THE BUYER GUIDE

From finding the right neighborhood to getting the keys.



An informed move starts with a plan.

A practical, step-by-step Colorado real estate reference prepared for Belvedere clients. The best decisions combine good market information, experienced professional guidance, and careful attention to deadlines.

Edition: November 2026 | Educational information; not legal, tax, lending, inspection, or title advice. Confirm the current forms and every deadline with your transaction professionals.

01 / ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM

Choose representation and set your priorities

Interview your real estate professional about local contract experience, neighborhood knowledge, negotiation strategy, and how they handle challenging inspections and deadlines. Discuss the agency relationship, services, and any written buyer representation agreement before touring.

Write down must-haves, nice-to-haves, commute and lifestyle needs, likely ownership horizon, and your maximum comfortable monthly payment. Keep a reserve for repairs after closing.

- Ask for a sample communication plan and availability during negotiations.
- Prioritize the location, layout, maintenance burden, and total cost of ownership over staging alone.

02 / LENDING

Get a serious preapproval, not just an online estimate

A knowledgeable lender can help you compete while protecting your finances. Have income, assets, debts, employment and down-payment funds reviewed before you offer; ask whether your approval is fully underwritten or still conditional.

Compare multiple lenders on the same day and for the same loan terms. Review interest rate, APR, points, lender fees, rate-lock duration, lender credits, cash to close, and whether the payment includes taxes, insurance, mortgage insurance and HOA dues. A low advertised rate is not necessarily the lowest total cost. Rate locks expire. Your lender should explain extension costs and how a lower appraisal, employment change or new debt could affect approval.

- Conventional: eligibility and down payment vary; PMI may apply below certain equity levels.
- FHA: insured financing with specific property-condition, appraisal and mortgage-insurance requirements.
- VA: for eligible borrowers; funding fee and appraisal standards may apply, with eligible exemptions.
- USDA: location/income eligibility and program property requirements.
- Jumbo / portfolio: higher-balance or specialized underwriting, often more cash reserves.
- Cash: verify funds and allow for title, inspection, insurance and ownership expenses.

> **Track the rate environment:** Follow current Treasury benchmark yields and mortgage market trends anytime on our live dashboard at **www.belvedererereg.com/market-insights/mortgage-rates** – updated from official Treasury data each business day. Treasury yields are not mortgage quotes.

03 / BUYER REPRESENTATION AND REQUIRED WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

A clear relationship from the first conversation

At Belvedere Real Estate Group, we believe a successful home purchase begins with a clear understanding of the relationship between the buyer and their real estate professional.

Before touring properties with Belvedere Real Estate Group, buyers are required to enter into an applicable written buyer agreement. This requirement reflects current real estate industry practices and applicable Colorado brokerage laws and MLS rules.

The agreement establishes the nature of the brokerage relationship, identifies the services to be provided, outlines the responsibilities of the parties, and clearly discloses the broker's compensation. The agreement's duration, scope, and compensation terms are discussed in advance and are negotiable.

This process is designed to promote transparency, establish mutual expectations, and ensure buyers understand how they will be assisted throughout their home search and purchase.

Our commitment is to provide thoughtful guidance, responsive communication, professional advocacy where an agency relationship has been established, and a personalized experience from the first showing through closing.

Please note: Belvedere Real Estate Group must have the appropriate signed agreement in place before scheduling or conducting property tours on a buyer's behalf. Signing an agreement does not obligate a buyer to purchase a property.

04 / SEARCH

Choose the neighborhood before the house

Use the Belvedere Neighborhood Explorer to compare market activity, transportation, parks, municipal boundaries and school resources. Confirm school assignments directly with the district; boundaries can change. Visit neighborhoods at different times and review HOA or metro-district costs.

At showings, look beyond finishes: roof age, drainage, foundation conditions, windows, HVAC, electrical panel, sewer line, potential noise, parking and evidence of water intrusion. For condos and townhomes, scrutinize insurance, reserves, assessments, rental restrictions and building maintenance.

- Create a short list and identify the trade-offs you are willing to make.
- Review insurance availability, wildfire exposure and property tax estimates early.

05 / OFFER

Construct a competitive offer without losing important protections

Your agent should study recent closed sales, competing inventory, days on market and property condition. Price is only one component: earnest money, financing, appraisal terms, inspection rights, closing date, inclusions and possession matter.

Earnest money is a good-faith deposit delivered to the contract-designated holder by the agreed deadline. It is not automatically nonrefundable, nor is its return guaranteed. Disposition depends on the contract, notices, defaults and other circumstances. Never wire funds using instructions received only by an unexpected email.

- Discuss offer price and any appraisal-gap exposure before signing.
- Evaluate inspection, title, financing and appraisal contingencies with your broker.
- Confirm inclusions such as appliances, fixtures, leased equipment and solar arrangements.

06 / UNDER CONTRACT

Follow every date in the signed Colorado contract

The executed Colorado Contract to Buy and Sell includes a detailed dates-and-deadlines table. Dates are negotiated for the specific transaction, not set by a universal 7-, 14- or 30-day rule. Calendar earnest money, disclosures, title review, loan conditions, appraisal, survey, inspection, HOA documents, closing and possession.

Deliver notices in the method and time required by the contract. An inspection objection, termination or loan objection filed late can materially change your rights. A knowledgeable agent should maintain a written deadline tracker and coordinate with lender, title company, and inspectors.

07 / DUE DILIGENCE

Inspect thoroughly and negotiate thoughtfully

A general inspection is a broad visual review, not a warranty. Depending on property and initial findings, evaluate sewer scope, roof, radon, structural engineer, HVAC, fireplace/chimney, mold/moisture, pest, water quality, well and septic, or other specialists. Colorado radon disclosures and information deserve special attention.

Inspection outcomes commonly include accepting the property, negotiating specific repairs or credits, seeking further evaluation, or terminating where the contract provides that right. Make requests in writing, prioritize safety and major systems, and consider whether lender requirements affect repair arrangements.

Review title commitments and exceptions, survey or improvement-location information, easements, deed restrictions, water and mineral rights where relevant, and HOA/metro-district documents. Purchase title insurance appropriate for the transaction and ask questions before objection deadlines.

08 / APPRAISAL AND FINANCING

Protect the path to closing

The appraisal is the lender’s valuation, not the inspection and not a guarantee of condition. If it is below contract price, options may include renegotiating, bringing additional cash, challenging factual errors, or exercising a contractual right within its deadline.

Keep your lender updated about deposits and documentation. Avoid changing jobs, opening credit, moving large sums without documentation, or purchasing vehicles/furniture before funding. Review the Loan Estimate and final Closing Disclosure; for most covered mortgages the Closing Disclosure must be received at least three business days before closing.

09 / CLOSING

Final walk-through, funding, keys

Confirm insurance begins when required. At the final walk-through, check agreed repairs, included items, fixtures, and whether the home is in the expected condition. Title and the lender reconcile funds and settlement costs; ask about property-tax prorations and HOA fees.

Sign closing documents, verify funds through an independently confirmed telephone number, and wait for the title company to confirm recording and possession under the contract. Transfer utilities and save warranties, permits, service contacts and closing records.

> **Belvedere advice on deadlines:** Colorado contract deadlines are negotiated for your specific transaction. Your agent should maintain a written deadline tracker, coordinate inspectors and lender milestones, and deliver every objection, termination or loan notice on time and in the required form.

FIELD GUIDE / TOURING & DISCOVERY

Tour homes with confidence.

A showing is a first look — not a professional inspection. Use it to assess location, layout, condition, and the total cost of ownership before deciding whether to make an offer.

BEFORE THE SHOWING

Your broker should confirm access and appointment instructions, review property disclosures and available listing details, and discuss representation before touring. A loan preapproval helps you judge affordability, but it does not obligate you to offer.

Bring a short priority list, a way to take notes, and comfortable shoes. Group homes by location and allow time to understand the surroundings — not just the interior finishes.

LOOK BEYOND THE FINISHES

- Room flow, ceiling heights, usable storage and natural light.
- Roof, gutters, grading, visible stains, uneven floors and window condition.
- Heating/cooling systems, water heater, electrical panel age and maintenance.
- Noise, parking, street activity, privacy and outdoor space.

ASSESS THE FULL COST

- HOA fees, rules, special assessments and insurance obligations.
- Property taxes, utilities, wildfire/hail insurance and metro-district charges.
- Age and condition of major systems versus cosmetic upgrades.
- Resale appeal, school assignment verification and future flexibility.

ETIQUETTE AND PRACTICAL EXPECTATIONS

Respect occupied homes: follow access rules, do not open personal drawers or closets without permission, avoid touching valuables or testing equipment, and obtain permission before photographs or video. Open houses may involve an on-site agent representing the seller; ask your broker how agency is handled.

New construction sales staff generally represent the builder. Arrange for your own representation before touring builder models or registering if you want the broker involved.

> **After each tour:** Score each home on location, condition, layout, likely improvements and monthly cost. Ask your broker for comparable sales, disclosures, an insurance quote, and a plan for specialist inspections before making a commitment.

COLORADO HOMEOWNERSHIP / WARRANTY GUIDE

Understand what is covered before you pay for it.

A home warranty is a service contract from a third-party company. Coverage terms vary widely by plan — read the fine print before deciding whether one fits your strategy.

POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES

- Can reduce certain unexpected repair expenses during the first ownership year.
- Offers a claims channel and network of service contractors.
- Seller-paid coverage may ease early repair uncertainty.

COMMON DRAWBACKS

- Annual premiums and per-call fees can outweigh benefits.
- Limits, exclusions and pre-existing issues can lead to denied or reduced claims.
- Providers may choose contractors and delay authorizations.

SIX QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE BUYING

- What is the full cost? Compare premium, service-call charge, renewal terms and transfer or cancellation fees.
- What exactly is covered? Ask for contract language, component limits, dollar caps, replacement standards and optional riders.
- Which conditions are excluded? Review pre-existing defects, improper installation, lack of maintenance, access and code-upgrade costs.
- Who performs repairs? Can you choose a contractor? How are emergencies prioritized and authorizations handled?
- What overlaps? Check manufacturer warranties, builder warranties, and your property insurance before paying twice.
- How will it be paid? If negotiated with the seller, clarify the provider, plan price, effective date and closing arrangements.

Belvedere guidance: Treat a home warranty as an optional budgeting tool. It should never replace inspections, appropriate homeowner’s insurance, emergency savings or negotiation over defects identified before closing.

Consumer resource: Federal Trade Commission • consumer.ftc.gov (home warranty/service contracts)

COLORADO HOMEOWNERSHIP / BUYER FIELD NOTES

The Colorado details that protect the plan

Property-specific diligence that protects the plan, the budget, and the contract.

01 / RADON — Schedule an indoor radon test

Colorado law provides specific radon disclosures. Test the property during your inspection window even if neighboring homes have low readings. Request reports and mitigation-system details, including any retest data. Elevated levels are typically manageable, but budget and deadlines matter.

Ask: Who will test, by what date, and how will we handle elevated results?

02 / INSURANCE — Get an insurance quote before committing

Ask a licensed insurance advisor for property-specific pricing and eligibility. Review roof age and materials, hail/wind deductibles, wildfire exposure, replacement cost and any exclusions. Confirm the lender accepts the policy and verify binder/coverage deadlines.

Ask: What will the premium and deductible do to the true monthly payment?

03 / TAXES — Plan for taxes beyond today's listing

Colorado property taxes are generally paid in arrears. Closing prorations are negotiated in the contract. The last tax bill may not predict future bills after reassessment, exemptions or changes in mill levies. Check county assessor and treasurer records and coordinate the estimate with your lender.

Ask: What taxes and escrow payments should I expect after closing?

04 / METRO DISTRICTS — Review special-district obligations

A metro district may impose separate property-tax mill levies and fees for infrastructure, even if the home also belongs to an HOA. Review the recorded district notices, tax certificate, debt, current mill levy and service plan. Generalized mapping is only a starting point.

Ask: What district taxes, debt and fees apply to this specific address?

05 / HOA — Read the documents and financials

Inspect CC&Rs, rules, budget, reserves, insurance coverage, owner responsibilities, special assessments and restrictions. For condos, check who insures the building, potential loss assessments and whether the project is lender-eligible. Document delivery and objection rights depend on the contract.

Ask: Could assessments or restrictions change my ownership plans?

06 / SEWER — Consider a sewer scope

Standard home inspections may not include camera examination of a sewer lateral. Ask an inspector whether a sewer scope makes sense for the home, particularly older properties or those with large trees. Investigate blockages, root intrusion, pipe materials and the responsible utility or owner.

Ask: Has the lateral been scoped, repaired or replaced?

Official starting points: Radon, Insurance, Special districts, HOA. See website for direct source links. Educational only; confirm local records, current rules and the signed contract.

DUE DILIGENCE / BUYER GUIDE

Verify before deadlines pass

A disciplined inspection and record review can prevent expensive surprises.

01 / PROPERTY CONDITION — Hire independent inspections

Schedule the general inspection early, then add specialists as needed: roof, HVAC, foundation/structure, radon, sewer camera scope, fireplace, moisture, pest, or well and septic. Ask for repair history and permits where relevant.

Decide: Which findings warrant a specialist, repair, credit, or written objection?

02 / TITLE, ACCESS AND BOUNDARIES — Know precisely what you are buying

Review the title commitment, exceptions, easements, liens and deed restrictions. Evaluate whether an Improvement Location Certificate or survey is needed to investigate fences, encroachments, additions, legal access and boundary concerns. Verify parking, storage and any leased or financed systems.

Ask: Are any recorded rights or improvements inconsistent with your intended use?

03 / FINANCING, APPRAISAL AND INSURANCE — Check affordability before contingencies expire

Confirm lender underwriting, appraisal strategy, down-payment and reserve requirements, loan-program property standards, rate-lock expiration and total cash to close. Obtain actual insurance quotes early, including hail, roof age, wildfire exposure, deductibles and availability. Do not assume preapproval guarantees funding.

Ask: Could appraisal, coverage or loan conditions derail closing?

04 / ASSOCIATION, DISTRICT AND UTILITIES — Understand obligations that remain after closing

Read HOA declarations, rules, budgets, reserve information, insurance, meeting minutes and special-assessment notices; confirm document delivery and objection rights. Check metropolitan district mill levies and fees, property taxes, utility providers, water source, sewer or septic arrangements, and availability of internet service.

Ask: What recurring charges, restrictions or liabilities could change your plans?

05 / LAND USE, ENVIRONMENT AND LOCATION — Confirm your intended use is permitted

Independently verify zoning, rental/short-term-rental regulations, additions and permits, historic restrictions, flood and wildfire maps, drainage, school assignments and planned transportation projects. For acreage, investigate water rights, wells, septic, access and mineral interests using appropriate experts.

Ask: Can you legally and practically use the property as you intend?

06 / WRITTEN DEADLINES AND PROFESSIONAL ADVICE — Protect choices and preserve documentation

Track each actual date in the signed Colorado contract: earnest money, Seller Property Disclosure, inspection, title, survey, HOA documents, due diligence, appraisal, loan and closing. Rights to object or terminate differ by provision; notices must be timely and in the required form. Your broker coordinates, while inspectors, attorneys, lenders and insurers advise within their specialties.

Do this: Maintain one shared deadline log and deliver notices before cutoffs.

Education only. Verify current Colorado Commission forms and your signed contract with professionals. Source: dre.colorado.gov/real-estate-broker-contracts-and-forms

YOUR BUYER CHECKLIST

A quick reference from first search to closing day.

Before searching	Choose agent and lender; establish budget; review cash to close; understand representation.
Before offering	Study comps, taxes, HOA, insurance, financing fit and contingencies.
After contract	Deliver earnest money; track every written deadline; schedule inspections immediately.
Before closing	Clear lender conditions; review title and disclosures; verify insurance; review Closing Disclosure.
At possession	Confirm recording and possession; transfer utilities; keep closing documents and service records.

Questions to ask your agent

How do recent sold homes support the offer price? How will we respond to a difficult inspection? Who tracks deadlines? Which lender issues could jeopardize closing? How is earnest money protected? What should I budget beyond the down payment?

Official resources and further reading

- Colorado Division of Real Estate contract forms: https://dre.colorado.gov/real-estate-broker-contracts-and-forms
- CFPB loan comparison and disclosures: https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/
- Colorado radon resources: https://cdphe.colorado.gov/radon

For questions about financing, offers, inspections and deadlines, contact your Belvedere Employing Broker directly using the details below.

YOUR BELVEDERE CONTACT

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