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YOUR CENTRAL TEXAS FIRST-TIME BUYER'S GUIDE · CENTRAL TEXAS

Your First Home, Without the Fear

The whole process in plain English — what it really costs, how the steps go, and why the hard parts are mine to carry, not yours.

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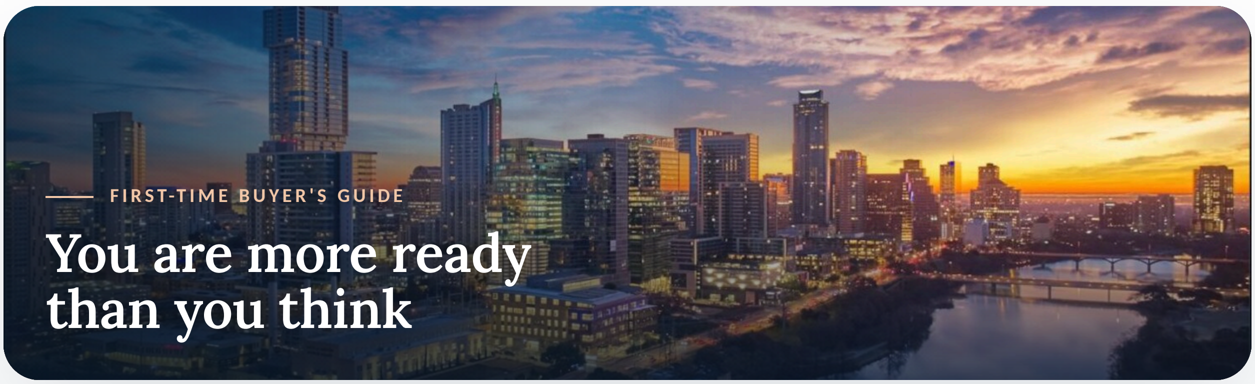
If it feels like a lot, that is normal, and it is exactly why I am here

Buying your first home is a big deal, and the industry has a talent for making it sound harder than it is. It is not that hard. This guide walks you through the whole thing in plain words. What it really costs, how the steps go, and the options most first time buyers never hear about. By the end you will know more than most people who have already bought. And the part that still feels heavy is the part I carry for you. You do not have to become an expert. You just need one in your corner.

What's inside



Start here. You are more ready than you think

Most first time buyers believe two things that are not true. That they need twenty percent down, and that they have to understand the whole process before they begin. Neither one is real. What you actually need is a clear picture of your numbers and someone you trust to guide the steps. That is the whole job, and it is mine, not yours.

The rest of this guide is about giving you the options nobody explained. There are more ways to get into your first home than you have been told, and knowing them is the difference between waiting another two years and moving in this year.

The twenty percent myth, and the truth about down payments

This is the belief that keeps more good people renting than any other, so let us clear it up first. You do not need twenty percent down to buy a home. Not even close. Here are the real options, in plain language.

Low down payment loans that actually exist

These are normal loans that regular first time buyers use every day. The right one depends on your situation, and a good lender will walk you through it, but here is what is out there so you know what to ask for.

- [ ] **Conventional loans as low as three percent down.** Yes, three percent. There are conventional loan programs built specifically for first time buyers that let you put down far less than people assume.
- [ ] **FHA loans at three and a half percent down.** These are backed by the government and are often more forgiving on credit. A very common path for a first home.

- [ ] **VA loans at zero down.** If you have served, this is one of the best deals in the country. No down payment and no monthly mortgage insurance for those who qualify.
- [ ] **USDA loans at zero down.** For homes in eligible areas outside the city core, which includes parts of Central Texas, this can mean no down payment at all.

Putting more down lowers your payment, so it is a trade off, not a rule. The point is simple. The door is open a lot wider than you were told.

Down payment assistance, the help most people miss

This is the part that surprises people the most. There are real programs in Texas, run by the state and by cities, that exist to help first time and moderate income buyers cover their down payment and closing costs. Some come as a grant you do not pay back. Some come as a second loan that is forgiven over time or paid back later. It is real money, and most buyers never even ask.

The programs change, the income limits change, and not every home or loan qualifies, so I am not going to promise you a number in a guide. What I will do is point you to the real sources and help you and your lender see which ones you might fit. That is a conversation worth having before you decide you cannot afford to buy, because you might be closer than you think.

- [ ] **Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation.** Statewide down payment help and first time buyer programs. A good first place to look.
- [ ] **Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.** The state's My First Texas Home and related programs.
- [ ] **City and county programs.** Austin and several surrounding areas run their own assistance. Which ones fit depends on where you buy.

> **How I use this for you**
>
> When we start, I connect you with lenders who actually know these programs, not ones who will shrug them off. Then we look at homes in the areas and price points where the help applies. It is the kind of thing that only works if someone is thinking about it from day one. That someone is me. See Texas down payment programs.

Rate buydowns, closing help, and making the payment work

The price of the home is only half the story. The monthly payment is the part you actually live with, and there are smart ways to bring it down that first time buyers rarely hear about.

A permanent rate buydown lowers your payment for good

A rate buydown means paying something up front to get a lower interest rate. A permanent buydown lowers your rate for the entire life of the loan, which lowers your payment every single month you own the home. Here is the good part. In a lot of deals, the seller or the builder can pay for that buydown instead of you. When rates are high, getting the seller to fund a permanent buydown can save you far more over time than simply knocking money off the price. Most buyers do not know to ask. I do, and I run the math with you so you take the version that helps you most.

Closing costs can be covered too

Closing costs are the fees to set up the loan and transfer the home, often somewhere around two to five percent of the price. On plenty of deals, we can ask the seller or builder to help cover them. That is real cash you keep in your pocket at the start, and it is one of the first things I go after for you.

> **Step one is free and painless**
>
> Before anything else, a good lender gives you a real pre approval. It tells you your true budget and your real monthly payment with no guessing, and it makes your offer count when you find the one. I will connect you with lenders who compete for your business. No cost, and no commitment.

Stuck in a lease? You have more options than you think

This stops a lot of first time buyers, so let us talk about it plainly. Being in the middle of a lease does not mean you have to wait. It just means we plan around it, and there are more ways through it than people realize.

- [ ] **Time the closing to your lease end.** A home purchase takes time to close anyway. Often we can line up your closing and move in date to land right around when your lease is up, so the two barely overlap.
- [ ] **Understand your lease break cost before you assume the worst.** Many leases spell out exactly what it costs to leave early, and it is often smaller than people fear. Sometimes it is a set number of months. Knowing the real figure turns a scary unknown into a simple line in the budget.
- [ ] **Some leases allow a buyout.** A lease buyout is a set fee to end the lease cleanly. If that is your situation, we can weigh that cost against buying now, and sometimes it still comes out ahead.
- [ ] **Ask the seller or builder to help.** On the right deal, we can negotiate for the seller or builder to help offset a lease break or buyout cost. It is not guaranteed, but you never get what you never ask for, and asking is my job.

The point is simple. A lease is a timing question, not a stop sign. Tell me your lease end and the terms, and we will build a plan that gets you into your home without paying twice for long.

Your first home, step by step

- [ ] **We talk.** Your goals, your timeline, your comfort zone. You leave knowing more, whether or not we work together.
- [ ] **You get pre approved.** A real budget and a real monthly number from a lender, so we shop with clarity instead of guessing.
- [ ] **We line up your options.** Loan type, any assistance you qualify for, and whether a buydown makes sense, all before we tour.

- [ ] **We find the right fit.** Homes that match your life and your number, resale or brand new, with my straight read on each.
- [ ] **We make a smart offer.** Built to win on more than price, and to protect you if something is off.
- [ ] **We inspect, then close.** We check the home properly, use what we find to protect your money, and I walk you through every signature. Then it is yours.

Worksheet — your true monthly cost

Principal & interest (P&I)	$
Property taxes (÷ 12) — use the actual rate for the address	$
Homeowners insurance (÷ 12)	$
HOA / MUD / PID (÷ 12 if applicable)	$
Utilities & ongoing upkeep (estimate)	$
All-in monthly cost	**$**

Build your budget on this number — not the price tag. I'm glad to fill this in with real figures for any specific home.

There is no wrong time to just ask

You do not have to be ready to buy to start a conversation. Curious what you could afford, or whether now is even the right time? Ask me anything, no pressure, ever. First time buyers are some of my favorite people to help, because good guidance makes the biggest difference of all right here.

This guide is educational and general. It is not tax, legal, or lending advice. Loan programs, assistance programs, income limits, and figures change and depend on your situation. Verify the details with a licensed lender and the program's official source before relying on them. Equal Housing Opportunity. TREC Information About Brokerage Services · TREC Consumer Protection Notice.

Made for you by Pete & Eugenia

We're a husband-and-wife team who help families move to Central Texas with a lot less stress and a lot more confidence. This guide is our way of helping before you ever pick up the phone. Whenever you want a real person to think it through with you — areas, timing, a specific home — we're one call or text away. No pressure, ever.

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Going deeper on new construction? **New Home Dispatch** is our independent, no-pitch guide to buying new in Central Texas — newhomedispatch.com.