

The Pre-approval Guide For Home Buyers



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Why Pre-Approval Matters:

Getting pre-approved isn't just a step in the homebuying process — it's the foundation. In today's competitive market, a strong pre-approval letter can be the difference between getting the keys... or losing out.

Often, sellers won't even consider an offer — or allow a showing — unless you're pre-approved. It tells them (and their agent) that you're serious, ready, and financially qualified.

Not All Pre-Approvals Are Created Equal

Unfortunately, some lenders hand out pre-approval letters without fully reviewing your situation. That can lead to heartbreak later — when a loan falls apart at the last minute, leaving buyers, sellers, and agents back at square one.

Why Mine Are Different

I treat pre-approvals like promises. I won't tell you what you want to hear just to win your business — I'll tell you the truth. If I issue a pre-approval letter, it means I've done the work, and I believe we can close your loan. Period.

That's why so many Realtors trust me with their clients — because when I say someone's pre-approved, they are.

What This Guide Covers

In the next few pages, I'll walk you through:

What pre-approval really means

Why it's so important (for both strategy and confidence)

What documents you'll need

How to avoid common pitfalls

Whether you're buying now or just planning ahead, I want this guide to empower you with the clarity and confidence to move forward.

Pre-Qualification vs. Pre-Approval

What's the Difference?

The terms “pre-qualification” and “pre-approval” are often used interchangeably — but they’re not the same. Knowing the difference can save you from confusion, frustration, and even losing out on a home.

Pre-Qualification: A First Glance

A pre-qualification is a quick estimate based on information you provide — like your income, credit score, and debts. There’s usually no document verification, and in many cases, no credit check.

It’s helpful early on if you’re just curious about what you might afford. But it’s not a green light to make offers or move forward.

● Think of it as: “Based on what you told me, you might qualify.”

Pre-Approval: Verified & Serious

A pre-approval is much more in-depth. I’ll review your actual documentation, run a full credit report, and assess your financial profile — just like we would for a full loan approval.

This makes your pre-approval credible and powerful — because it’s based on real data, not guesses. When a seller sees a strong pre-approval, they know you’re ready.

● Think of it as: “You’ve been vetted — and you’re ready to buy.”

Why It Matters

In competitive markets, pre-approvals win offers — and pre-qualifications can leave you behind. Worse, some buyers find out too late that they don’t actually qualify, costing them time, money, and heartache.

What You'll Need for Pre-Approval

Proof of Identity

What to provide:

Driver's license or passport

Why it matters:

Lenders need to verify that you are... well, you! It's also needed to run your credit and ensure all records match.

Proof of Income

What to provide:

Most recent 2 pay stubs

If self-employed: 2 years of tax returns

Why it matters:

Lenders want to see steady, reliable income — enough to comfortably cover your future mortgage payment.

Tax Returns & W-2s

What to provide:

2 years of full tax returns

2 years of W-2s or 1099s

Why it matters:

These documents back up your income over time and help verify your employment history and consistency.



What You'll Need for Pre-Approval cont...

Bank & Asset Statements

What to provide:

2 months of recent bank statements

Any investment or retirement accounts (if you plan to use those funds)

Why it matters:

We need to show where your down payment and closing costs are coming from — and that those funds are seasoned (not borrowed last-minute).

Credit Check

What we'll pull:

A tri-merge credit report (Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion)

Why it matters:

Your credit score affects your loan options, rate, and approval. We'll also check for any red flags we can clean up ahead of time.

Bottom Line:

This step sets the tone for the whole process. The more complete your info, the stronger your pre-approval — and the smoother your path to homeownership.



You're Pre-Approved — Now What?

Congrats! You've cleared one of the biggest hurdles — and now you're ready to shop with confidence.

But we're not done just yet. While you're out looking at homes (and hopefully writing offers!), there are a few things to keep in mind to keep your pre-approval valid and your path to closing smooth.



Do's & Don'ts After Pre-Approval



DO:

Stay current on all bills

Keep your job and income steady

Continue saving for your down payment

Let me know if anything changes financially



DON'T:

Change jobs without telling me

Make large deposits or transfers without documentation

Apply for new credit cards or loans

Make big purchases (like furniture, cars, or appliances)

These actions can affect your loan approval — even if you're already pre-approved. Keep things steady and simple until we close.



How Long Does Pre-Approval Last?

Most pre-approvals are good for 60–90 days, but can be easily updated with new documents. If your home search takes longer, just send over fresh pay stubs or statements and I'll keep your approval current.

Let's Make Home Happen

You're on the Right Track

Whether you're just starting to explore or you're already touring homes, I hope this guide helped you feel more confident and informed about the mortgage pre-approval process.

Remember — getting pre-approved isn't just about numbers. It's about building a plan, avoiding surprises, and working with a team that truly has your back.

Pro Tip:

Let me know as soon as you're ready to make an offer. I'll tailor your pre-approval letter to match the property — and make sure we're putting our strongest foot forward.

You're Not Doing This Alone

When we work together, you're getting more than just a loan — you're getting a partnership. I take that seriously. And when you're working with your trusted real estate agent, you've already got a great team in your corner.

We're both here to guide you, answer your questions, and celebrate with you when we hand over the keys.

Let's Connect

Have questions? Want to talk through your options?
I'd love to chat — no pressure, no obligation.

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