Homebuyer Readiness Checklist

Check every box that applies to you *right now*. Then read the scoring guide on the last page. Bring this with you to your first conversation with a loan officer — it is more useful with your real answers than with anyone else's.

Income and Employment

- [ ] I have been employed, or self-employed with documented tax returns, for at least two consecutive years
- [ ] My income has been stable or increasing over the past two years
- [ ] I have not changed careers, or switched from W-2 to self-employment, in the past 12 months
- [ ] I can document my income with pay stubs, tax returns, and/or W-2s
- [ ] If I earn overtime, bonuses, or commissions, I have a documented history of receiving them

Debt

- [ ] I know my current monthly debt payments — car, student loans, credit card minimums, and anything else
- [ ] My existing monthly debts leave room in my budget for a housing payment. If those debts already take up a large share of my gross monthly income, I plan to discuss my debt-to-income ratio with a loan officer before house-shopping
- [ ] I do not have debts in collections that I haven't addressed or made a plan for
- [ ] I am not currently co-signed on a loan that could affect my debt-to-income ratio

Savings

- [ ] I have savings toward a down payment, or I know which assistance programs I plan to explore
- [ ] I have savings toward closing costs, or a realistic plan to build them, separate from my down payment
- [ ] I have, or am building, a reserve of two to three months of housing payments that I will not touch at closing
- [ ] My savings are in a stable, accessible account — not invested in volatile assets
- [ ] I have not made large, undocumented deposits in the past three months

Credit

- [ ] I have checked my credit report from all three bureaus within the past six months
- [ ] My credit score meets the minimum for the loan type I'm targeting, or I know what it would take to get there
- [ ] I do not have unresolved errors or disputes on my credit report
- [ ] I have not opened new credit accounts in the past six months
- [ ] I have not missed a payment on any account in the past 12 months
- [ ] My credit card balances are below 30% of their limits

Timeline and Readiness

- [ ] I have a realistic timeline in mind — ready now, six months, twelve months
- [ ] I have identified at least one area of Greater Houston where I want to live

- [ ] I understand that a new-construction home takes several months to build
- [ ] I am prepared to set aside time for a homebuyer education course before closing
- [ ] I have not made plans for a major purchase — car, boat, furniture on credit — before closing

NOT A CHECKLIST — READ THIS PART

How to Read Your Results

Most boxes checked

You're likely ready to start. Your next step is a conversation with a loan officer to get pre-approved, or a free consultation to confirm your options and match you with the right programs.

About half the boxes checked

You have a solid foundation with a few areas that need attention. Many buyers in this range are mortgage-ready within three to six months with a focused plan.

Only a few boxes checked

You're earlier in the process, and that's fine. Credit and down payment assistance are where to start. The consultation is free, available in English or Spanish, and comes with zero pressure.

No matter where you fall, the worst position is not knowing. Now you know.

NOTES FOR MY LOAN OFFICER

CONTACT

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DISCLAIMER

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Mary De Pinho is a licensed real estate agent and is not a lender, mortgage broker, or credit repair organization. Information about down payment assistance programs, credit readiness, and mortgage financing is provided for educational purposes only and does not constitute financial, legal, or credit repair advice. Assistance program eligibility, terms, income limits, and available funding are subject to change and are determined by the administering agency — not by the agent. Results vary by individual situation. Figures cited in this material were current as of the date of publication; verify all program details with the appropriate agency before making financial decisions.

Equal Housing Opportunity. Mary De Pinho does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, disability, or any other class protected under federal, state, or local fair housing law.

Buyer representation is provided under a written buyer representation agreement. The agent's commission for new-construction purchases is paid by the builder at no cost to the buyer. Terms of representation are disclosed in writing before services begin, in accordance with current Texas Real Estate Commission rules.