

**1 Figure out how much you can afford.**

- Calculate your monthly income and debt.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ — \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Check your credit report and FICO score.

FICO score: \_\_\_\_\_

- Figure out your down payment.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Get pre-approved for a mortgage.**

- Choose a type of mortgage.

fixed       adjustable       conventional  
 government       jumbo       other: \_\_\_\_\_

- Speak to at least five lenders and mortgage brokers.

- Shop for the best interest rates and programs.

Interest rate: \_\_\_\_\_ %

Loan term: \_\_\_\_\_ years

**3 Determine what you want and need in a home.**

- Choose a location (downtown, urban, suburban, rural).

- Choose a type (single family, townhouse, condo, loft).

- Choose a price range. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Choose a size. \_\_\_\_\_ sq. ft.

bedrooms: \_\_\_\_\_

bathrooms: \_\_\_\_\_

- Choose an architectural style. \_\_\_\_\_

**4 Research your target neighborhoods.**

- Look online for information on schools, crime rate, traffic and zoning.

- Determine your work commute.

- Scout local amenities, such as parks, shops and restaurants.

**5 Work with a buyer's agent who knows the neighborhood.**

- Get referrals.

- Consider working with an exclusive buyer's agent.

- Interview at least three agents.

- Look for experience and good chemistry.

**6** Search for homes in the MLS and For Sale By Owner (FSBO).

- Browse listings online, including FrontDoor.com.
- Ask your agent to set up tours of homes that fit your criteria.
- Check local newspapers.
- Pick up flyers and attend open houses (download FrontDoor's Open House & Home Tour Checklist).

**7** Research each home you want to buy.

- Ask your agent for comps to estimate the property's fair market value. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Ask the seller's reason for selling.
- Review all property disclosures.
- Find out about liens, easements or other restrictions.

**8** Make an offer and negotiate.

- Determine the purchase price. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Include contingencies, such as financial, inspection or purchase.
- Spell out any special requests and repairs you want included in the sale.
- Determine an earnest amount of money. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Decide a move-in date. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_
- Once both parties agree to the terms, sign the Purchase and Sale Agreement.

**9** Finalize the deal.

- Get the house appraised.  
Appraiser contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Appraisal amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Get a professional home inspection.  
Inspector contact: \_\_\_\_\_
- Consider getting specific inspections for structural engineering, roof and termites.
- Use the appraisal and inspection reports to re-negotiate if necessary.
- Choose a home insurance company.
- Complete the loan process with the lender.
- Do a walk-through inspection prior to closing.
- Set aside cash for the closing costs and down payment.

**10** Close the purchase.

- Review the settlement document at least two days before closing to see how funds will be collected and distributed.
- Get a cashier's check for the amount you need to bring to closing:  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes down payment and closing costs).