FREE GULF COAST REAL ESTATE GUIDE

A first-time buyer's guide to Pensacola

Your first home should fit your life after closing, not only your search filters today. This guide gives you an order for the decisions, the questions to ask, and room to write down your own answers.

Inside this guide

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Read online: bryceburch.com/guides/first-time-home-buyers-pensacola/

01 / THE DECISION

Start with the whole monthly cost

Ask a lender for a payment range, then build your own comfort range. Include principal and interest, property taxes, homeowners insurance, any flood insurance, HOA or condo dues, utilities, and a maintenance reserve. A lender's maximum approval is not a recommendation to spend that amount.

Keep cash for inspections, closing costs, moving, and the first repairs. Before you tour seriously, ask for a loan estimate and compare more than the headline rate. If a program sounds like a special first-time-buyer benefit, ask the lender to show its eligibility rules and total cost in writing.

ACTION LIST

- Choose a comfortable payment and a firm ceiling.
- Estimate insurance and taxes for the specific property, not an average home.
- Set aside a post-closing cash reserve.

02 / THE DECISION

Choose a daily-life map

Pensacola, Gulf Breeze, Perdido, Pace, and Milton can offer very different commutes and housing types. Make a short list of the places you visit every week, then test the drive at the times you will actually travel. Compare the age and condition of homes, parking, storage, outdoor space, and future flexibility.

For coastal or low-lying properties, check flood exposure and obtain property-specific insurance quotes early. A pretty listing photo cannot tell you how the home will feel during a normal Tuesday or what it will cost to own.

ACTION LIST

- Test two real commute times.
- List three non-negotiables and three tradeoffs.
- Ask for property-specific insurance information before committing.

03 / THE DECISION

Make the offer with an inspection plan

An offer is more than a price. Review financing, appraisal, inspection, deposit, closing date, and seller-concession terms together. Ask what each contingency does and when a deadline expires. Do not waive a protection simply because another buyer might.

Inspect the property with qualified professionals. Review roof age, HVAC, moisture intrusion, drainage, electrical systems, permits when relevant, and any HOA documents. If a major issue appears, separate safety or structural concerns from cosmetic preferences and decide whether to negotiate, investigate further, or walk away within the contract terms.

ACTION LIST

- Read every deadline before signing.
- Book inspections promptly.
- Get repair and insurance implications in writing.

04 / THE DECISION

Prepare for closing and the first year

Confirm the lender's required documents, compare the closing disclosure with earlier estimates, arrange the final walk-through, and verify how closing funds must be delivered using a trusted phone number. Keep copies of the contract, disclosures, inspection reports, insurance documents, and warranties.

After moving in, make a simple maintenance calendar. Learn the location of water shutoffs, electrical panel, and HVAC filters. Your first year is easier when you budget for small surprises instead of expecting the home to need nothing.

ACTION LIST

- Review the closing disclosure and cash needed to close.
- Verify wire instructions by a trusted independent phone call.
- Plan a 12-month maintenance budget.

BRING THESE QUESTIONS

Make the next conversation useful.

What payment still leaves room for repairs and savings?

Which location improves my ordinary week?

What would make me walk away from a property?

NOTES

FURTHER READING

CFPB: ready to buy a home: https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/mortgages/ready-to-buy-a-home/

CFPB: closing on your new home: https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/close/

This guide is educational and is not financial, legal, medical, or construction advice. Confirm property-specific facts and consult the relevant licensed professional before committing.

Talk through your real estate questions: Bryce@pbrrents.com | 850-202-8647