From Pre-Approval to Keys

No registration is required to read the class. This is general education, not a loan approval or an accredited homebuyer counseling certificate.

1. Set your buying budget

Start with a monthly housing budget and cash you can comfortably commit. Include taxes, insurance, HOA dues where applicable, utilities, upkeep, moving costs, and an emergency reserve. A lender's maximum is not automatically your comfortable payment.

Your action: Write down your monthly comfort limit, available cash, and the reserve you want left after closing.

2. Prepare for financing

Review your credit reports and gather the documents your lender requests through its secure portal. Ask what a pre-approval includes, what remains conditional, and when it expires. Compare written loan offers, including fees and cash needed to close.

Your action: Prepare three questions about payment, cash to close, and how changes in rates could affect the offer.

3. Choose the home and representation

Describe your needs using property features, budget, commute, and timing. Visit the home and review available property information. Discuss services, representation, compensation, and any agreements before committing.

Your action: Separate must-haves from preferences, and identify the trade-offs you would accept.

4. Understand the offer

Price is one part of an offer. Review financing, inspection and appraisal provisions, earnest money, included items, timing, and the consequences of missing a deadline with your agent. Make sure the signed documents reflect your understanding.

Your action: Create a calendar of your actual contract deadlines and the person responsible for each step.

5. Inspect and investigate

Use the contract period to investigate the property and relevant records. Discuss inspection findings, insurance availability, HOA information, title matters, and any repair requests with the appropriate professionals. An appraisal and an inspection answer different questions.

Your action: List unresolved concerns, who will answer them, and the deadline for deciding.

6. Close and plan the move

Review final loan and closing documents, confirm funds and signing requirements with the responsible professionals, and arrange the final walkthrough. Verify wiring instructions using a trusted phone number you already have. Confirm when ownership, possession, and keys transfer.

Your action: Prepare a closing checklist, utility plan, moving schedule, and a place to save your signed documents.

Further reading: CFPB homebuying tools.

Next step: call 888.777.6664 or visit your APMI website to request personal help.

Further reading: https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/