



METRO DETROIT AND SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

Your Homebuyer Guide

Plain-English answers from pre-approval to
keys in hand.



Greg Goddard

Sr. Mortgage Consultant | NMLS #1478824
734.540.2332 | Greg.Goddard@ccm.com



CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC | NMLS3029





Welcome. Let's get you home.

Buying a home is a big step. My job is to make the money side clear, calm and on time.

Thanks for picking up this guide. I'm Greg Goddard, a Senior Mortgage Consultant with CrossCountry Mortgage. I lead the Goddard Group here in Metro Detroit.

Most buyers I meet have the same questions. How much can I afford? How much cash do I need? What happens after my offer is accepted? This guide answers those in plain English, in the order you'll need them.

Read it front to back or jump to the page you need. Keep it handy until closing day. When a question comes up that isn't in here, call or text me. That's what I'm here for.

Talk soon,

Greg

How I work

- ✓ Straight answers, even when it's not what you hoped to hear.
- ✓ A clear plan before you shop, not after.
- ✓ Updates at every step, so you're never guessing.
- ✓ Close teamwork with your agent, title company and insurance agent.



Save my number

Call or text **734.540.2332**, or email **Greg.Goddard@ccm.com**. Evenings and weekends too. That's when most buyers find the house.



Greg Goddard

Sr. Mortgage Consultant

CrossCountry Mortgage | NMLS #1478824
734.540.2332 | Greg.Goddard@ccm.com

Inside this guide

- 01 Welcome. Let's get you home.
- 02 Meet your loan team
- 03 Your home team
- 04 The road to closing, step by step
- 05 Pre-approval vs. pre-qualification
- 06 Credit basics
- 07 Loan options in plain English
- 08 Down payment help
- 09 What it really costs
- 10 Michigan property taxes
- 11 Your monthly budget
- 12 Rate locks, buydowns and seller credits
- 13 From accepted offer to closing
- 14 Do's and don'ts during your loan
- 15 Wire fraud and closing day
- 16 Glossary

02 YOUR HOMEBUYER GUIDE Meet your loan team



A small team with one plan. Here's who helps you from pre-approval to keys, and when you'll hear from each of us.



Greg Goddard
SR. MORTGAGE CONSULTANT

Your main point of contact from first call to closing. I build your strategy, walk you through your loan options and make the big calls with you.



Kelli DeGrendel
LOAN PARTNER

Kelli helps you gather documents and supports you while you shop. She answers questions, updates your pre-approval letter and runs the numbers on homes you're considering.



Tonya Pinard and Megan Koby
CONTRACT TO CLOSE

Once your offer is accepted, Tonya and Megan take it from there. They prepare your loan disclosures, order the appraisal and guide your file through underwriting to closing.

Who you'll hear from, and when

STAGE 1

Pre-approval and home search With Greg and Kelli

- **First call:** I learn your goals and build your plan.
- **Pre-approval:** Kelli helps collect your documents and tells you what's missing.
- **While you shop:** call Greg or Kelli for an updated letter or numbers on a specific home.



STAGE 2

Accepted offer to closing With Tonya and Megan

- **Right after acceptance:** your loan disclosures arrive to review and sign.
- **Appraisal and underwriting:** they order the appraisal and send any condition requests.
- **Before closing:** they confirm clear to close and walk you through your final numbers.

I stay your main point of contact the whole way.



Your team will reach out directly

You'll hear from each of us by phone, text or email as your file moves forward. Not sure who to ask? Call me. I'll get you the answer.

Your home team



Beyond your loan team, a few outside pros help get you to closing. Here's who does what, and when you'll hear from them.

Your real estate agent

Helps you find the right home, writes and negotiates your offer, and guides you through inspection and the final walkthrough. Talk to me before you tour so your agent knows your numbers.

When: from the first showing to closing

Title company

Researches the property's ownership history, issues title insurance and runs the closing. Often holds your earnest money. This is also who receives your wire, so always confirm instructions by phone.

When: after your offer is accepted

Home inspector

Walks the home top to bottom and reports on its condition: roof, furnace, plumbing, electrical and more. You pick and pay the inspector during your inspection window.

When: first days after acceptance

Insurance agent

Quotes and binds your homeowners policy. Your lender needs proof of coverage before closing, so start shopping as soon as you have an accepted offer.

When: right after acceptance

Real estate attorney (optional)

Not required for most Michigan purchases. Worth it for estate sales, new construction contracts, unusual terms or anything you want reviewed line by line.

When: before you sign, if you want one

How it all connects

Your loan team shares updates with your agent and title company at each step, so everyone works from the same timeline and the same numbers.

When: every step, start to finish



The most important person on the team

You. Quick answers and complete documents are what keep a closing on schedule. I'll tell you exactly what I need and when I need it.

04

YOUR HOMEBUYER GUIDE

The road to closing, step by step



Six steps from first call to keys. Your purchase agreement sets the target date, and we plan backward from there.

1

Pre-approval

2

Application

3

Underwriting

4

Conditional
approval

5

Clear to close

6

Closing

01 Pre-approval

We review your income, savings and credit up front. You shop with real numbers and a letter your agent can use with confidence.

02 Application

Once your offer is accepted, we complete the full application. Your Loan Estimate arrives within three business days.

03 Underwriting

An underwriter verifies your documents. We order the appraisal to confirm the home's value.

04 Conditional approval

Most approvals come with a short list of conditions, like an updated pay stub or a letter about a deposit. Send them fast and we keep moving.

05 Clear to close

Final sign-off from underwriting. Your Closing Disclosure arrives at least three business days before closing with your final numbers.

06 Closing

You sign, funds are sent, the deed is recorded and you get the keys. Congratulations. You're a homeowner.



What you can expect from me

A status update at each step, to you and your agent. No surprises, and no chasing me for answers. If something changes, you'll hear it from me first, along with the plan to fix it.



Pre-approval vs. pre-qualification

They sound alike. They aren't. A pre-approval tells sellers you're ready. A pre-qualification is a starting estimate.

	Pre-qualification	Pre-approval
Based on	What you tell us	Verified income, savings and a credit report
Credit check	Light or none	Full credit review
Documents	None yet	Pay stubs, W-2s, bank statements and more
Weight with sellers	Limited	Strong
Good for	Early budgeting	Touring homes and writing offers

What to gather for your pre-approval

- ☐ Photo ID for each borrower
- ☐ W-2s for the last two years
- ☐ Bank and investment statements for the last two months, every page
- ☐ Gift funds: a signed gift letter and a paper trail of the transfer
- ☐ Divorce decree or support order, if it applies
- ☐ Pay stubs covering the most recent 30 days
- ☐ Federal tax returns for the last two years, all pages (if requested)
- ☐ Self-employed: two years of personal and business returns, plus a year-to-date profit and loss
- ☐ Other income: award letters for Social Security, pension or disability
- ☐ Rental property: current leases and mortgage statements



Greg's tip

Send clear, complete PDFs. Every page, even the blank ones. It's the easiest way to speed up your approval.



Your credit affects which loans fit and the pricing you're offered. A few simple habits make a real difference.

What drives your score

Payment history

Paying on time, every time



Amounts owed

How much of your card limits you use



Length of history

How long your accounts have been open



New credit

Recent applications and new accounts



Credit mix

Cards, installment loans and more



Bars show relative impact, from biggest to smallest.

How to help your score

- ✓ Pay every bill on time. Set up autopay for minimums.
- ✓ Keep card balances low compared with your limits.
- ✓ Keep old accounts open, even if you rarely use them.
- ✓ Hold off on new credit until after closing.
- ✓ Check your reports for errors at [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com).
- ✓ Mortgage shopping within a short window is generally scored as a single inquiry.

What shapes your rate quote

Two buyers can call on the same day and get different pricing. Here's why:

- 1 Credit score
- 2 Down payment and loan-to-value
- 3 Loan type
- 4 Property type
- 5 Occupancy (primary, second home, investment)
- 6 Loan amount
- 7 Lock period
- 8 Discount points or lender credits

That's why a quote without your details is only a guess. I'll price your real scenario.



Before you pay anyone to fix your credit

Call me first. Many issues have simple fixes, and some quick fixes do more harm than good.



Loan options in plain English

There's no single right loan. The right fit depends on your credit, your savings, the home and your plans.

Conventional

Follows Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac guidelines. Flexible for buyers with solid credit. Low down payment options are available, and mortgage insurance can come off as you build equity.

Often a fit for: strong credit, steady income

FHA

Insured by the Federal Housing Administration. More flexible on credit history and a common choice for first-time buyers. Includes mortgage insurance.

Often a fit for: rebuilding or thinner credit

VA

For eligible veterans, active-duty service members and some surviving spouses. Very low cash-to-close options and no monthly mortgage insurance.

Often a fit for: those who served

USDA

For eligible homes in designated rural and suburban areas, with household income limits. Parts of Southeast Michigan qualify, so a quick address check is worth it.

Often a fit for: homes outside the urban core

Jumbo

For loan amounts above the conforming loan limit, which is updated every year. Usually calls for stronger credit and more savings in reserve.

Often a fit for: higher-priced homes

Self-employed and non-traditional income

Bank statement, 1099 and other alternative-documentation loans for business owners, contractors and gig workers whose tax returns don't tell the whole story.

Often a fit for: business owners and 1099 earners

Fixed rate

Your principal and interest payment stays the same for the life of the loan. Predictable and simple.

Adjustable rate (ARM)

Starts with a fixed period, then adjusts on a set schedule. Can fit buyers who expect to move or refinance.

Program availability, terms and requirements change. We'll compare your real options side by side before you choose.

Down payment help

You may need less cash than you think. Here are the main ways Michigan buyers bridge the gap.

MICHIGAN HOMEBUYER PROGRAM

A lower-rate option plus up to \$10,000 toward your purchase

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) offers the MI Home Loan, a fixed-rate first mortgage that may carry a lower rate than standard options. Pair it with the MI 10K DPA for help with your down payment, closing costs and prepaids.

- ✓ Up to \$10,000 in assistance, with no monthly payment on it
- ✓ Repaid when you sell, refinance, pay off the first mortgage or move out
- ✓ First-time buyers statewide, and repeat buyers in targeted areas
- ✓ Works with FHA, conventional and Rural Development loans
- ✓ A homebuyer education course is required
- ✓ You'll still bring a small minimum contribution of your own

Income limits, purchase price limits and a minimum credit score apply.

Low down payment conventional

Programs like Fannie Mae HomeReady and Freddie Mac Home Possible are built for buyers with limited savings. Income limits may apply.

Gift funds

Family can help. We'll need a signed gift letter and a clear paper trail. Don't deposit cash. Talk to me before the money moves.

Local programs

Some cities, counties and employers offer their own grants or loans. They change often, so ask me what's open right now.

Mortgage insurance, explained

Mortgage insurance protects the lender, not you, when your down payment is on the smaller side. It's what makes low down payment loans possible.

Conventional (PMI)

Monthly cost that can be removed later once you have enough equity.

FHA (MIP)

An upfront premium plus a monthly premium. How long it lasts depends on the loan.

VA

No monthly mortgage insurance. Most borrowers pay a one-time funding fee, and some are exempt.

USDA

An upfront fee plus an annual fee that is paid monthly.



What it really costs

The price is only part of the picture. Here's what makes up your cash to close and your monthly payment.

Your cash to close

Down payment

Your share of the purchase price.

Closing costs

Lender fees, appraisal, credit report, title insurance, recording and settlement fees.

Prepays

Your first year of homeowners insurance, interest from closing to month end, and the starting balance of your escrow account.

Minus credits

Your earnest money, seller credits, lender credits and any down payment assistance.

Your monthly payment



Principal

Pays down what you owe



Interest

The cost of borrowing



Taxes

Property taxes, usually via escrow



Insurance

Homeowners insurance, usually via escrow

Plus mortgage insurance and HOA dues, if they apply to your loan and home.

Escrow: most buyers pay taxes and insurance through an escrow account. A portion goes in each month and your servicer pays the bills. Escrow is reviewed every year, so your payment can change when taxes or insurance do.

Michigan tax proration at closing

Michigan communities send summer and winter tax bills. At closing, the title company splits the taxes between you and the seller based on your purchase agreement and local custom. Depending on timing, you may reimburse the seller for taxes already paid, or get a credit for taxes coming due.

Loan Estimate

WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS OF APPLYING

A standard form with your estimated terms and costs. Every lender uses the same form, so it's easy to compare line by line.

Closing Disclosure

AT LEAST 3 BUSINESS DAYS BEFORE CLOSING

Your final numbers. Compare it with your Loan Estimate and ask me about anything that changed.



Michigan property taxes

Plan for the reset. This one surprises buyers the most: your taxes will often be higher than the seller's. Here's why.

State Equalized Value (SEV)

About half of your home's market value, set by the assessor each year.

Taxable value

What your taxes are figured on. Under Proposal A, it can rise each year by only inflation or 5 percent, whichever is less, while the same owner holds the home.

Uncapping

In the calendar year after a sale, taxable value uncaps and resets to the SEV. Then the cap starts again with the new owner.

HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE ONLY

Round numbers for illustration. Not a quote, estimate or promise. Actual values and millage vary by community.

	Seller (owned for years)	You (the year after purchase)
Market value	\$300,000	\$300,000
SEV (about half of market value)	\$150,000	\$150,000
Taxable value	\$95,000 (capped)	\$150,000 (uncapped)
Yearly taxes at a hypothetical 40 mills, PRE filed	\$3,800	\$6,000
Without a PRE filed (up to 18 more mills)		Up to \$8,700

One mill is \$1 of tax for every \$1,000 of taxable value.

What it means for you

- Don't budget on the seller's tax bill.
- I estimate your taxes on the likely uncapped value, so your escrow starts out right.
- Your first bills may still reflect the seller's value. Plan for the jump.
- Most communities bill in summer (around July) and winter (around December).

Two forms to file

- ☐ **Principal Residence Exemption, Form 2368.** Removes local school operating taxes of up to 18 mills on your primary home. File with your city or township assessor by June 1 (summer and winter bills) or November 1 (winter bill).
- ☐ **Property Transfer Affidavit, Form 2766.** File with your assessor within 45 days of closing. Late filing can bring penalties.

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury (michigan.gov/taxes). General information, not tax or legal advice. Confirm details with your assessor or a tax professional.



Your monthly budget

What does it cost to be you each month? This number shows what payment feels comfortable, not just what you qualify for.

Rent or current housing	\$	Groceries and dining out	\$
Car payments	\$	Childcare and school	\$
Car insurance and gas	\$	Pet care	\$
Student loans	\$	Giving	\$
Credit card payments	\$	Retirement contributions	\$
Utilities	\$	Savings	\$
Phone and internet	\$	Personal care and gym	\$
Streaming and subscriptions	\$	Travel and fun	\$
Health and life insurance	\$	Other: _____	\$
Medical and prescriptions	\$	Other: _____	\$

Monthly total

\$

\$ _____ x 6 = \$ _____

Monthly total x 6 = months of cushion

\$ _____ x 12 = \$ _____

Monthly total x 12 = months of cushion



Keep a cushion after closing

I suggest 6 to 12 months of expenses set aside after your down payment, if you can. Life happens: a furnace, a car repair, a job change. Reserves keep a surprise from turning into a crisis. Some loans also require a set amount of reserves.



Rate locks, buydowns and seller credits

Rates move every day. These tools help you control your rate and your payment. We'll choose the right mix for your deal.

Rate lock

Holds your rate and terms for a set number of days while we close. Longer locks can cost more. If closing slips, extensions may be available.

Float-down

Some locks offer a one-time chance to capture a lower rate if the market improves before closing. Rules vary, so ask before you lock.

Discount points

An upfront cost to reduce your rate for the life of the loan. Makes the most sense if you plan to keep the loan a long time.

Temporary buydowns

Money paid at closing, often by the seller or builder, to lower your payment for the first year or two. After that, you pay the full note rate.

2/1 buydown

A reduced rate in year one, a smaller reduction in year two, then your full note rate from year three on.

1-year buydown (1/0)

A reduced rate for year one only, then your full note rate.

Good to know

You qualify at the full note rate, so the lower early payments are breathing room, not a stretch.

Seller credit or price reduction?

Option	What it does	Often a fit when
Price reduction	Lowers the loan amount a little	The home appraised close to the line
Credit toward costs	Lowers your cash to close	You want more money left in the bank
Temporary buydown	Lowers your early payments	You expect income to grow or plan to refinance
Permanent buydown	Lowers your rate for the life of the loan	You plan to stay put for years

Limits on seller credits depend on your loan type and down payment. Your agent negotiates the credit. I make sure it fits your loan, and I'll run the options side by side.



From accepted offer to closing

Your offer is accepted. Here's what happens next and what I'll need from you.

1

Earnest money

Deposit it as your purchase agreement says, usually with the title company or listing broker. Keep the receipt. It's credited to you at closing.

2

Home inspection

Schedule it right away so it fits inside your inspection window. Review the report with your agent and decide on repairs, credits or next steps.

3

Full application and documents

We finish your application and update your documents. Your Loan Estimate arrives within three business days. Let me know you want to move forward.

4

Appraisal

An independent appraiser confirms the value. If it comes in low, you have options: renegotiate, cover the gap, request a reconsideration of value, or use your contract's appraisal terms.

5

Homeowners insurance

Shop early. Insurance costs have climbed in recent years and quotes vary a lot. I need your policy details before we can clear to close.

6

Title work

The title company confirms clean ownership, clears old liens and prepares your closing documents.

7

Clear to close and final walkthrough

Your Closing Disclosure arrives at least three business days before closing. Walk the home one last time, usually within a day of closing.



During this stretch

Keep your finances boring. No new credit, no big purchases, no surprise deposits. The next page has the full list.



Do's and don'ts during your loan

Avoid setbacks between pre-approval and closing. Most delays come from one of these.

Do

- + Tell me before any job change: a new job, quitting, going self-employed or a change in how you're paid.
- + Keep paying every bill on time.
- + Save every page of every statement, even the blank ones.
- + Keep your closing funds where they are. Ask me before moving them.
- + Answer document requests quickly. Same day if you can.
- + Shop homeowners insurance early and send me your quote.
- + Tell me about gift funds before they're deposited.

Don't

- x Apply for new credit: cars, furniture, appliances, store cards or financed phones.
- x Co-sign a loan for anyone.
- x Make large cash deposits without talking to me first.
- x Spend money you've set aside for closing.
- x Open, close or move money between accounts without a heads-up.
- x Pay off or close accounts without asking. It can change your numbers.
- x Sign up with a credit repair or debt settlement company.



When in doubt, call first

A two-minute conversation can prevent a two-week delay. There are no silly questions while your loan is in process.

Wire fraud and closing day



Protect your money, then show up ready. Here's how to finish strong.

IMPORTANT

Protect your down payment from wire fraud

Criminals target homebuyers with fake emails that look like they're from your title company, your agent or me. They send new wiring instructions. Once money goes to a scammer, it's often gone for good.

- Never trust wiring instructions sent by email or text alone.
- Call the title company at a number you look up yourself, not one in the email, before you send anything.
- Last-minute changes to instructions are a red flag.
- I will never email you asking you to wire money to a new account.
- If you think you've been targeted, call your bank right away, then report it at ic3.gov.

Closing day checklist

- ☐ Valid photo ID for everyone signing
- ☐ Funds to close by verified wire or cashier's check, as the title company directs
- ☐ Your Closing Disclosure, reviewed ahead of time
- ☐ Homeowners insurance in place
- ☐ Final walkthrough done
- ☐ Utilities set to transfer into your name
- ☐ Phone numbers for your agent, title officer and me

After closing

- ☐ File your Principal Residence Exemption (Form 2368)
- ☐ File your Property Transfer Affidavit (Form 2766) within 45 days
- ☐ Store your closing documents somewhere safe
- ☐ Watch for first payment details from your loan servicer
- ☐ Ignore mailers selling copies of your deed. Your county has the official record.
- ☐ Call me with any questions, anytime

**Amortization**

Paying off a loan with regular payments over time. More goes to principal as the years pass.

Appraisal

An independent opinion of the home's value, ordered by the lender.

Closing costs

Fees to get your loan and transfer the home, like title, appraisal and lender fees.

Contingency

A condition in your purchase agreement, like inspection, financing or appraisal, that must be met.

Discount points

An upfront cost paid to reduce your interest rate for the life of the loan.

Escrow account

An account your servicer uses to pay your property taxes and insurance.

Loan Estimate

A standard form with your estimated terms and costs, sent within three business days of applying.

Mortgage insurance

Protects the lender when your down payment is smaller. Called PMI on conventional loans and MIP on FHA loans.

Pre-approval

A lender's written review of your verified income, savings and credit.

Rate lock

A commitment to hold your rate and terms for a set period.

Taxable value

The value your Michigan property taxes are based on. Resets the year after a sale.

Underwriting

The lender's review and verification of your loan file.

APR

Annual percentage rate. The yearly cost of a loan, including interest and certain fees. Handy for comparing offers.

Clear to close

Underwriting's final sign-off. Your loan is ready to close.

Closing Disclosure

The form with your final loan terms and costs, sent at least three business days before closing.

Debt-to-income ratio (DTI)

Your monthly debt payments compared with your gross monthly income.

Earnest money

A deposit made with your offer to show good faith. Credited to you at closing.

Homeowners insurance

Covers your home and belongings. Required by your lender.

Loan-to-value (LTV)

Your loan amount compared with the home's value.

PITI

Principal, interest, taxes and insurance. The main parts of a monthly payment.

Principal Residence Exemption

Michigan's exemption from local school operating taxes on your primary home. File Form 2368.

State Equalized Value (SEV)

About half of a home's market value, as set by the assessor.

Title insurance

Protects you and your lender from past ownership problems with the property.



Ready when you are.

One conversation gets you a clear plan: what you can afford, what cash you'll need and which loan fits. No pressure. Just answers.

QR: apply link

Placeholder. Replace with final
QR before print.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Scan to start your application
or call or text

734.540.2332

Greg.Goddard@ccm.com



Greg Goddard

Sr. Mortgage Consultant | NMLS #1478824

CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC | NMLS3029

43252 Woodward Ave, Suite 202, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302



Greg Goddard, Sr. Mortgage Consultant, NMLS #1478824, CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC, NMLS3029 (www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org). 43252 Woodward Ave, Suite 202, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302. Equal Housing Opportunity. This guide is for general information only and is not a commitment to lend or an offer to extend credit. All loans are subject to credit approval, underwriting approval and property eligibility. Certain restrictions apply. All borrowers must meet minimum credit score, loan-to-value, debt-to-income and other requirements to qualify for any mortgage program. Rates, programs, terms and conditions are subject to change without notice. Down payment assistance is subject to program availability, funding, eligibility, income limits and purchase price limits. CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC is a private mortgage lender and is not affiliated with or endorsed by FHA, VA, USDA, MSHDA or any government agency. Michigan property tax information is general in nature and is not tax or legal advice; please confirm details with your local assessor, a tax professional or an attorney. Goddard Group is a team of CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC.