

HOME BUYER'S GUIDE

Buying Your Home, *made clear.*

Ready to buy but not sure where to start? This guide walks you through getting ready, financing, finding the right home, making an offer, and closing day – without the confusion. Clear language, real steps, all in your language through ASL.

Getting ready

Financing

The home search

Closing day

START HERE

Your path to the keys

Buying a home is one of the biggest moments of your life. It should feel exciting – not overwhelming, and never lost in translation.

Too often, Deaf buyers go through one of life's biggest financial decisions without full access to the information – relying on written notes, unclear explanations, or no interpreter at all. This guide changes that. We'll walk through every stage of buying a home in plain language, so you can move forward with confidence.

You don't need to know everything today. Read one section at a time. By the end, you'll understand what it takes to be ready, how financing really works, how to find the right home, and exactly what happens on closing day.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each section stands on its own. Skim the headers, then go deep where you're curious. Keep the glossary on page 7 nearby – every bolded term is explained there in plain language.

What's inside

01 Are You Ready to Buy?

The honest signs you're ready – income, credit, and savings.

02 Your Money Game Plan

Down payments, loan types, and getting pre-approved.

03 The Home Search

Needs vs. wants, and finding an agent who signs.

04 Making an Offer

What's in an offer and how to negotiate with confidence.

05 Inspection & Closing Day

From accepted offer to keys in your hand.

SECTION 01

Are You Ready to Buy?

Owning a home builds wealth that renting never will – but readiness matters more than timing. Here's how to know where you stand.

When you rent, your payment builds your landlord's wealth. When you own, every payment builds **equity** – the part of the home you truly own. Owning also brings stability: your payment can stay steady for years while rents keep rising. The question isn't whether owning is worth it; it's whether you're ready.

Three signs you're ready



Steady income

Reliable money coming in that comfortably covers a monthly payment.



Healthy credit

A credit score and payment history that lenders can say yes to.



Savings ready

Money set aside for a down payment and closing costs.

What lenders actually look at

- **Credit score** – how you've handled debt in the past. Higher scores unlock lower interest rates.
- **Income & job history** – steady, documented income shows you can make the payment.
- **Debt-to-income** – how much of your income already goes to other debts. Lower is better.
- **Savings** – for your down payment, closing costs, and a small cushion after.

RENT VS. BUY, SIMPLY

Renting offers flexibility with no upkeep. Buying builds equity, brings stability, and can be cheaper over time. If you plan to stay put for a few years, buying usually wins.

SECTION 02

Your Money Game Plan

The biggest myth in home buying: that you need 20% down. For most buyers, the real number is far smaller.

A **down payment** is the part of the price you pay up front; a lender covers the rest with a **mortgage**. Many first-time buyers put down as little as 3% – and grant programs can help with even that. The key first step isn't saving a fortune; it's getting **pre-approved** so you know your real budget.

DOWN PAYMENT IS SMALLER THAN YOU THINK

Loan option	Typical down	On a \$250,000 home
Conventional	as low as 3%	\$7,500
FHA	3.5%	\$8,750
VA / USDA (if eligible)	0%	\$0
First-time buyer grants	varies	may cover part

Common loan types

- **Conventional** – the standard loan; as little as 3% down for first-time buyers.
- **FHA** – backed by the government, friendly to lower credit scores; 3.5% down.
- **VA** – for veterans and service members; often 0% down.
- **USDA** – for eligible rural areas; often 0% down.

GET PRE-APPROVED FIRST

A pre-approval is a lender's written estimate of what you can borrow. It tells you your budget, and it shows sellers you're serious. Always get pre-approved *before* you start touring homes.

SECTION 03

The Home Search

Now the fun part. With a budget in hand, you can search with focus — and the right agent makes all the difference.

Start by separating your **needs** from your **wants**. Needs are non-negotiable: enough bedrooms, a safe area, a commute that works. Wants are nice extras: a big yard, a updated kitchen, a garage. Knowing the difference keeps you from overpaying for things that don't matter to your daily life.

Needs vs. wants

- **Needs** — location, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, price within budget, condition you can live with.
- **Wants** — style, updates, extra space, special features. Great to have, but flexible.

Work with an agent who signs

Your real estate agent guides the whole journey — finding homes, scheduling tours, and explaining each step. For Deaf buyers, an **ASL-fluent agent** (or one who arranges interpreters) means nothing gets lost: you understand every detail and advocate fully for yourself. The ASL Real Estate Collective's *Find a Pro* directory exists for exactly this.

ACCESSIBILITY IS YOUR RIGHT

You have the right to full communication access at every showing, meeting, and signing. Request an interpreter in advance, and never sign anything you don't fully understand.

SECTION 04

Making an Offer

You found it. Now you make a written offer — and a smart offer is about much more than price.

Your agent helps you write an offer the seller will take seriously, based on what similar homes have actually sold for. A strong offer balances a fair price with terms that protect you.

WHAT'S INSIDE AN OFFER

Part of the offer	What it means
Offer price	What you propose to pay, based on recent comparable sales.
Earnest money	A good-faith deposit that shows you're serious.
Contingencies	Conditions that let you back out safely — inspection, financing, appraisal.
Closing date	When the sale becomes final and the home is yours.

Negotiation, calmly

The seller may accept, decline, or send a **counteroffer** with different terms. This back-and-forth is normal. Decide your top number ahead of time and don't go past it. The right home at the wrong price is still the wrong deal.

CONTINGENCIES PROTECT YOU

An **inspection contingency** lets you walk away if the home has serious problems. A **financing contingency** protects you if your loan falls through. These are your safety net — use them.

SECTION 05

Inspection & Closing Day

Your offer was accepted. These final steps take you from "under contract" to keys in your hand.

- 1 Home inspection**
A professional checks the home's condition. You can ask the seller to make repairs or adjust the price.

- 2 Appraisal**
Your lender confirms the home is worth what you're paying before they finalize the loan.

- 3 Final loan approval**
The lender reviews everything and clears your loan to close. Avoid new debts during this time.

- 4 Final walkthrough**
You visit the home one last time to confirm it's in the agreed condition.

- 5 Closing day**
You sign the paperwork, pay your closing costs, and receive the keys. Request an interpreter for the signing.

BUDGET FOR CLOSING COSTS

Beyond your down payment, expect **closing costs** of roughly 2–5% of the price for loan fees, taxes, and insurance. Your lender gives you an itemized estimate in advance.

SECTION 05+

Key Terms, in Plain Language

Keep this page handy. Every bolded word in this guide is defined here, simply.

Pre-approval — a lender's written estimate of how much you can borrow.

Down payment — the part of the price you pay up front; often far less than 20%.

Mortgage — the loan used to buy a home, paid back monthly over many years.

Earnest money — a good-faith deposit that shows the seller you're serious.

Contingency — a condition that lets you back out of the deal safely.

Appraisal — a professional estimate of the home's value for your lender.

Inspection — a professional check of the home's condition before you buy.

Escrow — a neutral third party that holds money and documents until closing.

Closing costs — fees due at closing, usually 2–5% of the price.

Equity — the part of the home you truly own; its value minus what you still owe.

A note on accessibility: You have the right to full communication access at every step of buying a home. Every concept here, and every course inside the Collective, is taught visually and in American Sign Language so the information is truly yours.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Ready to find the home that's right for you?

This guide is the beginning. Inside the **ASL Real Estate Collective** membership, the full *Confident Homeownership* course walks you through every stage in depth — all in ASL — plus live monthly calls where you can ask questions in real time.

MONTHLY

\$49.99 / month

Full access to every call, course, and document.
Flexible month-to-month.

BEST VALUE · ANNUAL

\$497 / year

Every call plus the full course library, all documents, and expert masterclasses.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES

- ✓ The full Confident Homeownership course
- ✓ LIVE monthly Q&A calls
- ✓ On-demand course library
- ✓ Buying, selling & building courses
- ✓ Agent exam prep
- ✓ Worksheets, checklists & templates
- ✓ A nationwide Deaf community
- ✓ Everything delivered in ASL

Join today and get instant access to every course and resource:

[Join the Collective →](#)

Monthly: courses.aslrealestatecollective.com/monthly

Annual: courses.aslrealestatecollective.com/annual

ASL Real Estate Collective · Real estate knowledge, in your language. · aslrealestatecollective.com

© 2026 ASL Real Estate Collective. All rights reserved. Equal Housing Opportunity. This guide is educational and not financial, legal, or investment advice.