

FINANCE YOUR HOME WITH CONFIDENCE





PURCHASING A HOME?

Homeownership is more than just a financial investment - it's an investment in your future.

Buying your dream home is possible! And with Certainty Home Lending by your side, you can navigate the mortgage process with confidence. This guide is to help you navigate your financing journey and help you know what to expect every step of the way.

After reading this guide, you should be able to:

- Feel comfortable and confident with the mortgage process.
- Determine how much home you can afford.
- Understand the basics of what goes into a credit score.
- Review the Do's and Don'ts to keep in mind before and during the application process.
- Find a home that fits your goals and lifestyle.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 YOUR GUIDE, HOME
- 2 OWNING VS RENTING
- 3 DOWN PAYMENTS & COSTS
- 4 CREDIT SCORE 101
- 5 THE HOME LOAN PROCESS
- 6 MORTGAGE OPTIONS
- 8 DO'S AND DON'TS
- 9 DOCUMENT CHECKLIST
- 10 DIGITAL MORTGAGE
- 11 COMMUNITY CONNECTION





YOUR GUIDE, HOME.

Certainty has been helping homebuyers and homeowners for over 20 years, with a focus on providing a simple mortgage process and unparalleled customer service. Whether you're a first-time homebuyer or an experienced investor, our knowledgeable and accessible teams are here to guide you every step of the way.

- Quickly discover what you can get pre-approved for with our simple and secure Digital Mortgage.
- Benefit from guidance from your experienced loan team to explore our wide array of options and find the home loan that best fits your budget and lifestyle.
- Stay in the loop through the entire process and feel safe with our eClose capability.

Welcome to a simple mortgage process that saves time and allows you to purchase your home as quickly as possible.





OWNING VS RENTING

Is owning your own home better than paying rent? Well, that depends on a few factors and your own personal circumstances. Renting does come with certain perks, such as short lease periods and relief from maintenance fees. However, owning property can help you gain a better financial future by building equity and increasing your net worth.

Have you found yourself asking, “Can I *afford* to buy a home?” This is a question that many people have asked. Luckily, there are many down payment assistance programs to help with coming up with a down payment AND interest rate strategies to make sure you get the lowest rate you can. The better question may be, “Can I afford to keep *renting*?”

Benefits of owning your own home:

- Build equity over time with each mortgage payment that you make.
- Enjoy appreciation of your home’s value.
- Gain stability and a stronger sense of community.
- Make it your own! Your home is your castle. Consider a renovation home loan for those fixer-uppers out there.
- Take advantage of interest rate strategies to make your monthly mortgage payments more affordable.
- Avoid increasing rent prices by having a fixed-rate payment option.



DOWN PAYMENTS & COSTS

Coming up with a down payment is often cited as the primary barrier for those wanting to purchase a home. Many people do not know that you don't have to put down the traditional 20% anymore. There are many programs available that allow for less - some even as low as 0% down for qualifying homebuyers! Some popular options include:

MORTGAGE OPTION	AUDIENCE	DOWN PAYMENT REQUIREMENT
Conventional Home Loan	Anyone	Options as low as 3%
FHA Home Loan*	First-time Homebuyers	3.5%
Jumbo Home Loan	Higher Price Tag Buyers	Options as low as 3%
Renovation Home Loan	Renovators	Options as low as 3%
USDA Home Loan*	Rural Home Buyers	0%
VA Home Loan*	Veterans & Service Members	0%

*Certainty Home Lending has no affiliation with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the US Department of Agriculture or any other government agency.

Explaining Closing Costs

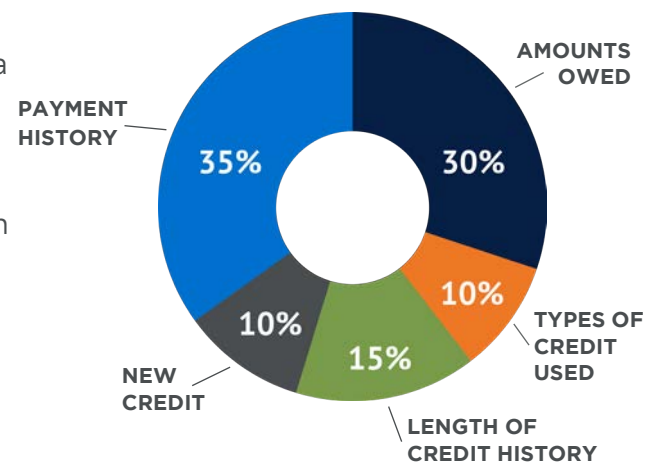
In addition to a down payment, there are other costs that are part of the mortgage process. Closing costs are the costs associated with the origination and underwriting of your loan, and may include recording fees, taxes, appraisal charges, title insurance and more. But don't worry, your Loan Officer will work with you so you have a good sense of what your closing costs will be. They usually total between 3% to 6% of the home's purchase price.

CREDIT SCORE 101*

CREDIT SCORE FACTORS

Before you start looking at homes, it would be a good idea to figure out what your credit score is. This is one of the primary metrics used to determine if you can qualify for a mortgage, and what terms you may qualify for.

To better understand your creditworthiness, obtain your credit score and obtain your free credit reports from each of the three credit reporting agencies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.



Credit Score Requirements To Qualify For a Home Loan

Credit scores range from 300 to 850 with a higher credit score indicating a lower credit risk. While a score of 700 and higher is generally considered good, you can qualify for a home loan with a lower credit score. A conventional home loan, FHA home loans, USDA home loans, and VA home loans** all have flexible qualifying criteria.

Actions That Can Influence Your Credit Score

When a FICO® Score is calculated from your credit report, the credit reporting agency will also provide up to five reasons that are most heavily influencing that score. Some of the more common contributing factors that influence a credit score are:

- Pay your bills on time. Delinquent payments on your utility bills, even if only a few days late can negatively impact your score.
- Reduce your amount of credit card debt. Create a personal payment plan to apply your "pay off debt" budget towards the highest interest cards first, while maintaining minimum payments on your other accounts. When the highest interest credit card is paid, apply the same amount you were paying to the next credit card on your list.
- Don't open new credit cards and move debt around. Opening new accounts just to have a better credit mix or to spread out your existing balances over more cards is unlikely to raise your credit score.
- Don't close old credit cards. As you pay off each credit card balance, keep the account open to demonstrate a longer credit history.

OBTAIN YOUR CREDIT REPORTS

You're entitled to one free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each of the credit reporting agencies. Order your credit reports from annualcreditreport.com or call 1-877-322-8228.

*Certainty Home Lending does not offer credit repair services.

**Certainty Home Lending has no affiliation with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the US Department of Agriculture or any other government agency.



THE HOME LOAN PROCESS

Like any worthwhile venture, the right guidance is crucial in seeing you through your home buying journey with ease. Our simple mortgage process saves time and allows you to purchase your home as quickly as possible.

- 1 GET PRE-APPROVED** – Discover how much home you can afford quickly by getting pre-approved with our Digital Mortgage application. You'll be armed with the knowledge of exactly what loan amount you can expect to be approved for.
- 2 FIND YOUR DREAM HOME** – Find your dream home with the help of your real estate agent, who will help you put in an offer, negotiate the price, and handle paperwork. When you find the right home and your offer is accepted, the home will go under contract.
- 3 HOME INSPECTION & APPRAISAL** – Schedule a home inspection of the house to make sure you understand the quality, safety, and overall condition of the home. Certainty will schedule an appraisal to confirm the value and condition of the home.
- 4 WORK WITH PROCESSING & UNDERWRITING** – Our experienced team will help you gather necessary documentation so our Underwriters can review your file and work on getting everything validated and approved.
- 5 CLOSE ON YOUR NEW HOME** – Once approved, it's time to close your loan and get the keys to your new dream home. We'll send you the closing documents package the day before your closing appointment. At closing, you'll sign the remaining mortgage documents and pay any closing costs and your down payment.

MORTGAGE OPTIONS

Not sure which loan program is right for you? We're here to help. From first-time homebuyer options to renovation and jumbo financing, we have something for just about everyone. Your dream home is possible.



CONVENTIONAL

One of the most popular financing options out there that can offer great rates to those who qualify.



FHA LOAN*

A popular option for first-time homebuyers with a low down payment and flexible qualifying criteria.



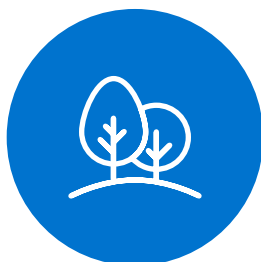
VA LOAN*

Offering a variety of benefits to make homeownership accessible to those who have served our Nation.



DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE (DPA)

Get help with your down payment with a local or state run DPA or bond programs.



USDA LOAN*

An affordable loan option for those seeking a rural location with flexible qualifying criteria. Guaranteed by the USDA.



JUMBO

A jumbo mortgage offers financing for those homes with a price tag that exceeds the conforming loan limits.



RENOVATION LOAN

Get the financing needed to buy a new property and the funds needed to make renovations to the home.



NEW CONSTRUCTION

Our new build lending options include everything from DPA programs to jumbo loans and long-term rate locks.



MANUFACTURED HOME

Choose from a variety of loan options and terms to finance a new manufactured home.

*Certainty Home Lending has no affiliation with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the US Department of Agriculture or any other government agency.

FEATURED PROGRAMS

Conventional Home Loan

A conventional mortgage is one of the most well-known options out there and can offer great rates to those who qualify. Conventional loans are a great option if you have good credit and enough money for a down payment. There is no mortgage insurance requirement if you can put 20% down, but down payment options as low as 3% may be available.

- One of the most popular home loan options available.
- Many loan options available, from 15- to 30-year terms with fixed and adjustable rate mortgage options.

FHA Home Loan*

An FHA mortgage is a popular option with first-time homebuyers. It was created to help potential homebuyers purchase a home of their own by providing a lower down payment option and flexible underwriting criteria.

- Down payment option as low as 3.5%.
- Flexible qualifying criteria with less strict credit score requirements compared to conventional home loans.
- Under FHA guidelines, if you have not owned a primary residence for at least three years you may qualify as a first-time homebuyer!

Jumbo Home Loan

A jumbo mortgage offers financing for those homes with a price tag that exceeds the conforming loan limits set by the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) annually. If you are looking at a luxury home, or live in an area of the country where the cost of living is high, a jumbo loan may be the answer.

- A variety of options available to fit your financial situation and goals.
- Fixed and adjustable-rate mortgage options to choose from.
- Buy that home you've been eyeing in a highly desirable market.
- Jumbo financing available with low down payment options - ask me for details!
- Programs for homebuyers who have non-traditional income.

DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE (DPA)

Worried about coming up with a down payment? Ask me about down payment assistance and bond programs that were created to help people purchase a home of their own.

*Certainty Home Lending is an FHA Approved Lending Institution and is not acting on behalf of or at the direction of HUD/FHA or the Federal government.



DO'S AND DON'TS

This list of 'Do's and Don'ts' will help you prepare to apply for your home loan. We want you to go through your homebuying journey with confidence.

DO continue making debt payments
(if applicable).

DO submit all items requested within
3 days.

DO notify your Loan Officer of any
changes in employment or marital status.

DO obtain insurance no less than 7 days
after your appraisal has been ordered.

DO notify your Certainty loan team of any
special circumstances with the closing of
your new home.
(i.e. Using a Power of Attorney or sending closing docs to
you at a location other than the title company.)

DON'T change jobs or employers
without speaking with your Loan Officer.

DON'T overdraft any accounts.

DON'T attempt to open or increase
any credit accounts, including credit cards,
loans, or financing a new car.

DON'T obtain and/or deposit unusually
large sums of money from a bonus,
insurance settlement or a gift without
proper documentation.

DON'T close, open or transfer any asset
accounts without first discussing with your
loan officer.
(i.e. If you transfer all the funds in your stock account to
your savings account.)

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

Here's a list of documents that **may** be requested during your home buying journey.

INITIAL DOCUMENTATION

- ☐ Pay stubs for the most recent 30-day period
- ☐ Information on any other income you wish to have considered (part-time income, rental income, etc.)
- ☐ W-2's and tax returns for the past 2 years
- ☐ Name, address and phone number of landlord for the past 24 months if you have been renting
- ☐ Previous 2 months bank account statements (all pages)
- ☐ Most recent statements on asset bearing accounts if generated yearly or quarterly (401K, IRA, etc.)

SELF EMPLOYED OR COMMISSIONED APPLICANTS

- ☐ Most recent 2 years business tax returns, including all schedules
- ☐ Previous 2 years of corporate or partnership tax returns
- ☐ Year to date profit and loss statement (self-employed only)
- ☐ Current leases on investment properties with rental income

IF APPLYING FOR A VA LOAN*

- ☐ Certificate of Eligibility (COE)
- ☐ For in-service veterans, Statement of Service and recent Leave and Earnings Statement
- ☐ Name and address of child care provider (if applicable)

*Certainty Home Lending has no affiliation with the the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

IF YOU ARE RELOCATING WITH COMPANY BENEFITS

- ☐ Copy of company's relocation policy
- ☐ Letter from employer stating effective date of transfer and new income
- ☐ Copy of entire relocation buyout offer (if applicable)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS IF YOU ARE REFINANCING

- ☐ Copy of your survey
- ☐ Settlement Statement or Closing Disclosure from purchase of the home
- ☐ Most recent mortgage statement on your primary loan (and 2nd lien if applicable)
- ☐ Most recent homeowners insurance declarations page on home retained
- ☐ Most recent tax bill on home retained
- ☐ Copy of HOA dues on property retained (if applicable)





DIGITAL MORTGAGE

You deserve a home financing process that is as simple and transparent as possible. Our Digital Mortgage was created with you in mind. Get pre-approved by visiting our website to get started.

- Apply online 24/7 from the comfort of your own home in just moments. Anytime, anywhere.
- Show home sellers and real estate agents that you are a serious buyer by showing them a pre-approval.
- Upload any required documentation right to your secure online portal. It's easy to use and navigate.
- Get updates and transparent communication throughout every step of your loan process.
- Esign the majority (or even all!) of your closing documents remotely if you choose to.



ASSISTANCE WHEN YOU NEED IT

Want a little more guidance? No problem! We are here to meet with you and discuss your financial and lifestyle goals together and discuss the mortgage application.



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Certainty Home Lending is committed to building strong and lasting relationships within our communities. Our Community Connection Program* offers the opportunity for us to do so by contributing to a non-profit organization when our customers purchase or refinance a home.

Our vision is to strengthen our communities while helping our customers finance a home.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- Certainty will contribute \$250 in the name of the borrower to their charity of choice.
- The donation will be made once the loan closes and funds.
- Purchase and refinance transactions are able to participate.
- All United States non-profit organizations that have a current 501 (c)(3) status are eligible.

The Community Connection Program provides a way for homebuyers and homeowners to contribute to their favorite charitable organization and leave their mortgage experience knowing that they were able to help others.

2021

The Certainty Home Loans Community Connection Program proudly donated \$170,750 to non-profit organizations during 2021.

*\$250 donation will be made to the charity of choice at time of closing. Donations are valid for all loans closed from 11/01/2022 through to 12/31/2023. Certainty Home Lending is not affiliated with any specific charities, nor does Certainty Home Lending sponsor or endorse any charity. Applicant subject to credit approval. If loan does not close for any reason, donation will not be made. This offer and/or receipt of application does not represent an approval for financing or interest rate guarantee. This offer cannot be redeemed for cash/has no cash value. Restrictions may apply, contact Certainty Home Lending for current rates or more information.

