



FAMILY  
FIRST  
FUNDING



*First Time*  
**HOME BUYER  
GUIDE**

[www.fam1fund.com](http://www.fam1fund.com)



# WHY BE A RENTER WHEN YOU CAN BE AN OWNER?



## Owners

- Build wealth and home appreciation by paying down their principal
- Enjoy valuable tax benefits
- Tap into equity for college, home repair, or family emergencies
- Pay consistent monthly bills over the life of a fixed-rate mortgage
- Renovate and decorate as they please
- Support and get supported by their neighborhood communities
- Feel pride of ownership and joy of community engagement

## Renters

- Have no potential for profit
- Do not enjoy tax benefits
- Contend with rent increases
- Do not financially benefit from property improvements
- Miss out on the joys of community
- Have no right to personalize their home
- Lack control over pet policies





# STEP 1:

## DISCOVER YOUR BUYING POWER



Not sure how much house you can afford? Most people aren't. Partner with a seasoned FFF Loan Officer to assess your financial situation and determine what type of dream home and mortgage you can afford and confidently enjoy. Together you'll be able to realistically add up the basics:

**Monthly Income** — your salary and investment income set a baseline for what kind of monthly mortgage payment you can afford

**Available Funds** — the amount of savings, investments, or other cash sources you can combine to cover a down payment and closing costs

**Debt and Expenses** — all your monthly obligations like credit cards, car payments, student loans, groceries, utilities, health insurance, life insurance, child support, medical payment plans, and personal loan payments

**Credit Profile** — your credit score and debt amount help determine how much money you can borrow and at what interest rate



## STEP 2:

# OPTIMIZE YOUR CREDIT SCORE



To raise your credit score:

### Set up auto-pay and make payments on time

35% of your score is defined by your overall payment history.

### Keep your credit card utilization ratio below 30%

30% of your score is defined by balances outstanding vs credit limits. For example: If your credit limit is \$15,000, your credit balance should be less than \$4,500 each month.

### Keep your 0 balance credit cards open

to avoid increasing your debt utilization ratio. 10% is based on the mix of credit in use.

### Review your credit reports

(Experian, Equifax, Transunion) for inaccuracies. 15% of your credit score is based on your credit history.

### Avoid opening new credit accounts

10% of your credit score is based on new credit inquiries.

These factors define your credit score which predicts how you'll handle your mortgage obligations:

#### Payment History on Revolving Accounts

Make higher than minimum payments before they're due.

#### Balances Outstanding vs Credit Limits

Don't charge over 50% of your credit limit; it's better to have small balances on a few cards than to max out one card.

#### Credit Types

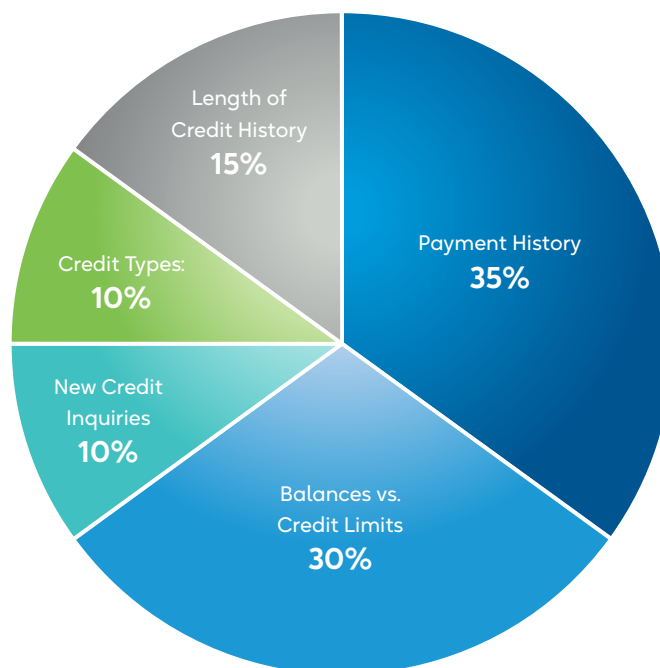
Maintain a healthy mix of revolving and installment accounts (your score will reflect open & closed accounts).

#### New Credit Inquiries

Each inquiry could reduce your score between 5 & 15 points; it's okay to have 5-7 inquiries per year.

#### Length of Credit History

Though scores drop after bankruptcies (which stay on a credit report for 10 years) and state tax liens (which stay on a credit report for 7 years) timely payments on other tradelines can improve credit scores.





## STEP 3:

# GET PRE-APPROVED



### Q: What is pre-approval and how long does it take?

**A:** Pre-approval (which usually takes about 1-3 days) is your Loan Officer's tool for determining your loan amount. How much you'll be allowed to borrow and at what interest rate will depend on:

- Debt-to-income (DTI) ratio
- Credit scores (Experian, Equifax, and Transunion)
- Assets (cars, boats, investments, retirement accounts)

### Q: Why is getting pre-approved better than getting pre-qualified?

**A:** Pre-qualifying only provides an estimate of how much you may be able to borrow. Pre-approval, which requires examination of your documents, is a commitment that kickstarts the application process and gives you time to shop and compare loan options. If you don't get pre-approved, you may waste time looking at homes out of your budget or lose leverage in multiple offer situations where your offer is less attractive to sellers.

### Q: How can I get a pre-approval letter?

**A:** You'll need to give your Loan Officer your social security number, driver's license, tax documents, proof of employment, income and debt documents, and permission to perform a credit check.

### Q: How long does pre-approval last?

**A:** A pre-approval letter may expire after 60 to 90 days. Then you can always provide your lender with updated paperwork and get a new one. This usually doesn't take too long either, since they already have the bulk of your information on file.

### Q: When should I get pre-approved?

**A:** The best time to get pre-approved is right before you start house shopping. This is the best way to know how much you can afford, and improves your chance of having an offer accepted over a buyer who does not have a pre-approval letter in hand.

### Q: Why should I partner with an FFF Loan Officer?

**A:** All the loan options out there can be overwhelming. We'll simplify your search to help you find one that matches your budget and priorities. Our team's communication is clear and consistent – from the moment you apply to the moment you sign your closing documents. Taking your home-buying journey with a seasoned Loan Officer makes it quicker and more enjoyable.



## STEP 4: CREATE YOUR POWER TEAM



Just as important as your Loan Officer is the Realtor you choose to help find a home that matches your lifestyle and budget. Your Realtor can help you find the perfect attorney, inspector, and title company.

Besides being approachable and friendly, make sure the Realtors you interview are:

- Familiar with the local area and neighborhood
- Knowledgeable about home features you prioritize
- Prepared to show excellent reviews and can handle negative feedback professionally
- Known for closing deals quickly and successfully
- Creative negotiators and proactive problem solvers
- Experienced with your specific buying scenario
- Good listeners – as good as your FFF Loan Officer
- Prepared to provide up-front quotes

A seasoned, reputable realtor will narrow down options that work for you and inform you when they can be viewed and inspected. Use your **FFF House Hunting Checklist** to make the process more efficient and enjoyable.





# STEP 5: FIND A HOME



This is the fun part! Visit as many Open Houses as you can. To make sure your excitement doesn't cloud your good judgement, fill out this **Home Buying checklist** at each viewing.

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Price: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Bedrooms: \_\_\_\_\_ Bathrooms: \_\_\_\_\_ Square Feet: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Schools: 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of Floors: \_\_\_\_\_

## Home Features

1=None 2=Awful 3=Acceptable 4=Good 5=Great

Outside:	1	2	3	4	5
Porch/Entryway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driveway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brick/Siding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back Deck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Swimming Pool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yard Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Master Bath:	1	2	3	4	5
Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shower	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tub	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cabinet Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flooring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Bathroom(s):	1	2	3	4	5
Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shower	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tub	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cabinet Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flooring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Master Bedroom:	1	2	3	4	5
Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flooring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bathroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Living Room:	1	2	3	4	5
Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Piso	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fireplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storage Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Kitchen:	1	2	3	4	5
Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flooring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counter Tops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cabinet Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appliances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Dining Room:	1	2	3	4	5
Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flooring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Condition of Home

	Y	N
• Do the lights dim when turning on appliances?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do the doors open and close properly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are there signs of moisture on the window frames or walls?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Does the furnace make strange noises while running?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is the floor around the toilet soft?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are the washer/dryer hookups in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is there water in the basement/foundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is there rust on the		
furnace?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
air conditioner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
water heater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Condition of Roof

	Y	N
• Are there signs of roof sagging?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are there missing roof tiles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are the roof tiles moldy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are the roof tiles curling or damaged?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Happy Shopping!*



# STEP 6:

## MAKE AN OFFER



Don't have much of a down payment saved?

There are many options for borrowers who have less than 20% to put down on a home. Depending on your situation, you may choose a conventional or a FHA loan.

### **Conventional Loan:**

- Require a down payment as low as 3%
- Good or excellent credit
- Allows you to eliminate mortgage insurance overtime and with value increases

### **FHA Loan:**

- Requires down payment as low as 3.5%
- Offers flexible credit requirements
- Requires higher amount of monthly debt in proportion to income permitted

\*Both loan options allow sellers to pay your closing costs. Ask your Loan Officer for details.



# STEP 7:

## APPLY FOR YOUR MORTGAGE LOAN



Complete this **Loan Approval Checklist**.

Submit the following information to your Loan Officer to kickstart the approval process:

- ☐ Source of your down payment (Gifts, checking/savings accounts, other sources)
- ☐ Last two years W2s
- ☐ Last two years personal tax returns. Filed with IRS. (All schedules please)
- ☐ 30 days current pay stubs
- ☐ Two months of most current bank statements for all accounts. (All pages.)
- ☐ Investment accounts, 401(k) and retirement statements (Most current. All pages.)
- ☐ Homeowners insurance agent name and number
- ☐ Copy of mortgage statement
- ☐ Proof of taxes, insurance. HOA
- ☐ Copy of driver's license

### (If Applicable)

- ☐ Copy of mortgage note/Agreement for Sub 2nd
- ☐ Copy of permanent resident alien cards/visa
- ☐ Divorce decree
- ☐ Child support order
- ☐ Bankruptcy papers and discharge notice
- ☐ Rental agreements

### For VA Loans

- ☐ Copy of DD-214
- ☐ Certificate of eligibility

### For USDA Loans

- ☐ Proof of income from non-borrowing household members

### For Retiree Loans

- ☐ Social Security Award Letter
- ☐ Pension Award Letter
- ☐ Last 2 Years 1099s



# STEP 8:

## SIGN CONTRACT OF SALE



Your attorney will review your contract then negotiate with the seller's attorney until both parties come to agreeable terms before all parties sign the contract.

### 7 Steps To Win That Bidding War

#### 1. Get pre-approved for a mortgage.

It used to be that getting pre-qualified was enough. But in today's market getting pre-approved will make a much stronger impression.

#### 2. Pay Cash.

If you have the means to do so, pay cash for the purchase. A cash buyer is always more attractive to a seller because they don't have the complications of the mortgage process. Ask about our **CashPower™** program!

#### 3. Ask Questions.

Don't be shy when questioning the seller's agent about activity on the home. The more information you have, the better for crafting your offer – or deciding against placing a bid.

#### 4. Eliminate Contingencies.

Many buyers nowadays are waiving the home inspection and the appraisal. Be flexible on the closing date.

#### 5. Add an escalation clause.

An escalation clause would say that the buyer will pay an amount above the highest bid, up to a certain price. It's helpful when there are multiple offers to avoid the back and forth.

#### 6. Tell people you're shopping for a home.

People want to help people they know. So tell your friends and family you're in the market – you never know, a friend might be thinking of selling!

#### 7. Make a personal connection.

Write a letter to the seller explaining why you love the house. Compliments and personal connections could lead the seller to spend more time looking at your offer even if it's a little less.

## STEP 9:

# APPRAISAL & INSPECTION REPORTS



It usually takes up to one week from the time the appraiser delivers a report. If there are no errors, the lender will have the report reviewed the same day it's submitted by the appraiser.

The loan processor will alert us of any outstanding items, then we will email you within 3 days so you can address them.

The appraiser can make changes to the appraisal and adjust it up or down with the correct data from other comparable homes that have sold.

Make sure to review your appraisal and inspection reports with your attorney, and request revisions if the appraisal does not support the agreed upon purchase price and the Lender requires the new purchase price and concessions indicated in the report.

### Here are the 5 most common revision items that could hold up your appraisal:

#### 1. Correct the spelling of the borrower and/or seller's name.

Half of the time this error is the customer's, the other half it's the Appraiser's.

#### 2. Add or delete a specific borrower to the appraisal.

This is up to the borrower and a co-borrower to take care of.

#### 3. Correct the Assessor's Parcel Number (APN)

Lenders require the APN entered on the appraisal to match exactly what the local Assessor indicates – sometimes the Appraiser needs to add -000 to the APN demonstrated in their report.

#### 4. Correct the purchase price and/or reported seller's concessions.

Borrowers often request this revision after the appraisal did not support the agreed upon purchase price and the Lender requires the new purchase price and concessions indicated in the report. Sometimes Appraisers are missing an addendum to the Purchase Agreement or Counter offer reflecting a different sales price or concession amount.

#### 5. Include a copy of the Appraiser's current license and/or E&O.



## STEP 10:

# APPLICATION PROCESSING



While you're reviewing your Welcome Package, the processor will verify your credit, employment, and assets, then submit your files to underwriting.

**To help your processor complete this step more efficiently make sure to:**

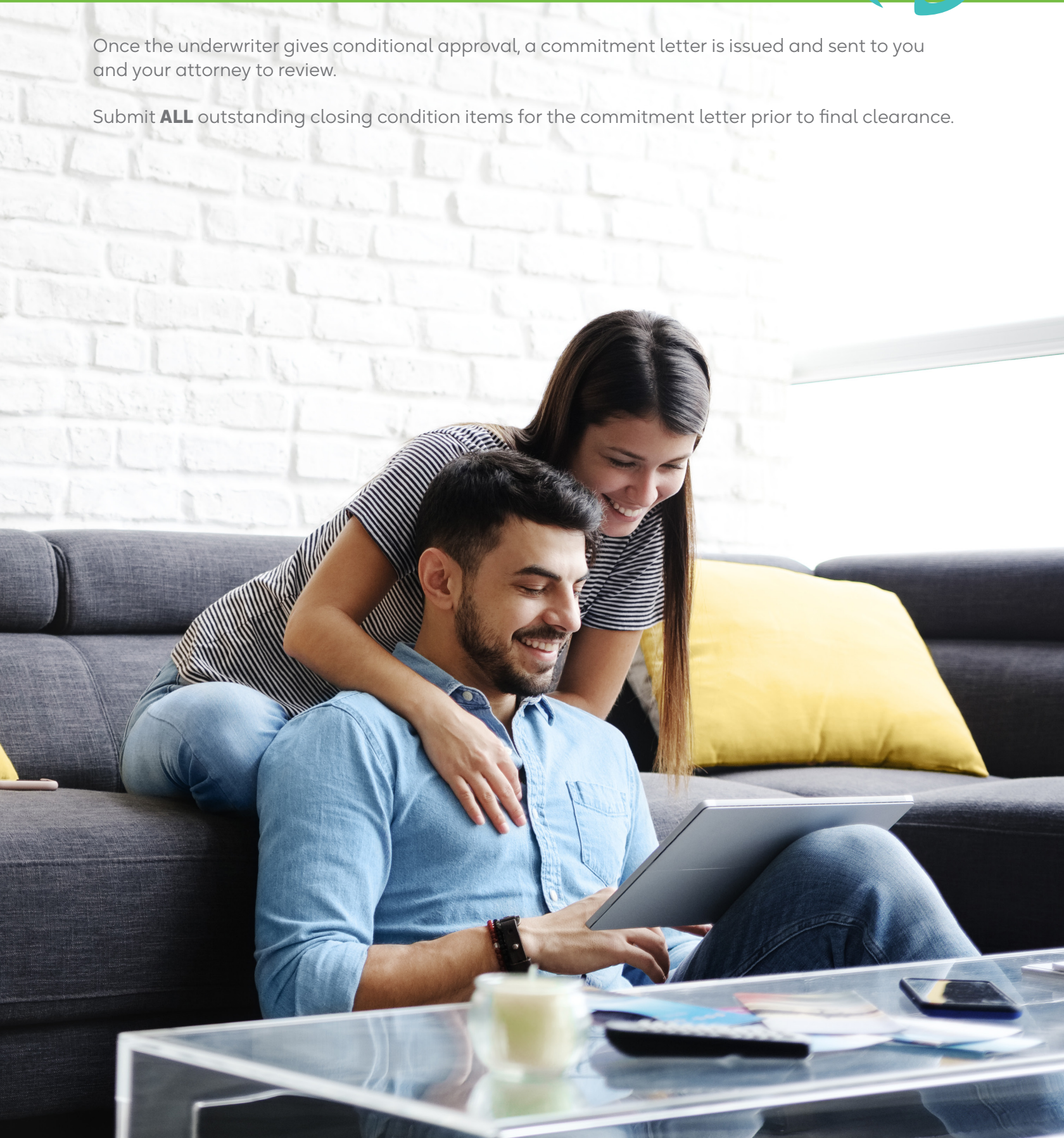
- ☐ Include all pages of a multi-page document, even if they're blank
- ☐ Make sure all documents are clear and legible
- ☐ Be prepared to provide additional documentation throughout the process (While it may seem like you're being asked for it repeatedly, some information needs to be verified at multiple stages of the loan process)
- ☐ 30 days current pay stubs
- ☐ Use your loan portal to upload documents securely, or send in an encrypted email to your loan officer or processor
- ☐ Copy of driver's license

## STEP 11: WAIT FOR UNDERWRITING



Once the underwriter gives conditional approval, a commitment letter is issued and sent to you and your attorney to review.

Submit **ALL** outstanding closing condition items for the commitment letter prior to final clearance.





## STEP 12:

# TITLE REPORT



Once your loan is approved, we will request that your attorney forward us a copy of the title binder for review. Any buyer or seller concerns will be addressed.

### **What is a Title Binder?**

This temporary form of real estate insurance is used during home ownership transfer to protect both buyers and sellers, especially in times when there might be a gap in the buyer's or seller's home insurance policy.

### **Will I Need a Title Binder?**

If you plan to remain in your home for more than two years, you more than likely do not need a title binder. However, if you plan on selling your home within two years of purchasing it, the title binder – or “interim binder” as it's sometimes called – is an important concept to understand, as it can save you money.

### **How Does a Title Binder Save Me Money?**

Each time a home is purchased or sold a title search must be paid for. Buying a title binder upfront could save you hundreds of dollars in title fees and allows the buyer to resell the same property with a policy of title issued at a lower cost.

Title insurance protects both buyer and lender against any defects in the title. You pay the title insurance company a one-time premium for searching through public records, preparing abstract titles, and issuing title insurance.

If you're an investor buying a “fix-up and flip” house to sell in a year and purchase a Title Binder upfront, when the time comes to sell you can use the same title company and avoid paying fees again.

## STEP 13:

# HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE POLICY



Provide your Processor with proof of homeowners insurance.

Make sure to shop around – get quotes from multiple companies and compare rates.

**Remember:** As a first-time homebuyer, you will need to pay one full year of homeowner's insurance upfront. When the time comes to sell you can use the same title company and avoid paying fees again.



# STEP 14:

## SCHEDULE CLOSING DATE



You and your attorney will be notified that your file is clear to close, and our closing department will schedule a closing date with your attorney.





# STEP 15:

## FINAL WALK-THROUGH



Fill out this **Walk-Through Checklist** at your final walk-through the home. Discuss any concerns with your Realtor and attorney.

### HEATING AND COOLING

- ☐ Turn on and listen to the heater. Check that warm air is coming out of the vents.
- ☐ Turn on and listen to the air conditioning unit outside.
- ☐ Check that cool air is coming out of the vents.
- ☐ Check that an air filter has been installed.
- ☐ Make sure pipe extensions have relief valves

### ELECTRICAL

- ☐ Inspect all of your light fixtures to make sure they have no missing or broken parts.
- ☐ Turn on all light switched and fans to confirm they work.
- ☐ Plug a nightlight into each outlet to test
- ☐ Test the doorbell
- ☐ Check for any exposed wiring.
- ☐ Make sure meter box is firmly secured to house.
- ☐ Test smoke detectors.
- ☐ Be sure breakers are labeled and missing knockouts are replaced and uncapped wires are terminated.
- ☐ Replace breaker panels if they are made by Federal Pacific.

### PLUMBING

- ☐ Check every faucet to make sure they turn on and off easily.
- ☐ Run fixture for five minutes. Check for leaks from the base of the fixture and check drips from the faucet.

### KITCHEN

- ☐ Open every cabinet. Look for sturdy hinges and hardware.
- ☐ Pull out every drawer as far as possible. Be sure each drawer pulls in and out smoothly.
- ☐ Turn on each appliance and make sure that it functions correctly.
- ☐ Check filters in fan hood.

### BATH

- ☐ Inspect bathtub, shower, sink, and toilet for chips and cracks.
- ☐ Close the bathtub and sink stopper. Add a couple inches of water. Wait two to three minutes to be sure the stopper doesn't leak.
- ☐ Flush every toilet. Check for leaks around the base of the toilet.
- ☐ Sit on the toilet to make sure it is securely fastened to the floor.

### WINDOWS

- ☐ Check glass to make sure there are no cracks.
- ☐ Open every window to its fullest and then close it tight.
- ☐ Check each for sturdy hinges and hardware.
- ☐ Be sure there is a screen tightly installed on every window.
- ☐ Look for holes or tears in screen.

### DOORS

- ☐ Open and close all doors to their fullest.
- ☐ Look for smooth operation of the hinges with no dragging at the bottom of the door.
- ☐ Lock and unlock every door.
- ☐ Look for a smooth operation of the lock with no binding.
- ☐ Check the threshold under every door to be sure there is no excessive space under the door.

### WALLS, FLOORS, AND CEILINGS

- ☐ Check drywall for visible seams or nail heads.
- ☐ Check floor and ceiling moldings. Look for a smooth finish with no protruding nail heads. Check for gaps that may need caulking.
- ☐ Look for broken, chipped, or cracked floor and wall tiles.
- ☐ Check for missing grout.
- ☐ Look for scuff marks on hardwood, tiles, and linoleum flooring.
- ☐ Check carpeted areas. Look for loose fitting carpeting at the edges or in the middle of the room.

### PORCHES AND DECKS

- ☐ Check the sturdiness of the construction.
- ☐ Be sure that there are no exposed nails or screws.

### GARAGE DOOR

- ☐ Open and close the doors. Be sure they all open and close completely.
- ☐ If there is an automatic garage door opener, test the door from the wall switch and the remote control openers.

### BASEMENT AND ATTIC

- ☐ Check the walls for cracks and water damage.
- ☐ Check attic ventilation system. Manually turn any fans or blades.
- ☐ Check and make sure sump pump drains into storm drain.
- ☐ Sump pump should be powered by ground outlet.
- ☐ Make sure bathroom ventilation is directed to exterior and not into attic.

### EXTERIOR

- ☐ Check exterior paint for defects. Be sure it is the correct color and that all surfaces are evenly covered.
- ☐ Check to make sure all gutters and downspouts are installed and clear of debris.
- ☐ Be sure there are no cracks in the garage floor, driveway or patio.
- ☐ Chimney checkpoint.
- ☐ Check for damages to the siding.

# STEP 16:

## ATTEND CLOSING



### Welcome to the finish line!

Your loan documents are ready to be signed so your loan can be funded! The closing may be the only time you see your entire team in one place. Use this **Closing Checklist** to prep needed items for your closing day.

#### ☐ Photo ID

The title company running your closing will verify your identity. It will do this by checking and making copies of a photo ID that you bring to closing day. You can use a signed U.S. driver's license, U.S. ID card or U.S. or foreign passport to serve as your photo ID. Make sure, though, that everyone whose name is on the mortgage loan – including your spouse or partner – also provides an approved signed photo ID. The title company is required to verify the identity of every person listed on the mortgage.

#### ☐ Cashier's Check

You will have to pay your down payment, closing costs, prepaid interest, property taxes and insurance during your closing. The total amount of money you'll need to bring to close your mortgage loan is called cash-to-close. Your lender will provide this total amount days before, so you'll have time to get a cashier's check made out in the amount you need to pay to cover the cost of closing your loan. A cashier's check certifies that you have the funds available and contains security features such as watermarks to make it more difficult to counterfeit.

#### ☐ The Closing Disclosure

This form lists the final terms and costs of your mortgage: the loan amount, interest rate and monthly payment, including a breakdown of how much of your payment is made up of principal, interest, private mortgage insurance, property taxes and homeowners insurance. Your lender is required to provide it to you at least 3 business days before your loan closing. If you're signing your mortgage papers, and any costs are different from what's listed on your Closing Disclosure, make sure to question your lender and title company.

#### ☐ Proof Of Homeowner's Insurance

You can use your policy's declarations page as proof of your insurance. This page lists your name and address, a description of the home you are insuring and your policy's premium. But check with your lender and title company to make sure you are bringing the proper form to the closing table.

#### ☐ Professional Representation

Make sure to have professionals (real estate agents or attorneys) representing your interests by answering your questions and checking the documents you're signing. In many states, you're required to have your own lawyer present at the closing. Usually, you'll pay a flat fee for this representation. If your real estate agent or lawyer can't attend the closing, they'll typically send one of their associates. Never go to closing without a real estate professional or attorney.

# STEP 17:

## MOVE IN!



### **Congratulations! You are now homeowners!**

Grab your keys and enjoy the tax advantages and personal benefits of owning a home.

Use this **Moving Checklist** to get acclimated to your new area and make sure essentials are set up.

- ☐ Go to the post office and get your mail forwarded to your new address
- ☐ Inform the IRS and your employer of your new address
- ☐ Set up utilities
- ☐ Introduce yourself to neighbors
- ☐ Discover the neighborhood parks, grocery stores, restaurants, health clubs, libraries, and service providers
- ☐ Plan your house-warming party!
- ☐ Stay in touch with our team as you enhance your home and grow your family!



# Contact Us for More Information

## **(732) 505-4600**

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