CARMEN WHALEY PRESENTS

PIKES PEAK FIRST HOME ROADMAP

An easy, real talk guide to buying your first home in Colorado Springs, Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Pikes Peak region.

PLAN SMART. ASK QUESTIONS. BUY WELL.

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START HERE

READY DOES NOT MEAN PERFECT.

Your first step is not touring homes. It is understanding what would make homeownership comfortable and sustainable for you.

FOUR SIGNS YOU MAY BE READY

1. **Stable enough income**
   You can document your income and expect it to continue.
2. **Room in the monthly budget**
   The payment still leaves space for repairs, savings, and real life.
3. **A reason to stay**
   Buying fits your likely plans better than remaining flexible as a renter.
4. **Willingness to learn**
   You do not need every answer. You need a good team and the courage to ask questions.

FIRST-TIME BUYER MYTHS

MYTH	**You need 20% down.**	REALITY	Many buyers use lower-down-payment financing. Your options depend on eligibility and the loan.
MYTH	**Your credit must be flawless.**	REALITY	Credit affects options and cost, but perfection is not the entry requirement.
MYTH	**You should wait to call an agent.**	REALITY	An early conversation can help you make a better plan, even if buying is months away.

YOUR COMFORT NUMBER MATTERS MORE THAN YOUR MAXIMUM.

A lender can estimate what you may qualify to borrow. Together, we will also consider what you want your life to feel like after the mortgage payment is made.

MONEY MAP

KNOW THE CASH BUCKETS.

The down payment is only one part of the plan. Ask your lender and agent for estimates early, then update them as the property and loan become clearer.

1 Earnest money

A good-faith deposit delivered after contract acceptance and credited according to the contract at closing.

2 Inspections

Independent evaluations you choose, which may include general, sewer, radon, well, septic, or specialists.

3 Lender costs

Appraisal, credit report, origination, discount points, and other loan-related charges.

4 Down payment

Your contribution toward the purchase price. The amount varies by loan program and strategy.

5 Closing costs

Title, recording, prepaid taxes and insurance, HOA items, and other transaction expenses.

6 After-closing cushion

Moving costs, immediate projects, furnishings, maintenance, and an emergency reserve.

QUESTIONS TO ASK A LENDER

What payment range protects my other goals? What cash will I need before and at closing? Which loan types Which loan types fit me? Are assistance programs worth comparing? What could change my approval?

PROGRAMS, RATES, AND ELIGIBILITY CHANGE. VERIFY CURRENT OPTIONS WITH A QUALIFIED LENDER.

YOUR TEAM

YOU DESERVE YOUR OWN GUIDE.

The listing agent represents the seller unless a different relationship is established. I will explain your representation choices and any required agreements before private showings.

WHAT I DO FOR YOU

- Help define a realistic search and strategy
- Explain forms, deadlines, options, and risks in plain language
- Research comparable sales and local market conditions
- Prepare and negotiate offers based on your goals
- Coordinate with your lender, inspector, title company, and transaction team
- Help you make informed decisions without pressure

THE REST OF THE CIRCLE

LENDER
Explains loan options, documents, estimates, and approval.

INSPECTOR
Evaluates the home's visible systems and condition within the inspection scope.

TITLE + CLOSING
Researches title, prepares settlement figures, and coordinates signing and recording.

INSURANCE
Confirms insurability and coverage cost early enough to protect your timeline.

A buyer agreement should be understood, not rushed.

Before signing, ask about services, compensation, duration, geographic scope, cancellation, and what happens if you purchase a home introduced by another source. I will walk through the document and answer your questions.

SEARCH SMART

FIND THE FIT, NOT JUST THE HOUSE.

A beautiful listing can distract from the things that shape daily life and long-term ownership. Build the decision from the outside in.

YOUR THREE-LIST FILTER

MUST HAVE — Requirements that make the purchase workable.

STRONGLY PREFER — Features with real value, but some flexibility.

BONUS — Things you would enjoy but should not distort the decision.

LOOK BEYOND THE PHOTOS

- [ ] Commute, access, and winter driving
- [ ] Insurance availability and cost
- [ ] Utilities, water, sewer, well, and septic
- [ ] Resale considerations
- [ ] Property taxes and HOA obligations
- [ ] Roof, drainage, foundation, and major systems
- [ ] Future maintenance and immediate projects
- [ ] Neighborhood feel at different times of day

Pikes Peak property types need different questions.

A downtown condominium, suburban HOA home, mountain property, rural acreage, and home on well and septic do not carry the same ownership responsibilities. I will help you identify the right questions before you fall in love with the wrong fit.

OFFER STRATEGY

PRICE IS ONLY ONE LEVER.

A strong offer balances competitiveness with protection. The right terms depend on the property, financing, market activity, and your tolerance for risk.

AN OFFER MAY ADDRESS

- Purchase price
- Earnest money
- Financing and appraisal
- Inspection rights and deadlines
- Closing date and possession
- Seller concessions
- Included and excluded property
- Title, HOA, and property-specific terms

BEFORE YOU SIGN, KNOW YOUR ANSWERS

- [ ] What is this home worth to me based on comparable sales and condition?
- [ ] What payment and cash requirement would this offer create?
- [ ] Which protections matter most, and what risk would I accept?
- [ ] What happens if the inspection, appraisal, title, insurance, or loan creates a problem?
- [ ] Where is my walk-away point if there are competing offers?

The winning offer is not always the highest offer.

Certainty, timing, financing strength, clean communication, and terms that solve the seller's priorities can matter. I will help you understand the choices without pushing you beyond your comfort zone.

ASSUMABLE LOAN POSSIBILITY?

Some FHA and VA loans may be assumable with approval. Assumptions have specialized requirements, equity considerations, and longer timelines, so they should be evaluated early.

UNDER CONTRACT

KEEP THE DEADLINES MOVING.

Once an offer is accepted, the work becomes less visible and more time-sensitive. I track the contract while helping you make the decisions only you can make. The following is a typical timeline.

01 **Deliver earnest money**
Follow the contract instructions and document delivery.

02 **Complete due diligence**
Review disclosures, title, HOA documents, property records, and applicable investigations.

03 **Inspect and decide**
Use qualified professionals, review findings, and choose how to proceed within the contract.

04 **Protect financing**
Respond promptly to the lender and avoid new debt, credit changes, or unusually large purchases.

05 **Confirm appraisal + insurance**
Resolve questions early enough to protect financing and deadlines.

06 **Final walk-through**
Confirm agreed condition, inclusions, and completed items shortly before closing.

07 **Sign and receive keys**
Review final figures, bring approved identification and funds, sign, and celebrate after closing is complete.

DURING THE LOAN PROCESS

Check with your lender before changing jobs, opening credit, moving money, refinancing, purchasing a car, or making unusually large deposits.

You will not have to remember everything alone.

I will keep you oriented to the next decision, the next deadline, and the people responsible for each moving part.

YOUR FIRST-HOME CHECKLIST

SAVE THIS PAGE. CHECK OFF THE NEXT RIGHT STEP, NOT EVERY STEP AT ONCE.

BEFORE SEARCHING

- [ ] Choose a comfortable monthly range for a mortgage payment
- [ ] Gather income, asset, debt, and identification documents
- [ ] Speak with a qualified lender
- [ ] Identify must-haves and likely locations

WHILE TOURING

- [ ] Compare the home with the plan, not the staging
- [ ] Estimate immediate and future projects
- [ ] Consider insurance, utilities, HOA, and property type
- [ ] Record questions before moving to the next home

BEFORE OFFERING

- [ ] Review comparable sales and competition
- [ ] Understand every material term and deadline
- [ ] Confirm estimated payment and cash needed
- [ ] Choose protections and a walk-away point

UNDER CONTRACT

- [ ] Deliver earnest money as instructed
- [ ] Complete inspections and due diligence
- [ ] Respond quickly to lender and insurance requests
- [ ] Review final figures and complete the walk-through

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE READY TO BUY TODAY TO ASK A QUESTION.

Tell me what you are hoping to accomplish, what feels uncertain, or where you are in the process. I will help you identify the next useful step.

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Educational information only. Loan, legal, tax, insurance, inspection, and program questions should be verified with qualified professionals.

QUESTIONS FOR CARMEN

You've done your homework. What questions do you have before we get started?

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