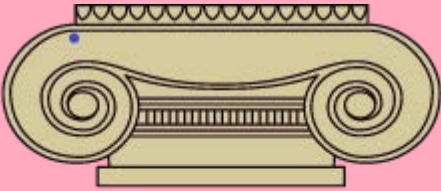




YES 2 THIS
ADDRESS

THE HOME BUYER'S GUIDE



**CHAPMAN
HALL**

PROFESSIONALS

INTRODUCTION

Owning a home is more than a financial investment; it's an investment in quality of life – particularly if you have a family or if you're planning one. You can decorate or renovate however you like, customize your landscape, rule the roost! It's your home. This guide provides a detailed look at the home buying process for first-time homebuyers.

Do you qualify to own?

Get your financial facts straight. Go to your bank or other lending institution for a credit check and general financial analysis. Also, keep in mind that you may be eligible for loans insured by the Veterans Administration (VA) or the Federal Housing Administration (FHA).

Is it a good time to buy?

Generally speaking, if you are currently renting but want to own a home, have the funding, and the right real estate professional to guide you - those are signs that it might be a good time to buy.

We can assess the current local market conditions and inform you about your options. As industry insiders, we often get the scoop on great real estate opportunities you might otherwise miss!

Is Yes 2 This Address the right real estate partner for me?

Stephanie is passionate about helping her clients realize their dreams and feels blessed to be part of such an amazing journey with them! She was raised in the Atlanta Metro Area so she has an intimate knowledge of the metro area and has watched it grow into one of the top places to live in the country. Prior to becoming a real estate agent, Stephanie worked in Media Sales for over 20 years, which strengthened her negotiating skills and become more familiar with all of Metro Atlanta and the surrounding cities. She's a mother of two as well as a grandmother of two. She currently resides in Gwinnett County, where most of her family still lives as well.

Shelley also was raised in the Atlanta Metro Area and has a love of remodeling and decorating/staging and educating her sellers on how to get top dollar for their houses with small little changes, if necessary, and helping her buyers envision what their dream home could be. Shelley began renovating and flipping houses in 2015. Shelley is a mother of one and a bonus mother of two.

With Stephanie's expertise in sales and Shelley's eye for remodeling and decorating, they offer the full package when it comes to real estate. They know the Metro Atlanta Area very well, including well established neighborhoods and up and coming neighborhoods alike. Clients become family to them and they work together to make sure their clients are well taken care of from start to finish.

7 STEPS TO HOME OWNERSHIP

Buying a home usually represents your single biggest investment – and debt. Adequate research, knowing what you want and what you can afford, and the assistance of a professional real estate agent are the keys for the best outcome.

1. Define your goals, research your options, and develop an action plan

Giving the green light to future homeownership means educating and preparing yourself as much as possible. Know what your personal reasons are for buying, and determine the kind of home, neighborhood, and features you want. Since buying and financing a home are fundamentally connected, you'll also need to examine your current financial situation and know what you can realistically afford.

Once you're clear on the above, you'll be in a better position to research housing and mortgage options, and create an action plan with timelines for moving forward. While it is possible to do this yourself, we can help you right from the start.

2. Get pre-qualified for a loan

It's important to get pre-qualified for a loan before you start viewing homes in earnest. The pre-approval process involves meeting with a lender and authorizing them to examine your current financial situation and credit history. On the basis of this examination, the lender may provide you with a document detailing the amount you are pre-qualified to borrow to buy a home.

The benefits of pre-qualification include:

You'll know roughly what you are qualified to borrow and be able to plan accordingly

As a pre-qualified buyer you'll be taken more seriously when you make an offer. Most sellers in this market require a pre-qualification letter when the offer is submitted

Lenders can tell you if you might qualify for special programs that will help you afford a better home (particularly if you're a first-time buyer)

Financing is available from many sources, and **we are** able to suggest lenders with a history of offering excellent mortgage products and services.

For more information about the benefits of pre-qualification and the loan process in general, see - FINANCING YOUR HOME - THE LOAN PROCESS, on page 5.

3. View homes and find THE ONE

The secret to a happy home search is in knowing what you really want. That means distinguishing between “must-haves” and “like-to-haves”. To help you to target your search and define your home preference priorities, refer to the Home Search Worksheet on page 8.

Although with today’s mobile apps and online real estate websites, you can view homes, see details, take video tours, and access neighborhood info, **it’s absolutely necessary to view homes in person.** While the property details may seem similar online, homes can be very different in terms of layout, design, workmanship and other aspects. Ideally, we will view homes together as we may notice things you might miss, provide expert analysis, and act as an impartial sounding board.

4. Make an offer and we negotiate with the seller

When you’ve found the home you’d like to buy, it’s time to make an offer. At this time, you will also need to pay the earnest money (“a deposit”) which is typically 1% of the purchase price.

The price you offer for a home is based on a wide variety of factors:

- Days on market
- Condition of the home
- Sales price of comparable properties
- Re-sale potential
- Seller’s motivation

The price you offer for a home is **NOT** based on:

- What the seller paid for the home
- What the Zestimate says

5. Secure Your Financing

Once you have a pending agreement, it’s time to return to your chosen lender to finalize mortgage details in order to close the deal. This means completing the loan application and finalizing your down payment, interest rate, regular payment schedule and all other financial conditions associated with the closing. As the saying goes, ‘let the buyer beware’. Unfortunately, too many buyers suffer negative consequences from not fully understanding their financing decisions. Thus, it’s crucial for you to work with people you trust. For more information on the loan process, see - FINANCING YOUR HOME - THE LOAN PROCESS, on page 5.

6. Due Diligence

The day after you have a signed contract to purchase your new home, you start a period of time called "Due Diligence". This is a negotiable period of time in your contract in which you, the Buyer, can hire an inspector to perform all the inspections you want on the home.

During this period of time should something unfavorable come up in the home inspection that the Seller will not fix and/or you no longer have a desire to purchase the home, you may terminate the contract (for any reason) and receive your earnest money back.

7. Close the deal

Key steps prior to the closing of escrow, also referred to as the "settlement."

Getting a title search – the closing attorney will order a historical review of all legal documents relating to ownership of the property – to ensure that there are no claims against the title of the property. It's also necessary to purchase Title Insurance for protection in the event of errors in the records or mistakes in the review process.

The final walkthrough – you will be given the chance to look at the home one last time to make sure it's in the same condition as when you signed the sale agreement.

The settlement – typically, on or shortly prior to the Closing Date, you'll sign all the paperwork required to complete the transaction, which will be done in a meeting with a closing attorney. The settlement will include paying your closing costs, legal fees, property taxes and transfer taxes. At that point, you'll receive the property title and copies of all documentation pertaining to the purchase.

Oh, and one more thing – *you'll get the keys!* In most cases, possession date will fall on the day of closing and you will be able to move into your new home.

FINANCING YOUR HOME – THE LOAN PROCESS

Paying all cash for your home isn't a realistic option for most. So, finding the right lender and mortgage product is integral to buying.

There are many types of lending institutions, offering a wide range of loans and special programs.

To secure the best mortgage for your needs:

1. Educate yourself about your options

There are a host of loan types and programs available through thousands of banks, finance companies, credit unions, and other assorted lenders. Additionally, there are as many sources of information about mortgages.

In short, do your homework before signing your name on the dotted line.

2. Be realistic about your financial situation

Along with educating yourself about loan options, ask yourself how much mortgage, down payment and closing costs you can really afford. Answer yourself with complete honesty and be sensible. Be sure to weigh the risks and opportunity costs. Some lenders will qualify you for the maximum they're willing to lend which may be more than you can comfortably afford. Be sure to factor all related taxes, insurance, improvements, homeowner fees and all other potential costs into the equation. Make a list of your monthly expenses and project your financial commitments during the life of the mortgage. This will provide a realistic figure of what you can afford.

3. Find a reputable lender or mortgage broker

When shopping for a loan you should consider two main sources - *direct lenders and mortgage brokers*.

Direct lenders have the money and make the decisions, but have a limited number of in-house products to offer. Brokers are intermediaries who charge a fee, and can provide you with loan options from many sources, which may save you money overall. We have a list of Preferred Lenders that you can reach out to.

4. Determine the right mortgage option for you

Generally, there are two ways to go: a fixed-rate mortgage with an interest rate that remains the same for the life of the loan, or an adjustable-rate mortgage (ARM) with a rate that adjusts up or down, depending upon economic trends.

The **advantages of fixed-rate mortgages**: (particularly if you lock in at a low rate)

- they protect you against the risk of rising interest rates
- their stability can also make it easier for you to plan and budget

The **downside of fixed-rate mortgages**: they generally have higher rates than ARMs at any given time, and by locking in you run the risk of being trapped at a relatively high rate if interest rates fall.

Another consideration with a fixed-rate mortgage is the term. Shorter-term mortgages, like a 15-year, have lower rates than a 30-year. The shorter term and lower rate mean that you'll pay less interest over the life of the loan, although your monthly payments will generally be higher.

In contrast, the rate of an adjustable-rate mortgage (ARM) is commonly based on the U.S. Treasury index for a one-year Treasury bill, although it may also be geared to other indexes. Generally, lenders add 2-4% to the index rate to get their ARM rate. Initially, the rate is lower than the fixed rate by a quarter point to two points or more. This rate will periodically adjust within set limits or "caps" that are specified by the terms of the loan. Finally, it must be reiterated that the loan you ultimately qualify for will depend on your credit status. The best rates and terms are only available to those with solid credit so, if possible, pay off your credit cards and make all other bill payments in full and on time.

5. Get your documents ready, then apply!

Once you've reached a pending agreement with a seller to buy a home you'll be ready to formally apply for a mortgage. Your chosen lender will need you to provide information about your household income, job tenure and stability, assets and existing debt, and regular expenses to complete the application. This may take the form of pay stubs, bank and investment statements, tax returns and other documentation.

The lender will check your credit status during the application process, and will review the different loan options and programs you qualify for, as well as finalize the size of your down payment. If you place less than 20% down, the lender may require the mortgage to be guaranteed by a third party such as the Veterans Administration (VA), the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) or a private mortgage insurer (PMI).

Since so much is at stake, remember to bring all of your questions to the table. Lastly, if you qualify for the loan you're seeking, the lender will have the home you're buying professionally appraised to ensure that it's worth the purchase price

HOME SEARCH WORKSHEET

MUST HAVES

Price range: _____	Lot size: _____
Area: _____	Square footage: _____
Detached/Attached: _____	Number of bedrooms: _____
House style(s): _____	Number of bathrooms: _____
Age of property: _____	Garage: _____

LIKE TO HAVES

(e.g., waterfront, view, large lot, pool, fireplace, basement, garage size, built-in vacuum, distance to school, additional room preferences, etc.):

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
