

5 tips to help home buyers win

in this hot seller's market

If you're considering buying a home this year, preparing yourself financially and mentally can make all the difference. Use this checklist to keep track of your journey as you navigate five steps that could help increase your likelihood of winning a home.

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STEP 1: Finance first.

Use the [mortgage calculator](#) to determine your budget.

My total down payment can be \$ _____.
My monthly mortgage payment can be \$ _____.

Buyer tip – Closing costs could be up to 5% of the purchase price, in addition to your down payment.

Compare rates among lenders and get pre-approved for a mortgage. Consider asking lenders some of these [25 questions](#), which can help you better understand their services.

Buyer tip – Lenders can help you find special programs, such as VA loans; estimate your closing costs; and explain annual percentage rates.

Possible [mortgage lenders](#) to finance my mortgage:

Name: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____

I've been pre-approved for a mortgage of up to \$ _____.
 I have received a letter of approval from _____.

**Buyer tip – Mortgage rates are on the rise. Shopping around can help find the best deal for you.*

Determine if you qualify for down payment assistance.

Down payment assistance information is located on every home listing page on [Zillow.com](https://www.zillow.com) and the Zillow app, when assistance is available. Fill out the form for details.

Program name: _____

Website: _____

Program name: _____

Website: _____

Program name: _____

Website: _____

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**STEP 2:
Hire the right agent.**

A local agent can address your specific needs, translate real estate language and help craft a competitive offer. First, make a list of what’s most important to you in a home.

Must have: _____

Nice to have: _____

Then, use the agent finder to search for local agents, read reviews and check their recent sale histories. Interview a few to see who feels like the best fit.

Agent name: _____ Link to profile: _____

Agent name: _____ Link to profile: _____

Agent name: _____ Link to profile: _____

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**STEP 3:
Shop smarter for a home by using tech.**

Using technology can help you act in a fast-moving market. View interactive floor plans, filter by listings with 3D tours and compare homes side by side using your “saved” homes on Zillow.

Link to home on Zillow: _____

- Took 3D tour
- Viewed interactive floor plans
- Added to my saved homes to compare
- Scheduled an in-person tour with a Premier Agent partner

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STEP 4:

Make your strongest offer.

Zillow research shows that 41% of agents say a cash offer is the most effective bidding strategy in today's market. Making a higher down payment or offering more earnest money can also be effective. It's also important to always get an offer in as quickly as possible.

My total cash available: \$ _____

Avoid too much risk when making your offer, such as waiving an inspection contingency or underestimating the costs of repairs. You could wind up feeling a common regret. Before making an offer, have you considered whether your expectations are being met regarding the following features?

- The location of the home
- The condition of the home
- The size/layout of the home
- The surrounding neighborhood of the home



STEP 5:

Close the deal.

Closing can be stressful and costly. First-time buyers should look for an official loan estimate, which includes an itemized list of closing costs that are due before buyers can close on their mortgage.

The cost of my prospective home is \$ _____ and the 2%–5% in closing costs is estimated to be \$ _____.

You can try to reduce those costs by shopping around for a closing company, similar to the process used when shopping for a mortgage. Home shoppers can compare the closing costs of qualified third-party closing companies.

Closing service : _____

Contact: _____ Est. cost: _____

Closing service : _____

Contact: _____ Est. cost: _____

Closing service : _____

Contact: _____ Est. cost: _____

Keep up to date with additional home-buying news with our [Home Buyers Guide](#).

Additional notes:

Use this section for any additional notes or information during your search.