

BUYER'S GUIDE · 2026 EDITION

The Long Island Home Buyer's Guide

How to buy a home in Seafood, Massapequa or
anywhere on Long Island, from pre-approval to
keys.



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THE PROCESS

The 8 steps to buying your home

1 Get pre-approved

Know your budget, and show sellers you're a serious buyer.

2 Choose your agent

Sign a written buyer agreement so I can represent you and only you.

3 Make your lists

Your must-haves, your nice-to-haves, and the towns and school districts you'd consider.

4 Tour homes

In person, by video or with a 3D tour. I'll point out what you might not notice.

5 Make an offer

We build an offer around price, terms and timing to beat the competition.

6 Inspection and contract

Your home inspection, then the attorneys finalize the contract and you pay your deposit.

7 Mortgage and title

Your lender completes the appraisal and mortgage commitment while the title company clears the title.

8 Walkthrough and closing

A final walkthrough, the closing table, and the keys are yours.

STEP 1

Get ready before you start looking

On Long Island, many sellers won't consider an offer without a pre-approval letter. Talk to a lender first. It's also smart to get a second opinion, since rates, fees and programs vary.

Do

- ✓ Get pre-approved, not just pre-qualified
- ✓ Keep paying every bill on time
- ✓ Keep credit card balances low
- ✓ Save pay stubs and full bank statements
- ✓ Budget for closing costs and moving, not just the down payment

Don't, until after closing

- ✓ Open new credit cards or loans
- ✓ Make big purchases, like a car or furniture
- ✓ Co-sign for anyone
- ✓ Change jobs or banks
- ✓ Make large cash deposits you can't document

STEP 2

Working with a buyer's agent

A listing agent works for the seller. A buyer's agent works for you: finding homes, spotting problems, negotiating price and terms, and keeping your deal on track through closing.

The buyer agreement

Since August 2024, agents who use the MLS must have a written agreement with a buyer before touring a home. It spells out what I'll do for you, for how long, and how I'm paid. New York also requires an agency disclosure form so you know who represents whom.

How your agent gets paid

Compensation is negotiable and agreed in writing up front. Depending on the home, it may be paid by the seller as part of the deal, offset with a seller concession, built into your offer, or paid by you. We'll talk through the options before you make any offer.

What I handle for you

- ✓ Finding homes, including ones not yet online
- ✓ Scheduling showings and pulling disclosures
- ✓ Pricing advice from real comparable sales
- ✓ Negotiating price, repairs and credits
- ✓ Coordinating your lender, attorney and inspector

About dual agency

If one agent or brokerage represents both buyer and seller, New York requires both sides' informed written consent, and the agent can't fully advocate for either one. Having your own agent means someone is only on your side.

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW COULD COST YOU

Protect yourself while you shop

A few common moves can confuse who represents you, and in some cases leave you paying an agent's fee out of pocket. Keep me in the loop and you're covered.

Open houses

Sign in and tell the host agent you're working with me.

Calling the listing agent

Send me the listing instead. I'll get the details and set up the showing.

For sale by owner

Let me contact the owner, so terms including my fee are settled up front.

New construction

Builders often require your agent to register you on your first visit. Tell me before you go.

STEPS 3 AND 4

House hunting on Long Island

Start with two lists. Must-haves are the things you won't compromise on, like bedrooms, a school district or a short commute. Nice-to-haves are the things you'd love, like a pool or a finished basement. Then look closely at every home you tour.

- ✓ Confirm the school district by address, not ZIP code
- ✓ Check the flood zone and ask about flood insurance
- ✓ Ask about the heat: oil, gas or electric
- ✓ Look at the age of the roof, boiler or furnace and A/C
- ✓ Ask which additions and improvements have Certificates of Occupancy
- ✓ Drive by at rush hour and on a weekend night
- ✓ Time your commute, including the LIRR
- ✓ Look up the property taxes, not just the price

FINANCING

Common mortgage types

Your lender will match you to the right program. Here's a quick overview of the ones Long Island buyers use most.

Loan type	Down payment	Good to know
Conventional	As little as 3% for some first-time buyers, commonly 5% to 20%	Private mortgage insurance applies under 20% down and can be removed later.
FHA	3.5% with a qualifying credit score	More flexible credit rules. Has upfront and monthly mortgage insurance.
FHA 203(k)	3.5%	Rolls the cost of renovations into one loan. Good for homes that need work.
VA	As little as 0% for eligible veterans and service members	No monthly mortgage insurance. A funding fee usually applies unless exempt.
Jumbo	Often 10% to 20%	For loan amounts above the conforming limit. Stricter credit and reserve requirements.

Programs and requirements change and vary by lender. Ask your loan officer for current details.

STEP 5

How to make an offer that wins

In Seaford and Massapequa, homes are selling above asking in under three weeks. When there are multiple offers, the strongest offer isn't always the highest one.

Strong financing

A pre-approval letter and a larger down payment show the seller your deal will close.

Flexible timing

Matching the seller's ideal closing date, or offering time to move out, can beat a higher number.

Clean terms

Fewer or shorter contingencies help, but don't skip the home inspection.

Know the comps

I'll show you what similar homes sold for, so you know how far to go and when to walk away.

After your offer is accepted: on Long Island, the deal isn't final until the contract is signed. Your inspection usually happens first, then the attorneys finalize the contract and you pay your deposit, often around 10% of the price, held in escrow.

STEPS 6 TO 8

Closing costs for Long Island buyers

Plan for closing costs on top of your down payment. Your lender's Loan Estimate will show your exact figures. These are the usual buyer costs in Nassau County.

Cost	What to expect
Mortgage recording tax	In Nassau County, 1.05% of the loan amount. The lender typically pays 0.25%, so the borrower pays about 0.80%.
Mansion tax	1% of the price on homes of \$1 million or more, paid by the buyer.
Title insurance and fees	Owner's and lender's title policies, title search and recording fees.
Your attorney	Usually a flat fee. Your attorney reviews the contract and represents you at closing.
Lender fees	Application, appraisal and any points you choose to pay.
Inspection	Paid when the inspection is done, before the contract is signed.

Cost	What to expect
Escrows and adjustments	Prepaid property taxes and homeowner's insurance, plus adjustments for taxes and fuel.

For general information only, not legal, tax or financial advice. Your lender and attorney will confirm the exact figures.

MOVING

Your moving checklist

One month out

- ✓ Book movers or a truck
- ✓ File a change of address
- ✓ Get homeowner's insurance in place
- ✓ Keep moving receipts

Two weeks out

- ✓ Set up utilities and internet
- ✓ Arrange help, sitters and pet care
- ✓ Confirm the movers
- ✓ Schedule your final walkthrough

Closing day

- ✓ Bring your ID
- ✓ Confirm your wire with your attorney by phone
- ✓ Do the final walkthrough
- ✓ Get your keys

After you move in

- ✓ Change the locks
- ✓ Update your license and registration
- ✓ Apply for any property tax exemptions
- ✓ Help the kids settle in

FAQS

Buying a home on Long Island: FAQs

How much do I need for a down payment?

It depends on the loan. Some programs allow 3% to 3.5% down, VA loans can allow 0% for eligible buyers, and 20% down avoids private mortgage insurance on a conventional loan. Remember to budget for your contract deposit and closing costs too.

Do I need an attorney to buy a house in New York?

Yes, in practice. On Long Island, your attorney reviews and negotiates the contract, works with the title company and represents you at closing. I can recommend experienced local attorneys.

Do I have to sign a buyer agreement?

Yes. Since August 2024, agents who use the MLS need a written agreement with you before touring homes. It sets out what your agent will do and how they're paid, and it's negotiable.

What is the mansion tax?

New York charges buyers a 1% tax on residential purchases of \$1 million or more. With Massapequa's median price near \$900,000, it's worth knowing about if you're shopping near that line.

How long does it take to buy a house on Long Island?

Finding the right home can take a few weeks to a few months. From accepted offer to closing commonly takes about 60 to 90 days, depending on your financing.

Which school district is a home in?

District lines follow addresses, not ZIP codes or town names. The Massapequas alone include four districts. I confirm the district for every home before you make an offer.

YOUR GUIDE

A local broker who knows these blocks



I was born and raised in Seaford, graduated from Seaford High School, and grew up in my family's brokerage, which my grandmother started in 1984. Today I'm the Associate Broker and Managing Broker at Bon Anno Realty ERA Powered on North Broadway in Massapequa.

200+

Homes sold

\$125M+

Career sales

5.0★

Zillow rating

\$15M+

ERA Leaders Circle 2024
& 2025

Let's talk about your move

Whether you're buying, selling or both, I'll give you straight answers, local numbers and a plan built around your timeline. No pressure and no obligation.

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