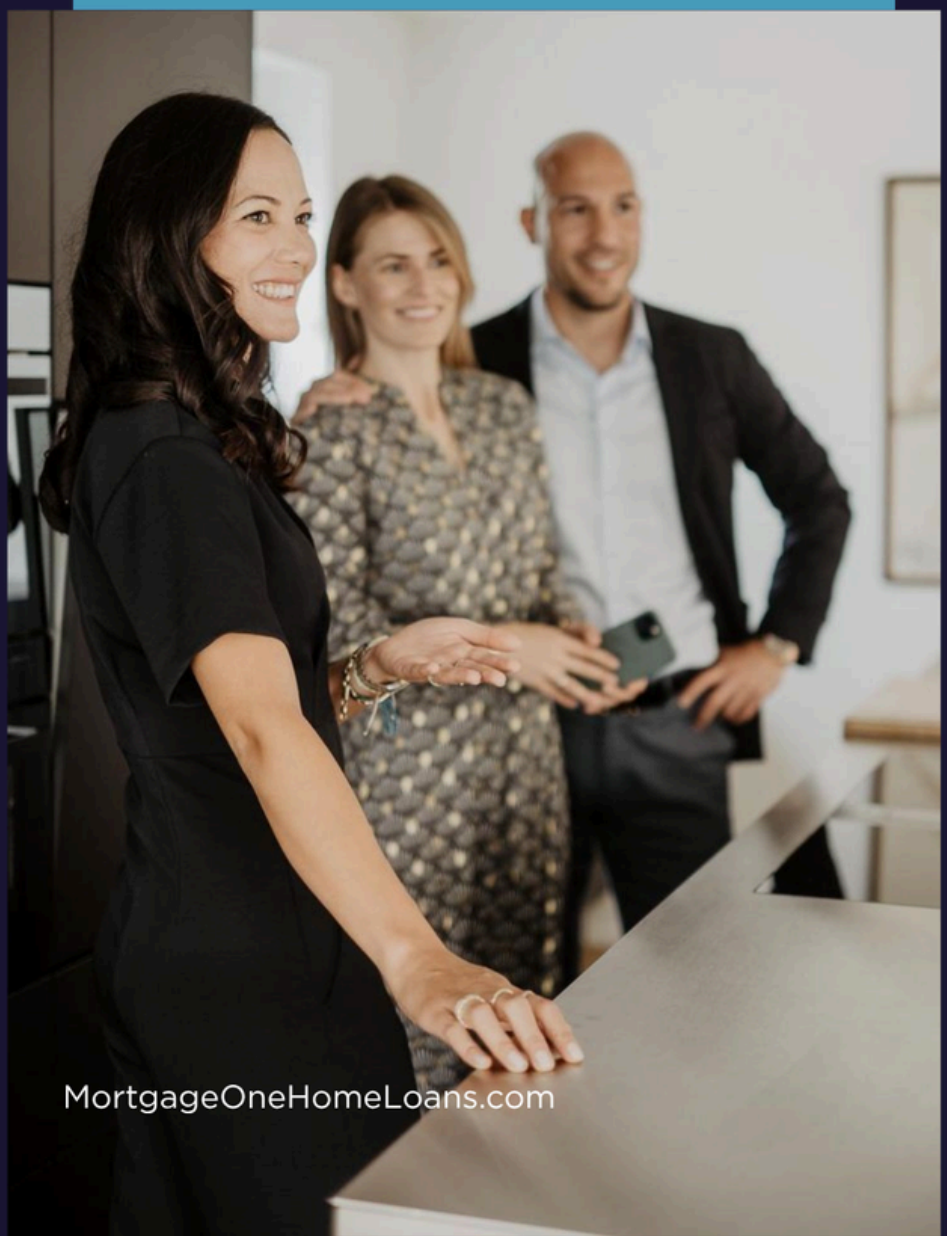
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Homebuying Guide



MortgageOneHomeLoans.com

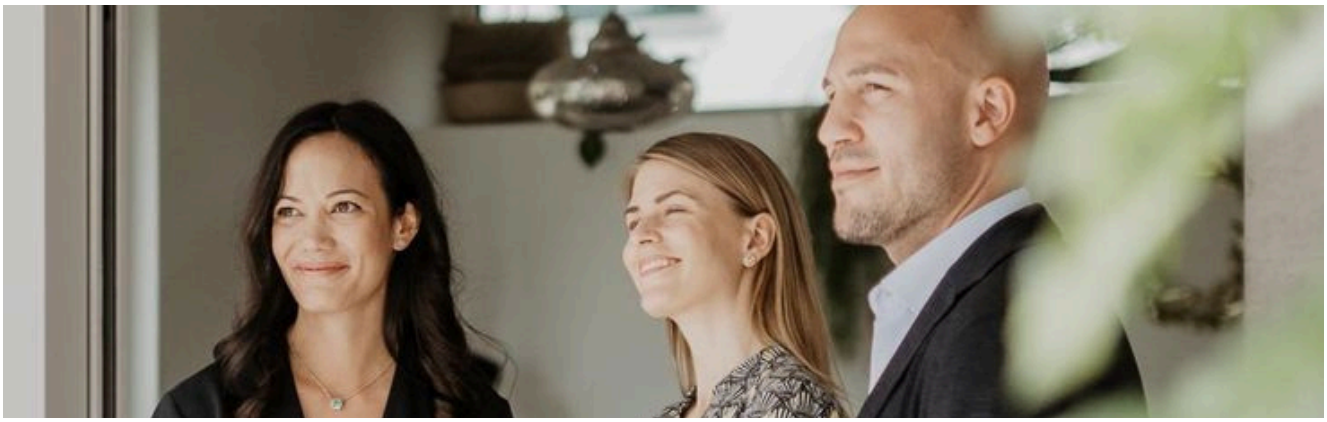
2026

WELCOME

Buying a home is a process — not a mystery

Most of the stressin a mortgagecomes fromnot knowingwhathappensnext.So this guide lays the whole thing out: every stage, every document, every decision point, and the handful of mistakes that cause the most delays.

Read it once now and keep it nearby. When something comes up that isn't covered here, call us. We would rather answer a question early than fix a problem late.



What's inside

03 Whatownership actually buys you — The case for owning

04 The eight steps to closing — Start to keys

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10 About MortgageOne — Who you're working with

WHY BUY

What ownership actually buys you

Amortgageis a large commitment,andit should bemade with clear eyes. Here is what owning tends to give you that renting does not — and one honest caveat at the bottom.

A payment that stops moving

On afixed-rate loan, your principal and interest are locked for the life of the loan. Taxes and insurance still shift year to year, but the largest piece of your housing cost stops responding to the rental market.

Equity instead of receipts

Every paymentretires a little more principal. Add any appreciation in the property's value and you're building a balance sheet asset rather than funding someone else's.

Possible tax advantages

Mortgage interestand property taxes may be deductible depending on your filing situation. This varies significantly by household — confirm with your tax advisor before counting on it.

Control over your space

Paint it, renovateit, get the dog, plant the tree. No renewal letters, no landlord approvals, no notice that the property is being sold out from under you.

Roots in a community

Owners tend to staylonger.That turns into knowing your neighbors, stable schools for your kids, and a genuine stake in how the area develops.

Future flexibility

Equityyou build can later support a renovation, a second property, or a refinance into better terms if rates move in your favor.

The honest caveat

Owning costs more than the mortgage payment. Budget for maintenance, repairs, and the occasional surprise — a common planning figure is roughly 1% of the home's value per year. Buyers who plan for this enjoy owning far more than buyers who don't.

THE PROCESS

The eight steps to closing

Timelines vary,but most purchasesfollowthis same sequence. Stepsoneandtwo are the ones you control — the rest move faster when those are done well.

01

Get pre-approved

BEFORE YOU SHOP

Wereviewyour income, assets, andcreditandissue a pre-approvalletter statingwhatyoucan borrow. This is not the same as a pre-qualification — it carries real weight with listing agents, and in competitive markets an offer without one often isn't considered.

02

Set your real budget

The maximum you qualifyfor and the amount you want to spend are two different numbers.

Before touring homes, decide on a monthly payment that still leaves room for savings, retirement, and life. We'll model payments at several price points so you're deciding with real figures.

03

Find the home

Work with anagent who knows the area. Start roughly three to six months before you intend to close, and separate what's fixable from what isn't:

- Cosmetic issues are negotiable— foundation,roof,and majorsystemsarenot
- Commute, schools, and property tax rates follow you for years
- Visit at different times of day before you commit

04

Make the offer

Youragentprices the offer against recent comparable sales and structures the terms. Two details matter more than buyers expect:

- Anything notphysicallyattached—appliances, fixtures,the shed— mustbe written intothe contract
- Inspection and financing contingencies are your exit ramps. Waiving them to win a bid has real consequences

> **Reach us before you write the offer.** A quick call lets us confirm the payment at that price, check the property type against your loan program, and flag anything that could complicate approval — while there's still time to adjust the terms.

THE PROCESS, CONTINUED

From accepted offer to keys

05 Complete your application and lock your rate

With a signed contract, wefinalize the applicationand youdecide when to lock. A lock holds your rate for a set number of days — it protects you if rates rise and holds you if they fall, so the timing is a real decision. We'll walk you through it rather than choosing for you.

06 Inspection and appraisal

Thesearetwoseparatethingsand buyers often conflate them:

- **Inspection** — youhire it, foryour benefit.It revealsconditionproblems and gives you grounds to renegotiate or walk
- **Appraisal** — the lender orders it, to confirm the property supports the loan amount. If it comes in below the contract price, we'll discuss your options right away

07 Underwriting

Anunderwriter verifies everything in the file and issues a decision, usually with conditions attached — additional statements, a letter of explanation, an updated pay stub. Returning these quickly is the single biggest thing you can do to keep the closing date. Once conditions clear, the file receives its **clear to close**.

08 Closing day

You'll receiveyour Closing Disclosure at least three business days before signing — review it and raise any discrepancy immediately. Then:

- Walk thepropertyone finaltime beforeyousign
- Bring government-issued photo ID
- Wire funds in advance or bring a cashier's check — personal checks are not accepted
- Verify wire instructions by phone using a number you already have. Wire fraud in real estate is common and the money is rarely recovered

CHECKLIST

Documents to gather

Havingthese ready before you apply isthedifferencebetweenasmooth file and a stalled one. Send complete documents — every page, including the blank ones, since underwriting requires the full record.

Everyone

- [ ] **Government-issued photo ID**
  Unexpired, for every borrower on the loan
- [ ] **Pay stubs — most recent 30 days**
  Showing year-to-date earnings
- [ ] **W-2s — past two years**
  From all employers
- [ ] **Tax returns — past two years**
  All pages and all schedules
- [ ] **Bank statements — most recent two months**
  Allaccountsholdingfundsfordownpaymentorreserves. Every page
- [ ] **Retirement and investment statements**
  If those funds will be used or counted as reserves

Depending on your situation

- [ ] **Self-employed or 1099**
  Twoyearsofbusinessreturns,year-to-dateprofitand loss, and business license or CPA letter
- [ ] **Gift funds**
  Signedgiftletterplusdocumentationofthetransfer. Gifts must be sourced before closing
- [ ] **Other properties owned**
  Mortgagestatements,taxbills,insurance,andany lease agreements
- [ ] **VA loan applicants**
  Certificate of Eligibility and DD-214
- [ ] **Divorce, support, or bankruptcy history**
  Decree,supportorders,ordischargepaperworkas applicable

> **On large deposits:** underwriting will ask about any deposit that doesn't match your regular income. Selling a car, a tax refund, cash from savings — all fine, but each needs a paper trail. Keep receipts and avoid cash deposits during the process.

PROTECTING YOUR APPROVAL

Do this. Not that.

Your approvalisbasedon a snapshotof your finances — and that snapshot gets re-verified right before closing. Credit is often re-pulled and employment re-confirmed in the final days. Keep things steady until you have the keys.

Do

- ✓ Keep every account current — a single late payment can change your rate or your approval
- ✓ Stay in your job. If a change is unavoidable, tell us before you give notice
- ✓ Return underwriting conditions the same day when you can
- ✓ Keep documents in one folder so you're not hunting for them under deadline
- ✓ Tell us about anything unusual — a bonus, a gift, a side business. Surprises found later cost more time than facts shared early
- ✓ Ask questions. There is no such thing as a question too small

Don't

- × Finance furniture, a car, or appliances — even at zero percent. New debt changes your ratios immediately
- × Open, close, or co-sign on any credit account
- × Make cash deposits that can't be documented
- × Spend the money set aside for your down payment or closing costs
- × Move money between accounts without telling us — every transfer has to be traced
- × Schedule travel near your closing date without confirming timing with us first

If something changes, call us first

Ajoboffer,an unexpectedexpense, afamily gift — none of these have to derail your loan. They only become problems when we learn about them from a bank statement instead of from you. There is almost always a path forward if we have time to build one.

PROGRAMS

Loan programs at a glance

Thereisno universallybest program —onlythe one thatfitsyourcredit,yourdown payment, and how long you plan to stay. Here's the landscape.

PROGRAM	BEST SUITED FOR	WORTH KNOWING
Conventional	Buyers with solid credit and at least 3–5% down	Mortgage insurance is required under 20% down but can be removed once you reach sufficient equity
FHA	Lower credit scores or limited down payment	As little as 3.5% down with qualifying credit. Mortgage insurance generally stays for the life of the loan
VA	Eligible veterans, active duty, and surviving spouses	Up to 100% financing with no monthly mortgage insurance. Certificate of Eligibility required
USDA	Buyers in designated rural areas	Up to 100% financing. Both the property and your household income must meet USDA guidelines
Jumbo	Loan amounts above the conforming limit for your county	Typically requires stronger credit, a larger down payment, and more reserves
Adjustable rate	Buyers not planning to hold the loan long term	Lower initial rate for a fixed period, then adjusts. Understand the caps before choosing this
Renovation	Homes needing work before or after purchase	Combines purchase price and qualified improvement costs into a single loan

> **A note on rate versus fit.** The lowest advertised rate usually carries assumptions — points paid, a specific credit tier, a particular down payment. Compare offers using the full picture: rate, points, monthly mortgage insurance, and total cash to close. We'll show you ours that way.

CASH TO CLOSE

The money you'll need up front

Down paymentisthenumbereveryoneknows.Theseare theonesthatcatchbuyersoff guard — your Loan Estimate will show your actual figures.

Earnest money — Typically 1–3% of price
Paidwhenyourofferisacceptedandcredited back to you at closing

Down payment — 0–20%+
Your equity at closing. Varies entirely by program

Home inspection — Paid out of pocket
Paiddirectlytotheinspector,usuallybefore closing

Appraisal — Charged to you
Ordered by the lender to confirm value

Lender fees — See Loan Estimate
Origination,underwriting,andprocessing— all itemized on your Loan Estimate

Title and escrow — Varies by state
Titlesearch,lender'stitlepolicy,andsettlement services

Prepaid interest — Depends on close date
Interestfromyourclosingdatethroughthe end of that month

Escrow reserves — Several months' worth
Initialdepositforpropertytaxesandinsurance held by the servicer

First-year homeowners insurance — Annual premium
Generally paid in full at or before closing

Recording and transfer taxes — Varies by county
Governmentchargesforrecordingthedeed and mortgage

Two protections worth using

The LoanEstimatearrives within three business days of applying, in a standardized format — so you can compare lenders line by line.

The Closing Disclosure arrives at least three business days before signing. Compare it against your Loan Estimate and ask about anything that moved.

ABOUT US

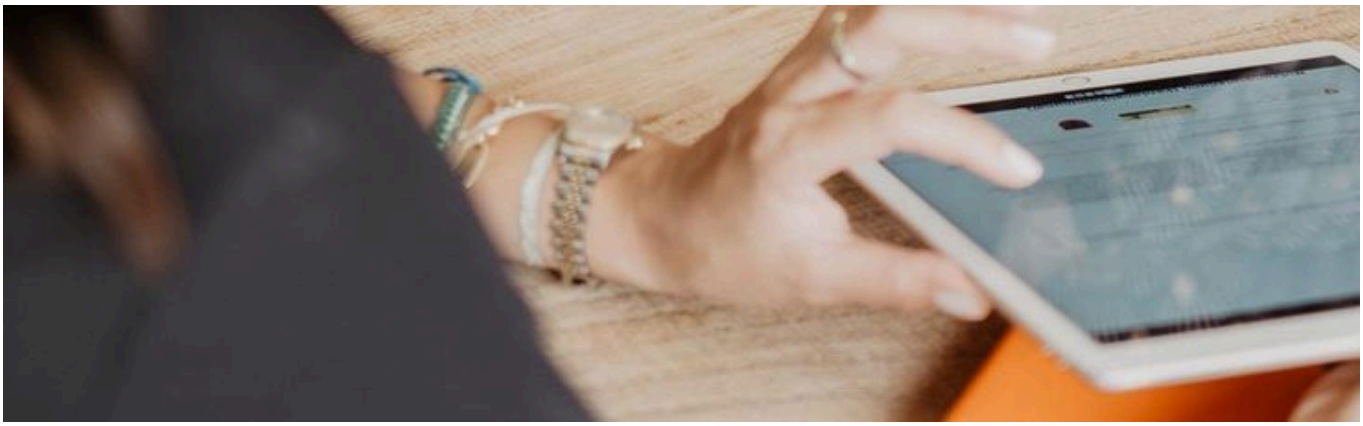
Who you're working with

[PLACEHOLDER — company story.Foundingyear,founder, whatMortgageOne was built to do differently. Two to four sentences. This is the paragraph borrowers actually read, so make it specific rather than generic.]

[00]	[00]	[0,000]
YEARS IN BUSINESS	STATES LICENSED	FAMILIES SERVED

How we work

- We recommend the loan that fits your situation — not the one that pays us best
- You get a direct line to a licensed loan officer, not a call queue
- We tell you what we need up front, so you're not chasing surprise requests at the deadline
- If something in your file is going to be a problem, you hear it from us early



> **Questions don't expire.** Whether you're six months from buying or under contract right now, the conversation costs nothing. Call, text, or email — whichever you actually use.

Notes & questions

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Program descriptions are summaries only and do not reflect complete eligibility requirements, terms, fees, or conditions. Down payment percentages, mortgage insurance requirements, and loan limits are subject to change and vary by program, property location, occupancy, and borrower qualification. Contact us for details applicable to your situation.

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