentation of all your assets, such as bank statements, investment accounts, and retirement accounts.

DEBT OBLIGATIONS:

Provide documentation of all your current debt obligations, such as credit cards, car loans, and student loans.

DOWN PAYMENT:

Determine the amount of your down payment and provide documentation of the source of funds for the down payment, such as bank statements or gift letters.

PRE-APPROVAL APPLICATION:

Complete a pre-approval application with your lender, providing all the necessary information and documentation.

PROPERTY INFORMATION:

Provide information on the property you intend to purchase, including the address, purchase price, and any other relevant details.

FINANCIAL MUST HAVES

DOWN PAYMENT

Although you'll pay this at closing, proof of this is also what will help you secure your mortgage.

EARNEST MONEY

When you make an offer on a home, you will be expected to pay a deposit as a show of good faith. It will be applied to your down payment or closing costs.

INSURANCE

You may need to pay for mortgage insurance depending on your down payment and loan. You are required to purchase both Title Insurance and Homeowners Insurance.

CLOSING FEES

Be prepared to cover the cost of attorney fees, surveys, appraisals, and documentation.



MORTGAGE LOAN TYPES

LOAN TYPE	WHO QUALIFIES	DOWN PAYMENT	UPFRONT MORTGAGE INSURANCE	MONTHLY MORTGAGE INSURANCE
FHA LOANS FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION	anyone who meets minimum credit and income levels	At least 3.5% of purchase price	1.75% of loan amount	0.07% of the principal balance for the life of the loan, if down payment was below 5%
VA LOANS DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS	Current servicemembers veterans with honorable discharge some surviving spouses	NONE	0	0
USDA LOANS U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	Anyone who meets minimum credit and income levels who is buying a home in a USDA designated area	0	2% of the loan amount; can be rolled into mortgage	0.03% of the remaining principal balance for the life of the loan, if down payment was 0
CONVENTIONAL MORTGAGES	Anyone who meets the lender's credit, income, and debt level requirements	Varies from 3% to 20%, but typically ranges from 5% to 20%	0	If the down payment is less than 20% mortgage insurance runs as much as 0.21% of the loan each month



finding
your home

BUYER QUESTIONNAIRE

CONTACT INFO

BUYER NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

CO-BUYER NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

HAVE YOU BEEN PRE-APPROVED?

☐

YES

☐

NO

WHAT'S YOUR PRICE RANGE?

ARE YOU SELLING YOUR CURRENT HOME?

☐

YES

☐

NO

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

DETAILS

BATHROOMS:

BEDROOMS:

WHEN DO YOU NEED TO MOVE BY?

AREA:

STYLE OF HOME:

HOUSE

☐

TOWNHOUSE

☐

CONDO

☐

MOST IMPORTANT IN A HOME:

DEAL BREAKERS IN A HOME:

PICKING THE PERFECT HOME

Before you look for a home, you should know the type of property you're after. Is it a condo that meets your needs and preferences? Or is it a single-family home that fits your long-term goals?

To help you decide, consider the following factors:

HOW MUCH YOU CAN AFFORD

Take into consideration your annual income, monthly expenses, and debt-to-income ratio, all of which will affect the mortgage loan you can afford.

AGE OF THE PROPERTY

[City, State] real estate offers both historic homes and new construction. A resale property might be the one that you need with a few minor tweaks. But if you're after a brand-new, move-in property, consider buying new construction.

NON-NEGOTIABLES

List down features that you absolutely need to have in your new house. Consider your proximity to your work and community services, nearby schools, home size and number of rooms. This will help you determine the type of property that meets your needs best.

FINDING THE RIGHT LOCATION

CONSIDER THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Research the community where you plan to purchase a home. Look for features such as nearby schools, public transportation, shopping centers, parks, and entertainment options.

PROXIMITY TO WORK

Consider the distance and ease of transportation to your workplace. Check traffic patterns, parking options, and commuting times.

CHECK THE LOCAL MARKET

Study the local real estate market to understand the property values, trends, and market conditions. Check the price of homes in the area to ensure that you are getting a fair deal.

CHECK PROPERTY CONDITION

Examine the condition of the house, including its age, construction quality, and necessary repairs. Have a home inspection to determine if there are any major defects or issues.

EVALUATE SURROUNDINGS

Take into account the property's surroundings, such as traffic noise, air pollution, and potential hazards. Consider the climate and weather patterns in the area.

CONSIDER ACCESSIBILITY

Think about the accessibility of the property to other amenities, such as hospitals, police stations, fire stations, and airports.

CHECK THE CRIME RATE

Research the crime rate in the neighborhood to ensure the safety of your family and property.

DETERMINE PROPERTY VALUE

Assess the potential future value of the property based on location, surrounding developments, and community growth trends.

THE OFFER PROCESS

ONCE YOU SUBMIT AN OFFER

We'll meet and review your offer together. Once the details are thoroughly reviewed and understood, the seller will have three options:

1 - ACCEPT THE OFFER AS WRITTEN

2 - DECLINE THE OFFER

If they feel the offer isn't close enough to their expectations to further negotiate this offer.

3 - COUNTER OFFER

If they agree to most the offer but want to change a few details, they can counter our offer with the new terms.

You can negotiate back and forth as many times as needed until you reach an agreement or someone chooses to walk away.

ONCE AN OFFER IS ACCEPTED BY BOTH PARTIES, YOU ARE OFFICIALLY UNDER CONTRACT.

A photograph of a classical building with a large flowering bush in the foreground. The building is light-colored with classical architectural details like columns and pediments. A large bush with bright pink flowers is in the foreground on the left. The text "final steps & closing" is overlaid in white serif font.

final steps & closing



FINAL STEPS

ORDER THE INSPECTION

Ordering inspections before closing when buying a home is crucial to avoid potential complications and ensure the home is in good condition. General and pest inspections should be completed, and any issues should be addressed before finalizing the sale.

ORDER THE APPRAISAL

Ordering an appraisal for buyers before closing on a home can be a good idea to ensure that the home is priced correctly and to avoid any surprises during the sale process. However, it is not always necessary and the decision should be made based on individual circumstances.

FINALIZE LOAN APPLICATION

You'll submit all necessary documents, such as income verification and credit reports, to the lender. The lender will then review the application and make a decision on whether to approve the loan. Once approved, you'll sign the loan documents and provide a down payment before the loan can be funded and the home purchase can be completed.

NEGOTIATE FINAL OFFER

When negotiating a final offer for a property, it's crucial to consider current market and property conditions, urgency of the sale, and be realistic with expectations to come up with a fair and reasonable offer. Flexibility and compromise are key to reaching a mutually beneficial agreement with potential buyers.

THINGS TO AVOID AFTER APPLYING FOR A MORTGAGE

Don't change bank
accounts.

Don't apply for new
credit or close any
credit accounts.

Don't co-sign other
loans for anyone.

Don't make any
large purchases

Don't deposit cash into your bank
accounts before speaking with your
bank or lender.

Consistency is the name of the game after applying for a mortgage. Be sure to discuss any changes in income, assets, or credit with your lender, so you don't jeopardize your application.

The best plan is to fully disclose and discuss your intentions with your lender before you do anything financial in nature.

SCHEDULING YOUR MOVE

AFTER SIGNING

Start by decluttering and packing up your belongings and donate or throw away anything you don't need, create an inventory of anything valuable that you plan to move, and, finally, you'll want to get estimates from moving companies for your specific needs.

4 WEEKS TO MOVE

- Schedule movers/moving truck
- Buy/find packing materials
- Start packing

3 WEEKS TO MOVE

- Your lender will arrange appraisal
- Title work will be completed
- Keep packing

2 WEEKS TO MOVE

- We will schedule you a time to close and sign your documents
- Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable)
- Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc.
- Minimize grocery shopping
- Keep on packing

1 WEEK TO MOVE

- You will complete your final walkthrough
- Finish packing
- Clean
- Pack essentials for a few nights in new home
- Confirm delivery date with the moving company.

WHAT TO BRING TO CLOSING

A PHOTO ID

A CASHIER'S CHECK

THE CLOSING DISCLOSURE

PROOF OF INSURANCE

YOUR REAL ESTATE AGENT

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

Selecting us as your realtor ensures a devoted and skilled team dedicated to assisting you in buying your ideal property. We offer personalized service, expert guidance, and a steadfast commitment to your satisfaction throughout the entire buying process.

- ✓ HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY
- ✓ COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSIVENESS
- ✓ PROFESSIONALISM AND EXPERTISE
- ✓ DILIGENCE AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL



SUCCESS STORIES

April is a fantastic agent to work with. We were unsure on where to find our new home and April not only guided us to the right town/ neighborhood but also to the best home we could have found within our budget. She also helped to navigate all communication with our builder and ensure that our home was just what we wanted. I cannot recommend her enough.

CARRIE HARDING



April is Superb! April made the process of selling my home a breeze. She told me what needed to get done and told me not to worry. The whole process went smoothly. She was always a call away and she was very responsive when I needed anything. Thank you April for making this experience smooth during the most stressful time of my life.

VALASKA SUMBRY



Amazing!!! You can say she went above and beyond through the entire process but I will say she was better than that. She truly had my best interest at heart. She was detailed, knowledgeable, and consistent with communication which made everything a breeze for me. If anyone is looking for someone that will be your partner through the process, April is the one for you.

OLIVIA HOLSTON





Congratulations!

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RESOURCES

LOCAL LENDERS

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

OUTDOORS

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

HOME INSPECTORS

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

ELECTRIC & PLUMBING

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

PROFESSIONAL MOVERS

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

HOME WARRANTY

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

FLOORING & ROOFING

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

PAINTING

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890

Company Name.....123-456-7890