



## 50 Point Checklist for First Time Home Buyers

### A. Buyer Education & Expectations

1. ☐ Learn the basic steps of the home-buying process from first search to closing.
2. ☐ Understand the main players in a transaction (buyer, seller, agents, lender, attorney, inspector).
3. ☐ Clarify your priorities: location vs size vs condition vs price vs future resale.
4. ☐ Decide your ideal move-in timeframe and any lease or life deadlines you must meet.
5. ☐ Discuss with your household what "compromise" looks like so decisions are easier later.
6. ☐ Make a short written list of top 5 goals for your first home (e.g., shorter commute, space for office, yard for pets).

### B. Mortgage & Lender Setup

7. ☐ Gather all lender documents (W-2/1099s, pay stubs, bank statements, ID, tax returns if needed).
8. ☐ Get pre-approved with at least two lenders and compare rates and fees.
9. ☐ Confirm your maximum purchase price and loan type with your chosen lender.
10. ☐ Clarify rate-lock rules, timelines, and any conditions for final approval.

### C. Agent, Inspector & Search Strategy

11. ☐ Select a buyer's agent experienced in your target area and price range.
12. ☐ Select a licensed home inspector and review a sample report in advance.
13. ☐ Define must-have features (beds, baths, commute, schools, parking, yard).
14. ☐ Define deal-breakers (busy roads, flood zone, high HOA fees, restrictions).
15. ☐ Set up listing alerts and track recent sales in your target neighborhoods.

### D. Touring & Evaluating Homes

16. ☐ Assess neighborhood: noise, upkeep, parking, distance to work and essentials.
17. ☐ Check grading and drainage; look for standing water or slope toward house.
18. ☐ Scan roof and exterior for visible damage, rot, or missing materials.
19. ☐ Note odors, uneven floors, or major wall/ceiling cracks inside.
20. ☐ Test a sample of windows and doors for smooth operation and drafts.
21. ☐ Run water at sinks and tubs; check pressure, hot water, and drainage.
22. ☐ Look under sinks and around toilets/tubs for leaks or soft flooring.
23. ☐ Observe electrical panel age/brand and test a few outlets and switches.
24. ☐ Inspect basement/crawlspace for moisture, staining, or efflorescence.
25. ☐ Inspect attic (if accessible) for insulation, ventilation, and signs of leaks.
26. ☐ Confirm which appliances and fixtures are staying with the home.
27. ☐ Rate each home (condition, layout, neighborhood, overall feel) and take notes/photos.



### **E. Offers & Negotiation**

- 28. ☐ Review recent comparable sales with your agent to support your offer.
- 29. ☐ Decide offer price, earnest money amount, and preferred closing date.
- 30. ☐ Include key contingencies: home inspection, financing, appraisal.
- 31. ☐ Add area-specific contingencies (radon, well, septic, sewer, lead paint, etc.).
- 32. ☐ Clearly list all inclusions (appliances, sheds, blinds, etc.) in the offer.
- 33. ☐ Understand deadlines for inspections, responses, and financing.

### **F. Inspections & Due Diligence**

- 34. ☐ Schedule the general home inspection immediately after acceptance.
- 35. ☐ Schedule recommended specialty inspections (radon, pest, chimney, sewer, well/septic).
- 36. ☐ Attend the inspection and have the inspector show main shut-offs and filters.
- 37. ☐ Review the full inspection report and highlight safety and big-ticket items.
- 38. ☐ Decide whether to request repairs, credits, a price reduction, or to walk away.

### **G. Loan, Appraisal & Insurance**

- 39. ☐ Send any additional documents your lender requests promptly.
- 40. ☐ Avoid new credit accounts, large purchases, or major job changes before closing.
- 41. ☐ Track appraisal status and discuss strategies if the appraisal comes in low.
- 42. ☐ Obtain multiple homeowners insurance quotes and choose coverage and deductibles.

### **H. Closing & Move-In**

- 43. ☐ Review your Closing Disclosure carefully and confirm cash-to-close.
- 44. ☐ Arrange secure payment (wire or cashier's check); verify instructions by phone.
- 45. ☐ Set up start dates for utilities, trash, internet, and change of address.
- 46. ☐ Complete a final walk-through to verify condition, repairs, and inclusions.
- 47. ☐ After closing, change or rekey exterior locks and update any access codes.
- 48. ☐ Locate and label main water, gas, and electrical shut-offs and test smoke/CO detectors.
- 49. ☐ Create a home maintenance calendar (filters, gutters, servicing, seasonal tasks).
- 50. ☐ List and prioritize your first-year safety, repair, and upgrade projects.