

BEFORE YOU BEGIN CHECKLIST

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF SUGGESTIONS FOR HOMEBUYERS PRIOR TO ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR HOMES. PLEASE NOTE, NEITHER RELLA NOR ANY OF ITS EMPLOYEES, REPRESENTATIVES, OR AFFILIATES PURPORTS TO BE OFFERING LEGAL ADVICE. THIS LIST IS PROVIDED AS A COURTESY ONLY.

Before You Begin:

- Set a timeline for your home buying process, including target dates for saving, finding a home, and completing the purchase.
- Research and understand different types of mortgage loans available to determine which one suits your financial situation and goals.
- Explore potential sources of funding, such as down payment assistance programs, grants, or gifts from family members.
- Evaluate your long-term goals and assess whether buying a home aligns with your overall financial plan.
- Calculate and consider the costs of homeownership beyond the purchase price, including property taxes, insurance, maintenance, and repairs.
- Research and understand the tax benefits of homeownership, such as deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes.
- Determine your preferred level of homeownership involvement, whether it's a move-in ready home or a fixer-upper that allows for customization.

Finding the Right Home:

- Prioritize your needs versus wants to focus on the essential features of a home. Research school districts and educational opportunities if you have school-aged children or plan to have them in the future.
- Consider the proximity to essential amenities like grocery stores, healthcare facilities, parks, and recreational areas.
- Evaluate the potential for future property value appreciation by analyzing historical trends and planned development in the area.
- Research the neighborhood's safety, crime rates, and overall livability using local resources or online databases.
- Take into account the potential commute times and transportation options to your workplace or other frequently visited areas.

- Consider the impact of noise, traffic, and proximity to busy roads or commercial areas on your lifestyle and peace of mind.
- Research homeowner association (HOA) rules, fees, and regulations if you're considering properties in HOA-governed communities.

Financing and Mortgage Process:

- Review your credit report for any errors or discrepancies and take steps to correct them.
- Consider getting pre-qualified in addition to pre-approval to have a better understanding of your potential loan options.
- Compare different mortgage lenders, including traditional banks, credit unions, and online lenders, to find competitive rates and terms.
- Explore government-backed loan programs, such as FHA loans or VA loans, if you qualify. Understand the difference between fixed-rate and adjustable-rate mortgages and determine which option suits your financial goals.
- Research potential mortgage closing costs, including origination fees, appraisal fees, title insurance, and attorney fees.
- Familiarize yourself with the loan application process and the required documentation, such as proof of income, tax returns, bank statements, and employment history. Consult with a mortgage professional to clarify any questions or concerns regarding the mortgage terms, interest rates, and repayment options.
- Consider obtaining multiple loan estimates to compare terms, rates, and closing costs from different lenders before making a final decision.