The First-Time Buyer's Step-by-Step Guide

From pre-approval to keys — how a home purchase actually works

Buying your first home is a series of clear steps. Here's the full path, so you always know what comes next and what to expect.

STEP 01

Get your finances ready

Check your credit, pay down high-interest debt, and build savings for a down payment plus closing costs (typically 2–5% of the price). A stronger financial picture means better loan terms.

STEP 02

Get pre-approved

Talk to a lender and get a written pre-approval. It tells you your real budget and shows sellers you're serious — essential in a competitive market.

STEP 03

Define your search

With your agent, set your target towns, price range, and must-haves. In the High Country, factor in commute, winter access, and whether you want rental potential.

STEP 04

Tour homes

See homes in person with your agent. Take notes and photos, and pay attention to road access, systems, and views — not just finishes.

STEP 05

Make an offer

Your agent prepares a competitive offer based on comparable sales, and negotiates price, closing date, and contingencies on your behalf.

STEP 06

Inspections & due diligence

Once under contract, complete your inspections during the due-diligence period. Use the findings to request repairs or a credit, or to walk away if needed.

STEP 07

Appraisal & financing

Your lender orders an appraisal and finalizes the loan. Respond quickly to any document requests to keep closing on schedule.

STEP 08

Close & get your keys

Do a final walk-through, review the closing disclosure, sign, and the home is yours. Welcome to the High Country.

This is the general path — your agent and lender will guide the specifics for your situation and loan type.