GET ORGANIZED. GET ANSWERS. KNOW YOUR NEXT STEP.

Pre-Approval Document Checklist

A practical checklist from The American Dream Project
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You don’t need a perfect file to start a conversation

You don’t have to understand mortgage paperwork before you ask for help. This checklist gives you a starting point so the process feels more manageable.

Gather what you have, mark what’s missing, and ask about anything that doesn’t fit your situation. Your lender will confirm the exact documents needed; requirements vary by lender, loan, and borrower circumstances.[1]

Core documents to gather

The following starting list is based on the CFPB’s loan-application packet guidance; your lender may request different periods or additional documentation.[2]

- ☐ **Identification:** Current government-issued photo ID.
- ☐ **Personal information:** Social Security number, provided through the lender’s secure application process.
- ☐ **Recent pay:** Pay stubs covering approximately the most recent 30 days, if applicable.
- ☐ **W-2 forms:** The most recent two years, if applicable.
- ☐ **Federal tax returns:** Have the most recent two years available and ask whether your loan requires them.
- ☐ **Other income:** Documentation for additional income you want considered.

1. https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/explore/get-a-preapproval-letter/
2. https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/prepare/create-a-loan-application-packet/

Core documents to gather, continued

Continue gathering the items that apply to you.[1]

- ☐ **Bank statements:** The two most recent statements for relevant accounts.
- ☐ **Purchase funds:** Statements showing the source of your down payment and closing funds.
- ☐ **Gift funds:** Tell your lender if someone will help with the purchase, and request the required documentation.
- ☐ **Name changes:** Supporting documentation if your name recently changed.
- ☐ **Buyer education:** A completion certificate, if you already have one.
- ☐ **VA eligibility:** If pursuing a VA loan, ask about obtaining your Certificate of Eligibility.

Tell your lender if any of these apply

Use this section to flag questions early rather than guessing which documents to send. Ask for a checklist tailored to your circumstances.

- ☐ I am self-employed or own part of a business.
- ☐ I receive commission, bonus, overtime, or variable income.
- ☐ I recently changed jobs or have an employment gap.
- ☐ I receive retirement, disability, or other benefit income.
- ☐ I own another property or receive rental income.
- ☐ Someone is contributing gift funds.
- ☐ I plan to use proceeds from selling a property or another asset.
- ☐ I have a recent large deposit or transfer to explain.
- ☐ I have a past bankruptcy, foreclosure, or other credit event to discuss.
- ☐ I need help understanding which income or obligations must be disclosed.

1. https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/prepare/create-a-loan-application-packet/

Make your documents easy to review

Provide complete, readable documents, including every page of multipage statements, even pages marked intentionally blank.[1]

Before submitting:

- ☐ Download original statements when available.
- ☐ Check that names, dates, and account information are readable.
- ☐ Keep documents organized by category.
- ☐ Ask before substituting screenshots for statements.
- ☐ Use the lender's verified secure upload process.
- ☐ Do not send Social Security numbers or financial documents through a public website form.

You do not need to send personal financial records just to download an ADP guide or ask a general question.

Questions to ask during your pre-approval conversation

Bring this list with you and write down the answers. The goal is to understand your options, not simply receive a maximum purchase price.

- ☐ What monthly payment fits the budget I'm comfortable with?
- ☐ What does that payment include, and what is separate?
- ☐ What is my estimated total cash needed to buy?
- ☐ Which loan options should I compare?
- ☐ Are there assistance programs worth considering?
- ☐ What information have you verified so far?
- ☐ What conditions remain before final approval?
- ☐ When does my pre-approval need to be updated?
- ☐ What should I avoid changing while my loan is being reviewed?
- ☐ If I'm not ready now, what specific steps should I take next?

1. https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/prepare/create-a-loan-application-packet/

My next-step notes

Documents I still need:

Questions I want answered:

My comfortable monthly housing budget:

Savings I want to keep after closing:

My next action:

Preparation, not pressure

This checklist is here to help you feel prepared, not judged. Start with what you have, and let the unanswered questions guide the next conversation.

Have questions or need help with your next step? Call or email me. I'm happy to explain your options and help you feel prepared, without pressure or any obligation to move forward.

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Buyer Masterclass: https://satx.localhomeclass.com
Schedule a conversation: https://satx.localhomeclass.com/book

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Educational checklist only. Not every item applies to every borrower, and additional documentation may be required. Pre-approval is not a guarantee of final loan approval.