

# FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER FAQs



Buying a home for the first time can be overwhelming. Our knowledgeable professionals can answer your title and closing questions and we are committed to making the home-buying experience a satisfying one for you. To help you begin your journey, here are some answers to a few of the questions that first-time homebuyers may ask as they begin their quest to purchase their slice of the American dream.

## Why should I buy instead of rent?

A home is an investment. When you rent, you write your monthly check and that money is gone forever. When you own your home, you can deduct the cost of your mortgage loan interest from your federal income taxes and usually from your state taxes. You can also deduct the property taxes you pay as a homeowner. In addition, the value of your home may go up over the years, building equity for you.

## How do I know if I am ready to buy a home?

You can find out by asking yourself a few questions:

- 🏠 Do I have a steady source of income? Have I been employed on a regular basis for the last 2-3 years? Is my current income reliable?
- 🏠 Do I have a good record of paying my bills? Do I have few outstanding long-term debts, like car payments?
- 🏠 Do I have money saved for a down payment? Do I have the ability to pay a mortgage every month, plus additional costs?

If you can answer “yes” to these questions, you are probably ready to buy your own home.

## What is title insurance and why do I need it?

An Owner’s Policy of title insurance protects the buyer against loss for title threats undiscovered at the time of closing and

*The more knowledgeable you are about the home-buying process, the better prepared you are to make an informed decision. Once you have found the home of your dreams, contact our office so we can provide the protection you need and the service you deserve.*

provides a defense in the event of claims against the title pursuant to the terms of the policy.

## How much money will I need upfront to buy a home?

In general, you need enough money to cover three expenses: the earnest money (variable), down payment, and closing costs.

## In addition to the mortgage payment, what other costs do I need to consider?

Utilities, property taxes, homeowners insurance, and maintenance costs are a few of the expenses to be considered. Additionally, there may be homeowner association or condo association dues.

## How are pre-qualifying and pre-approval different?

Pre-qualification is an informal way to see how much you may be able to borrow. A pre-approval is the lender’s commitment to lend to you.

## Should I use a real estate agent? How do I find a good one?

A good real estate professional can guide you through the entire process and make the experience much easier. All of the details involved in home buying, particularly the financial ones, can be mind-boggling. Start by asking your family and friends if they can recommend an agent. Look for an agent who listens well and understands your needs. The ideal agent knows the local area well and has resources and contacts to help you in your search.

## Surety Title Services of Florida, Inc.

Mindy Sharp

President

32815 US Highway 19 North, Suite 100-A

Palm Harbor, FL 34684

O: 727-799-0909 | F: 727-799-0109

[www.suretytitle.net](http://www.suretytitle.net)

[docs@suretytitle.net](mailto:docs@suretytitle.net)

Source: HUD.gov, Common Questions from First-time Homebuyers: [www.portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/common\\_questions](http://www.portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/common_questions)

First American Title Insurance Company makes no express or implied warranty respecting the information presented and assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions. First American, the eagle logo, First American Title, and firstam.com are registered trademarks or trademarks of First American Financial Corporation and/or its affiliates.

AMD: 11/2017

AN INDEPENDENT POLICY-ISSUING AGENT OF FIRST AMERICAN TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY

©2017 First American Financial Corporation and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. NYSE: FAF