

A modern, bright living room with large windows, contemporary furniture including a large light-colored armchair, a yellow armchair, and a low coffee table. The room features a patterned rug and a small round table with books. The background shows a dining area and a kitchen with a glass partition.

2026 *Real Estate* BUYER'S GUIDE

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Welcome to a journey where dreams meet doors. Together, we'll turn your vision into your view.

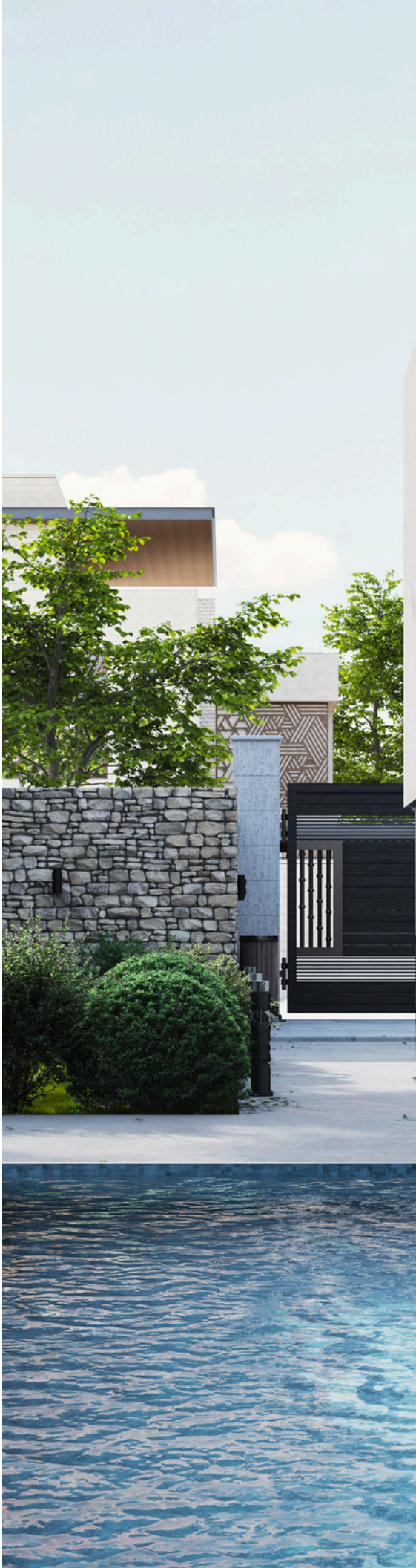
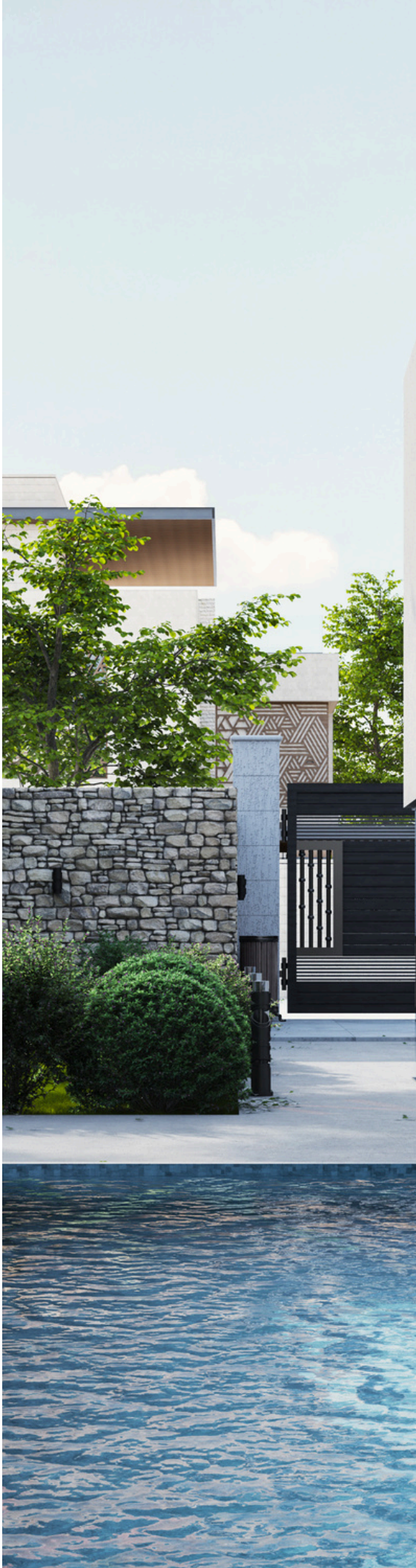


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PERSONAL PROFILE



Hi, I'm Thomas Grice, Realtor® with Coldwell Banker Realty and founder of Grice Properties. My mission is simple: to make the home buying process clear, stress-free, and rewarding for every client I work with.

I combine traditional real estate expertise with innovative strategies to help buyers find the right home while navigating financing options, down-payment assistance, and market opportunities.

My approach is built on three core values:

- Education – equipping you with the knowledge to make confident decisions.
- Authenticity – providing honest advice and keeping your best interests first.
- Dedication – ensuring your goals are met with persistence and care.

Thomas Grice

Realtor/Broker



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OUR MORTGAGE EXPERT



Karla DeVine

VP of Mortgage Lending NMLS #: 848701

Experienced Mortgage lender with 8 years of extensive experience in Mortgage origination.

 651.491.4825

 <https://www.grarate.com/loan-officers/karla-devine-848701>

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BUYING PROCESS



1. PRE-APPROVAL

Speak with a lender, Address any credit issues, Determine the right mortgage, Get a pre-approval letter.



2. HOME SHOPPING

Discuss your criteria with a buyer's agent, Tour listings in your price range
Adjust criteria if needed.



3. OFFER & NEGOTIATION

Research comparables with agent, Submit a strong offer to seller,
Negotiate terms of contract, Sign contract.



4. DUE-DILIGENCE

Schedule home inspection, Schedule appraisal and survey, Negotiate repairs, Begin title exam, Finish loan process.



5. PRE-CLOSING & TITLE

Confirm repairs are complete, Pre-Closing walk-through, Send funds to title company.



6. CLOSING

Review closing statement. Sign closing documents, Receive keys.

SMART FINANCIAL STRATEGIES

Save for a Down Payment

Set a savings goal, create a budget, and allocate funds towards your down payment. Building a substantial down payment demonstrates financial responsibility and helps secure a favorable mortgage rate.



Get Pre-approved for a Mortgage

Obtain a pre-approval from a lender before starting your home search. It clarifies your budget, makes you a serious buyer, and streamlines the process when making an offer.

Understanding Adjustable-Rate Mortgages

Learn about adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs), where the interest rate fluctuates over time. Assess if an ARM aligns with your financial goals and risk tolerance.

Mortgage Options and Terms

Research different loan programs and mortgage terms to understand eligibility requirements, down payment amounts, interest rates, and key concepts like amortization and loan-to-value ratio.

BANKRATE.COM ; IS A GREAT RESOURCE TO UTILIZE



LENDERS IN THE INDUSTRY

1

Guaranteed Rate Affinity

Established lender with diverse mortgage products and competitive rates.

2

Truist Bank

Leading bank that offers convenient and streamlined mortgage experience.

3

Fifth 3rd Bank

Trusted local institution providing personalized service and tailored mortgage solutions.

4

Rocket Mortgage (Online)

Respected lender with regional expertise, competitive rates, and a variety of loan options.



PROPERTY EXPLORATION



When exploring properties, it's essential to take a strategic approach to find the right home for your needs. Start by determining your budget and desired location. Research online listings and attend open houses to get a sense of available options. Consider factors like property size, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, amenities, and proximity to schools, shopping centers, and transportation. Take notes, ask questions, and envision yourself living in each property. Keep an open mind and be prepared to make compromises. As you explore properties, focus on finding a home that meets your criteria and feels like the perfect fit for you and your future plans.



CRUCIAL PROPERTY INSIGHTS



PROPERTY EVALUATION

A property evaluation plays a vital role when buying or selling a home. It provides crucial insights into the condition and potential of the property, allowing buyers and sellers to make informed decisions. During the evaluation process, trained professionals thoroughly assess various aspects of the property to ensure a comprehensive analysis.

KEY ASPECTS OF A PROPERTY EVALUATION INCLUDE:

- **Structural Assessment:** Evaluating the overall structural integrity and stability of the property, including the foundation, walls, and roof.
- **Energy Efficiency Analysis:** Assessing the energy efficiency of the home, considering insulation, HVAC systems, and energy-saving features.
- **Safety and Hazard Inspection:** Identifying potential safety hazards, such as pests, mold, asbestos, or other environmental concerns, and addressing them appropriately.
- **Exterior Condition Evaluation:** Examining the condition of windows, doors, exterior features, and landscaping to determine if repairs or improvements are needed

DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

Grice Properties



RESEARCH LOCAL & STATE PROGRAMS

Many state housing finance agencies (HFAs), city governments, and even county programs offer grants, forgivable loans, or deferred-payment loans for first-time buyers. These programs often go underutilized because buyers aren't aware of them. Start with your state's HFA website, then check your city/county housing department.

WORK WITH A LENDER FAMILIAR WITH DPA

Not every mortgage lender participates in down payment assistance programs. Partner with a lender who actively uses DPA options so they can match you with the right programs, ensure your loan type (FHA, VA, USDA, or conventional) is eligible, and help package your application correctly.



MAXIMIZE ELIGIBILITY BY PREPARING EARLY

Most DPA programs have income limits, credit score requirements (often 620+), and may require a homebuyer education class. Get pre-qualified early, pay down debt if possible, and complete any required education before you're under contract on a home—this will help prevent delays.

VISIT: WWW.WORKFORCE-RESOURCE.COM/DPR/PMT/CANOPY/THOMAS_GRICE
TO SEE IF YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE IN YOUR AREA

KEY DETAILS



Set Budget

Determine your financial limits and goals for the home purchase, considering factors like down payment, loan eligibility, and monthly affordability.

Engage Real Estate Professional

Partner with a knowledgeable agent who can provide expert guidance, access to market information, and support throughout the home buying process.

Research Properties

- Neighborhood research
- Property size and layout assessment
- Proximity to amenities and services
- School district evaluation
- Transportation accessibility
- Safety and crime rates analysis
- Future development plans in the area
- Local community and lifestyle factors
- Property features and amenities assessment

NAVIGATING THE HOME BUYING PROCESS



Purchasing a home involves important considerations such as financial aspects, legal requirements, thorough research, and professional guidance. Being informed and prepared will set the stage for a successful home buying journey.



HOME BUYER CHECKLIST



- ☐ Determine your budget and secure financing.
- ☐ Research and choose a reputable real estate agent.
- ☐ Define your must-have features and desired location.
- ☐ Conduct property inspections and due diligence.
- ☐ Obtain mortgage pre-approval before making an offer.
- ☐ Consider the long-term potential of the property.
- ☐ Evaluate the neighborhood and proximity to amenities.
- ☐ Prepare for the closing process and associated expenses.
- ☐ Verify the property's title and ownership history.

HOME INSPECTION CHECKLIST



Exterior Inspection

Assess exterior components for damage or structural issues.



Interior Inspection

Check for visible defects and water damage inside the property.



Electrical System

Verify proper installation and functionality of electrical components.



Plumbing System

Inspect pipes, fixtures, and drainage for leaks or issues.



HVAC System

Evaluate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems.



Structural Integrity

Assess overall structural condition for any signs of damage.



Roof Inspection

Check for roof damage, leaks, and proper drainage.



Attic and Insulation

Examine insulation levels and ventilation in the attic space.



Basement and Crawl Space

Evaluate moisture, pests, and structural issues.



Safety Features

Ensure the presence of smoke detectors, handrails, and other safety measures.

HOME BUYING ESSENTIALS



As you embark on your home buying journey, there are several important things to keep in mind. Firstly, it's crucial to have a clear understanding of your budget and financial capabilities. Determine how much you can afford, factoring in not only the purchase price but also ongoing costs like mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, and maintenance expenses. Additionally, consider your long-term goals and lifestyle needs when evaluating properties. Location plays a significant role, so assess the proximity to amenities, schools, transportation, and other essential services. Another key aspect is to conduct thorough inspections and due diligence to uncover any potential issues with the property.

PROPERTY FINALIZATION

1

SECURE ESCROW SERVICES

Safely handle funds and documentation during the real estate transaction for a smooth and protected transfer.

2

SETTLING CLOSING EXPENSES

Plan for additional costs involved in closing, such as title searches, insurance, appraisals, inspections, and taxes.

3

ASSESSING COMPARABLE SALES

Analyze recent sales of similar properties to determine a fair market value and make informed pricing or offer decisions.

4

PROTECTIVE TITLE INSURANCE

Safeguard your investment with comprehensive title insurance, providing peace of mind and protection against any potential issues or claims on the property's title.



PARTICIPANTS IN THE CLOSING PROCESS



It's important to note that the specific attendees may vary depending on local customs and practices, as well as the nature of the transaction. In certain situations, additional professionals or parties may be present, such as inspectors, appraisers, or other relevant stakeholders. The presence of these individuals ensures that all necessary documents are signed, funds are properly transferred, and any outstanding issues or concerns are addressed.

- Closing agent or settlement agent may facilitate the closing process.
- Homeowners association representative, if applicable, may attend to provide information or collect dues.
- Mortgage loan officer may be present to answer any last-minute questions or concerns.
- Home inspector or appraiser may attend to discuss their findings or address any outstanding issues.
- Spouses or family members of the buyer or seller may attend for support or to witness the transaction.
- Power of attorney holder, if authorized, may attend on behalf of one of the parties.
- Contractors or repair professionals may be present to discuss any necessary repairs or outstanding work.

EXPERT ADVICE



When buying a home, start by assessing your budget and getting pre-approved for a mortgage. Research neighborhoods thoroughly to find the best fit for your needs. Consider working with a reputable real estate agent who knows the area well. They can guide you through the process and help you negotiate the best deal.



Prioritize a comprehensive home inspection to identify any potential issues before buying. Engage a real estate attorney to review contracts and ensure legal requirements are met. Take your time, weigh the pros and cons of each property, and seek advice from trusted sources. By following these recommendations, you can make confident and well-informed decisions throughout the home buying process.

CONCLUDING THE SALE



1 Financial Document Review

Thoroughly review all financial documents, including mortgages and loan agreements, ensuring accuracy and addressing any discrepancies promptly.

2 Ownership Transfer

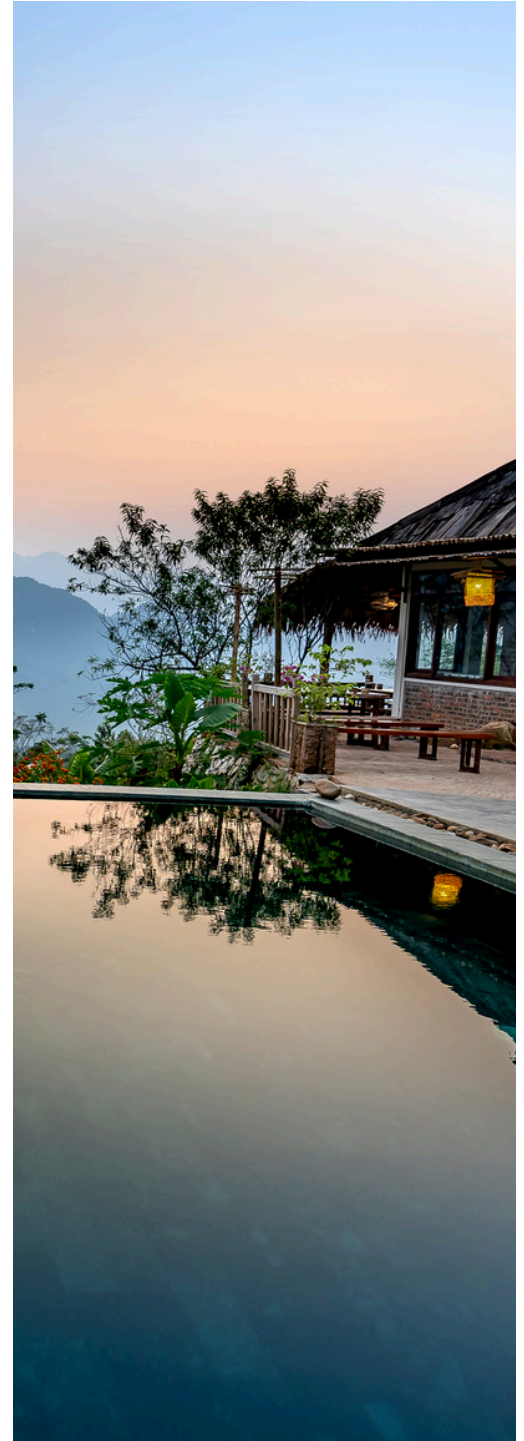
Complete the legal transfer of property ownership, working with professionals to prepare and execute necessary documents like deeds and title insurance.

3 Fund Disbursement

Safely distribute funds to involved parties, settling financial obligations and ensuring secure and timely transactions.

4 Legal Document Finalization

Carefully review and sign all legal documents, including contracts and disclosures, to ensure compliance and avoid legal complications.



ADDITIONAL NOTES



Date

Location

Your Notes

CONCLUSION



As you reach the end of this Home Buyer Guide, it's important to reflect on the valuable information and insights you have gained.

Throughout this guide, we have covered a range of topics to help you navigate the process of buying a home with confidence and ease.

From understanding the market and financing options to negotiating offers and closing the deal, you are now equipped with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions throughout your home buying journey.



Remember, buying a home is a significant decision, and it's essential to take your time, conduct thorough research, and seek professional guidance whenever necessary. As you move forward in your home buying process, keep in mind that each real estate transaction is unique, and there may be specific considerations and challenges along the way.