



FINDING THE  
RIGHT HOME  
FOR YOU:

---

**A FIRST-TIME  
HOMEBUYER'S**  
*Guide*

---





# *Congrats* ON STARTING YOUR **HOMEBUYING** **JOURNEY!**

Buying your first home is an exciting milestone. It's a chance to put down roots, build equity, and create a space that's all your own. But let's face it—with so many options out there, finding the right home can feel a little overwhelming. That's where this guide comes in. We'll walk you through the key steps to help you focus on what really matters and make confident decisions along the way.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Step 1:</b> Define Your Priorities.....	2
<b>Step 2:</b> Research Neighborhoods.....	3
<b>Step 3:</b> Get Pre-Approved for a Mortgage.....	4
<b>Step 4:</b> Start House Hunting .....	5
<b>Step 5:</b> Make an Offer .....	8
<b>Step 6:</b> Close the Deal.....	9





# Define YOUR PRIORITIES

Before you start scrolling through listings or visiting open houses, it's important to define what you're looking for in a home. Here are some key questions to ask yourself:

### What's your budget?

How much can you afford based on your savings and monthly income? (Tip: Don't forget to factor in property taxes, insurance, and potential HOA fees.)

### What type of home fits your lifestyle?

Are you looking for a single-family home, a condo, a townhome, or a property with room to grow?

### What are your "must-haves" vs. "nice-to-haves"?

For example:

**Must-haves:** Number of bedrooms and bathrooms, specific location, or a home office.

**Nice-to-haves:** A big backyard, updated kitchen, or a two-car garage.

### How long do you plan to stay?

Think about whether you're buying for your current needs or planning ahead for the future (like starting a family).

**Pro Tip:** Create a list of your top priorities so you can focus on homes that truly meet your needs.



# Research NEIGHBORHOODS

The right home isn't just about the house—it's about the community you'll be part of. Spend time researching and exploring neighborhoods to find the right fit. Consider:



### Commute:

How far are you willing to drive to work or other daily activities?



### Schools:

Even if you don't have kids, good school districts can increase home value.



### Amenities:

Are you close to grocery stores, parks, restaurants, or entertainment?



### Vibes:

Visit the area at different times of day to get a sense of the community and its energy.



**Pro Tip:** Use tools like Google Maps or neighborhood review sites to help with your research.





# Start HOUSE HUNTING

With your priorities in place and your pre-approval ready, it's time to start looking at homes. Here are some tips to keep in mind:



**Take your time:** Don't rush into a decision. Visit several homes and compare your options.



**Use your list:** Refer to your priorities to ensure the home checks all (or at least most) of your must-have boxes.



**Check for red flags:** Look for signs of potential issues like water damage, outdated systems, or poor maintenance.



**Think long-term:** Consider how well the home will suit your needs 5-10 years down the line.



**Pro Tip:** Bring a trusted friend, family member, or real estate agent along for a second opinion.



# GET PRE-APPROVED FOR A Mortgage

Before you fall in love with a home, make sure you're pre-approved for a mortgage. This will help you:



Understand how much you can afford



Show sellers you're a serious buyer



Speed up the buying process once you've found the right home



**Pro Tip:** Work with one of our talented loan officers. They can walk you through your options and help you find the best fit for your financial situation.







## WORKING WITH A BUYER'S AGENT IN TODAY'S MARKET

Traditionally, sellers covered both the listing agent's and buyer's agent's commissions. In some markets, this has changed, and the agent commissions are now negotiated as part of the contract. Here's what you need to know:

### How Buyer's Agents Get Paid:

- 1. Direct Payment:**  
Buyers pay their agent directly via a flat fee or percentage of the home price, outlined in a Buyer-Broker Agreement.
- 2. Rolled into the Offer:**  
Buyers can request the seller to cover part of the commission in their offer by a seller's credit and/or price adjustment.
- 3. Out-of-Pocket at Closing:**  
The fee can also be paid upfront during the closing process.

### Why It's Worth It:

A buyer's agent advocates for you throughout the process, saving you time and money by negotiating the best deal, providing market expertise, and resolving issues like inspections or appraisals.



### What to Do as a Buyer:



Review and understand any agreements with your agent.



Budget for commission fees as part of your home-buying expenses, if necessary.



Communicate openly with your agent about your needs and goals.

While the payment structure may differ, having a trusted buyer's agent remains a valuable investment for navigating the complexities of homeownership.





# Close THE DEAL

Once your offer is accepted, you'll move into the final phase: closing. This involves:



Completing a home inspection to ensure there are no hidden issues.



Finalizing your loan details with your lender.



Signing the closing paperwork and officially becoming a homeowner!



**Pro Tip:** Don't skip the final walk-through. It's your last chance to confirm the home is in the agreed-upon condition.



# MAKE AN Offer

When you find "the one," it's time to make an offer. Your real estate agent will guide you through this process, which typically includes:



Determining a fair offer price based on comparable homes in the area.



Submitting a formal offer to the seller.



Negotiating terms, such as the closing date or seller concessions.



**Pro Tip:** Stay flexible and be prepared to adjust your offer based on the seller's counteroffer or market conditions.



# Moving FORWARD

Buying your first home is a big step, but it's also an exciting opportunity to create a space that's truly your own. By taking the time to define your priorities, research your options, and work with experienced professionals, you'll be well on your way to finding the perfect home for you.

Remember, the journey to homeownership is different for everyone, so trust the process and enjoy the ride. **Your dream home is out there—and it's waiting for you!**



## NEED HELP GETTING *Started?*

Whether you have questions about financing, the home search, or anything in between, we're here to help. Contact us today to get expert guidance and personalized support on your journey to homeownership.





## About APM

As a company, we embrace the concept of homeownership with enthusiasm and optimism for housing in America. Every employee at American Pacific Mortgage takes personal ownership in *Creating Experiences That Matter™* for our customers and consumers. Every transaction represents a family, a home, and a life decision –we understand and value that our participation is a privilege and that our job is to delight everyone involved in the loan process.



**Footnote 1:** © 2025 American Pacific Mortgage Corporation (NMLS 1850). All information contained herein is for informational purposes only and, while every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, no guarantee is expressed or implied. Any programs shown do not demonstrate all options or pricing structures. Rates, terms, programs, and underwriting policies are subject to change without notice. This is not an offer to extend credit or a commitment to lend. All loans are subject to underwriting approval. Some products may not be available in all states and restrictions apply. Equal Housing Opportunity.

**Footnote 2:** American Pacific Mortgage Corporation is not a credit repair or financial service company. We are not licensed credit repair specialists or counselors, we are not licensed financial advisors; please contact your financial professional for your personal financial situation. The material provided is for informational and educational purposes only and should not be construed as investment and/or mortgage advice. Although the material is deemed to be accurate and reliable, there is no guarantee it is without errors.

**NMLS CONSUMER ACCESS LINK:** [www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org](http://www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org)

rev. 02/2025