



2026 EDUCATIONAL EDITION · BAY · WALTON · OKALOOSA

The Florida Panhandle *Home Loan* Guide

A simple, bite-size look at the home loans people use here — with local examples — so you know what to ask your lender.

BUYING A HOME TO LIVE IN

Conventional · FHA · VA · USDA ·
Help with down payment · Jumbo

BUYING A BEACH GETAWAY

Second-home loans · Condos ·
Hotel-style condos

BUYING A RENTAL

Investor loans · DSCR · Loans for
self-employed buyers

For learning only. I am not a licensed loan officer. Every number here is an example. Your lender will give you the real numbers.

Kinsey Haddock P.A.

Broker Associate · REALTOR® · Coldwell Banker Realty

(850) 340-0646

emeraldcoastbuyersguide.com

Here's the real answer — good and bad.

Most people pick a price first. It's smarter to look at the loan first. The loan decides how much cash you need, what you can buy, and what your monthly payment may be.

PLEASE READ FIRST

I am not a licensed loan officer. This guide is for learning only. It shows examples of how a loan might be set up. It is not a fact sheet, a quote or a promise.

You will get the real, correct numbers from the lender you choose. Need help finding a good lender for the loan you want? I'm happy to give you a contact so you can talk through your options.

How to use this guide in 3 steps

1

Find where you want to live.

Page 4 shows which loans people often use in each area.

2

Read the loan pages that fit you.

Each one is two pages: the basics, then a local example.

3

Take your questions to a lender.

Each loan page ends with questions you can ask.

Stuck on a word?: Words like "PMI," "points" and "DSCR" are explained on the next page. Look back at it anytime.

A quick cheat sheet

Short, simple meanings for the loan words used in this guide.

Down payment

The cash you pay up front. The loan covers the rest.

Credit score

A number (300–850) that shows how you've handled debt. Higher usually means a better rate.

Interest rate

What the lender charges you to borrow, shown as a yearly percent.

Points / buydown

Paying extra at closing to get a lower rate. One point = 1% of the loan.

Escrow

An account the lender uses to pay your taxes and insurance for you.

Flood zone (X, AE, VE)

X = lower risk. AE = higher risk. VE = highest risk, near the water. Zone changes the flood insurance cost.

Warrantable condo

A condo building that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will lend on. "Non-warrantable" means they won't.

Reserves

Savings left over after closing. Lenders like to see a cushion.

Closing costs

Fees to finish the purchase — lender, title, taxes. Often 2–5% of the price.

Pre-approval

A lender checks your income, debts and credit and says how much you may borrow.

PMI / MIP

Mortgage insurance. It protects the lender when you put down less than 20%. You pay it monthly.

Seller concession

Money the seller agrees to put toward your closing costs or rate.

HOA dues

Monthly or yearly fees for a neighborhood or condo building.

Wind mitigation

A short inspection that shows storm-strong features. It can lower insurance.

DSCR

A rental loan based on the home's rent, not your paycheck.

Debt-to-income (DTI)

Your monthly debts divided by your monthly income.

Likely loans by area

Where you buy and what you buy often point to certain loans. Prices are rough examples from listing and builder sites in 2026 — they change often.

Area	Example price range	Common home types	Loans people often use	Insurance picture
Beach towers PCB Front Beach Rd, Destin	About \$220K–\$900K, depending on the building	Condos	Second home · DSCR · Investor · Hotel-style (non-warrantable) loans · Cash	Condo policy (HO-6) + the building's policy in your HOA dues. Ask about special assessments.
PCB neighborhoods Ward Creek, Breakfast Point	About \$280K–\$600K	New and newer single-family homes	Conventional · FHA · VA · Second home · Investor	Often around \$2,600–\$3,300+ a year (estimates). Newer roofs help.
30A, Santa Rosa Beach, Miramar	Often \$675K to well over \$1M	Luxury homes, townhomes, condos	Jumbo · Second home · DSCR · Self-employed loans	Highest costs. Gulf-front homes can run \$10K–\$20K+ a year (estimates). Flood often required.
Destin, Niceville	Destin often \$500K–\$700K+; Niceville lower	Single-family, bay-side homes, condos	VA · Conventional · Jumbo · Second home	Destin estimates often \$3,400–\$9,000 a year, based on roof, age and flood zone.
Panama City, Lynn Haven, Callaway	About \$240K–\$360K for many new builds	New-build neighborhoods, older homes	FHA · Conventional · VA (Tyndall) · Down payment help	Usually lower inland, especially in flood zone X and with a newer home.
North of the bay Freeport, DeFuniak, Crestview	About \$240K–\$450K	New-build single-family homes	USDA (if the address qualifies) · FHA · VA (Eglin/Hurlburt) · Conventional	Often the lowest. Many homes are new and away from the coast.

Good to know: This is a starting point, not a rule. Your income, savings, credit and plans for the home matter more than the area. A lender will tell you what fits you.

What changes your insurance bill

In Florida, insurance can change your payment as much as the rate. Three things matter most: the home's age, where it is, and whether it's a house or a condo.

Situation	What it usually means	Example yearly cost*
New build, inland, flood zone X	Built to today's code. Usually gets wind discounts. Often the easiest to insure.	Lower end
Home 20+ years old	Many insurers want a 4-point inspection (roof, wiring, plumbing, A/C). Citizens asks at 20 years.	Higher; repairs may be needed first
Older shingle roof	Citizens wants proof of at least 5 years of life left on shingle roofs over 25 years old. Private insurers can be stricter.	May need a new roof to get coverage
Single-family near the beach (PCB)	Wind is the big cost. Wind mitigation reports help.	About \$2,600–\$3,300+ (estimates)
Single-family in Destin	Roof age and flood zone swing the price a lot.	About \$3,400–\$9,000 (estimates)
Gulf-front on 30A	Highest wind and flood risk.	About \$10,000–\$20,000+ (estimates)
Condo (HO-6 policy)	Covers your unit's inside. The building has its own policy, paid through HOA dues.	About \$1,050–\$1,730 for the HO-6, plus HOA dues
Flood insurance	Zone X: often a few hundred to about \$1,500. AE/VE near water: often several thousand.	Depends on zone and elevation

Hurricane deductible: Most Florida policies have a separate hurricane deductible, often 2–5% of the home's coverage. On a \$400,000 home, 2% = \$8,000 you'd pay first after a storm.

Condo heads-up: Condo buildings now have to fund big repairs under Florida's newer condo laws. That can mean higher HOA dues or one-time special assessments. Ask before you buy.

*Estimates from insurance comparison sites and agencies in 2026. They vary widely. Get real quotes for the exact address during your inspection period.

Loan limits & quick comparison

2026 loan limits

County	Conventional max	FHA max (1 home)	VA
Bay	\$832,750	\$541,287	No cap with full benefit
Walton	\$832,750	\$603,750*	No cap with full benefit
Okaloosa	\$832,750	\$603,750*	No cap with full benefit

Conventional limit per FHFA. *Walton and Okaloosa FHA limits differ between sources — check HUD's lookup or ask your lender. Borrowing more than \$832,750 usually means a jumbo loan.

Quick comparison

Loan	Down payment often seen	Credit score often seen	Often a fit for...
Conventional	3–5%	620+	Most buyers with fair-to-good credit
Second home	10%	620–680+	A beach home your family uses
FHA	3.5%	580+	Lower scores or small savings
VA	0%	~580–620	Veterans and service members
USDA	0%	~640	Moderate income, eligible areas
Jumbo	10–20%	700+	Loans over \$832,750
Investor	15–25%	620–680+	Rentals, with strong tax returns
DSCR	20–25%	640–680+	Rentals, qualified on the rent
Hotel-style condo	20–40%	680+	Buildings regular loans won't cover
Self-employed	10–20%	640–700+	Business owners with big write-offs

Typical ranges seen in 2026. Every lender sets its own rules.

Buydowns in plain English

A buydown means paying money at closing to get a lower rate. Sometimes the seller or builder pays it for you.

Permanent buydown

You (or the seller) pay "points" at closing. Your rate stays lower for the whole loan.

Example: 1 point on a \$300,000 loan = \$3,000.

Temporary buydown (2-1)

The rate is 2% lower in year 1 and 1% lower in year 2. Then it goes back to the normal rate.

Often paid by: a builder or seller.

The one question to ask: how long until it pays for itself?

Divide what you pay by what you save each month. If you pay \$2,400 and save \$50 a month, it takes 48 months (4 years) to earn it back. If you might sell or refinance before then, the buydown may not be worth it.

Simple rules of thumb

- The **first** small buydown is often the best deal. Each extra one takes longer to pay off.
- If rates may drop and you'd refinance, think twice about paying a lot of points.
- Ask if the **seller or builder** will pay for it. That's the best kind of buydown.

About the examples: Each loan section has a small example table. The starting rates are made up for teaching, set near average rates in mid-October 2026. Real rates change every day.

Conventional loans

In plain English: The most common home loan. It follows Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac rules and works for homes up to \$832,750 here.

3%

Down for some first-time buyers

5%

Down often seen for others

20%

Down to skip PMI

Often a good fit if...

- Your credit is fair to good (often 620+)
- You have steady, documented income
- You're buying a home to live in, a second home or a rental

Watch out for...

- PMI if you put down less than 20%
- Better rates usually need higher credit (740+)
- Some beach condo buildings don't qualify

Example: first-time buyer, \$350,000 new build

Down	Cash down	Loan	Note
3%	\$10,500	\$339,500	PMI; income limits may apply
5%	\$17,500	\$332,500	PMI
20%	\$70,000	\$280,000	No PMI

Questions to ask your lender

- Can my PMI come off early if my home value goes up?
- Can the seller pay part of my closing costs? (Often up to 3% with under 10% down)
- If I buy a duplex and live in one side, can rent help me qualify?
- Is this condo building approved for conventional loans?

Conventional loans

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

Builder & place	Lennar · Riverbend Run · Southport (Panama City area)
Example prices	\$269,990–\$359,990
Builder offer seen	D.R. Horton listed a conventional fixed rate of 5.50% (6.032% APR) on select Florida homes — contract on/after 9/4/26, close by 12/31/26
Loan fit	Conventional, 3–5% down
Insurance picture	New build, inland — usually easier to insure

Snapshot from builder and listing websites, October 2026. Prices and offers change often and may have ended — confirm with the builder. Builder rates usually require the builder's own lender — compare with an outside quote.

Example buydown on a \$332,500 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	7.250%	\$2,268	—	—
\$2,494	7.000%	\$2,212	\$56	about 3.7 years
\$5,819	6.750%	\$2,157	\$112	about 4.3 years
\$9,975	6.500%	\$2,102	\$167	about 5.0 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English: In this example, paying \$2,494 saves about \$56 a month and takes about 3.7 years to earn back. A seller-paid 2-1 buydown might cost about \$7,838 and lower the payment about \$432 in year 1 and \$221 in year 2.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

■ Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$2,268
■ PMI (estimate)	\$139
■ Property tax (rough guess, about 1.1% of price for a main home)	\$321
■ Home insurance (estimate, new inland home)	\$200
■ HOA dues (example)	\$50
Example total per month	\$2,978

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE
If your credit is strong and you can put 5% or more down, conventional often costs less over time than FHA. Ask your lender to show you both.

Second-home loans

In plain English: A conventional loan for a beach place your family uses. It usually needs less down and has a better rate than a rental loan.

10%

Down often seen

1 unit

Usually single-unit homes only

2–6 mo.

Savings cushion lenders may want

Often a good fit if...

- Your family will use the home part of the year
- It's in a vacation area like PCB, 30A or Destin
- You can qualify on your own income

Watch out for...

- You usually can't count rental income to qualify
- It can't be in a rental program that controls who stays
- Calling a full-time rental a "second home" is fraud

Example: family condo in Panama City Beach, \$425,000

Down	Cash down	Loan	Note
10%	\$42,500	\$382,500	PMI
20%	\$85,000	\$340,000	No PMI
25%	\$106,250	\$318,750	May get a better rate

Questions to ask your lender

- How much rental use is OK on a second home?
- Is this condo building approved?
- How many months of savings do I need after closing?
- What will HOA, insurance and taxes add to my payment?

Second-home loans

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

Builder & place	Toll Brothers · Breakwater at Ward Creek · Panama City Beach
Example prices	From about \$433,000–\$435,000
Or a beach condo	PCB building medians range widely — about \$344K at one tower to \$615K–\$735K at others
Loan fit	Second home, 10–25% down
Insurance picture	PCB homes often ~\$2,600–\$3,300+ a year; condos add HO-6 + HOA

Snapshot from builder and listing websites, October 2026. Prices and offers change often and may have ended — confirm with the builder.

Example buydown on a \$382,500 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	7.375%	\$2,642	—	—
\$2,869	7.125%	\$2,577	\$65	about 3.7 years
\$6,694	6.875%	\$2,513	\$129	about 4.3 years
\$11,475	6.625%	\$2,449	\$193	about 5.0 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English: In this example, paying \$2,869 saves about \$65 a month and takes about 3.7 years to earn back. A seller-paid 2-1 buydown might cost about \$9,066 and lower the payment about \$500 in year 1 and \$256 in year 2.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

■ Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$2,642
■ PMI (estimate)	\$159
■ Property tax (rough guess, about 1.5% of price — no homestead discount)	\$531
■ Condo HO-6 insurance (estimate)	\$142
■ HOA dues — includes the building's insurance (example)	\$700
Example total per month	\$4,174

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE
Be honest with your lender about how you'll use the home. If it will be a full-time rental, there are loans made for that.

FHA loans

In plain English: A government-backed loan with a small down payment and easier credit rules.

3.5%

Down with a 580+ score

1.75%

Upfront mortgage insurance (usually added to the loan)

0.55%

Yearly mortgage insurance, paid monthly

Often a good fit if...

- Your credit score is lower
- You don't have much saved
- You're buying a home to live in

Watch out for...

- Mortgage insurance usually lasts the life of the loan (under 10% down)
- Many beach condo buildings are not FHA-approved
- Loan limits cap the price

Example: first home in Lynn Haven, \$300,000

Item	Example amount
Down payment (3.5%)	\$10,500
Upfront MIP, added to loan	\$5,066
Total loan	\$294,566
Monthly mortgage insurance	about \$133

Questions to ask your lender

- Can the seller pay up to 6% toward my costs?
- Can I use down payment help with FHA?
- Is this condo building FHA-approved?
- Does the seller have an FHA loan I could take over (assume)?

FHA loans

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

Builder & place	D.R. Horton · Park Place · Callaway
Example prices	Express Series from \$286,900
Builder offer seen	FHA fixed rate of 4.99% (5.697% APR) on select Florida homes — contract on/after 9/4/26, close by 12/31/26
Another offer seen	Lennar: FHA 5/1 ARM at 4.25% (6.499% APR) + up to \$15,000 credit (ended 10/2/26)
Insurance picture	New build, inland — usually easier to insure

Snapshot from builder websites, October 2026. Offers change and may have ended. An ARM rate can change after 5 years.

Example buydown on a \$294,566 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	6.875%	\$1,935	—	—
\$2,209	6.625%	\$1,886	\$49	about 3.8 years
\$5,155	6.375%	\$1,838	\$97	about 4.4 years
\$8,837	6.125%	\$1,790	\$145	about 5.1 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English:

In this example, paying \$2,209 saves about \$49 a month and takes about 3.8 years to earn back. A seller-paid 2-1 buydown might cost about \$6,826 and lower the payment about \$376 in year 1 and \$193 in year 2. The seller can usually pay points within FHA's 6% limit.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$1,935
FHA mortgage insurance	\$133
Property tax (rough guess, about 1.1% of price for a main home)	\$275
Home insurance (estimate, newer inland home)	\$200
HOA dues (example)	\$40
Example total per month	\$2,583

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE

With less than 10% down, FHA insurance usually stays for the life of the loan. Many people refinance later — only if it makes sense then.

VA loans

In plain English: A loan benefit for veterans and service members. No down payment and no monthly mortgage insurance.

\$o

Down payment required

\$o

Monthly mortgage insurance

2.15%

One-time funding fee, first use, under 5% down

Often a good fit if...

- You're a veteran, active duty or eligible spouse
- You're near Eglin, Hurlburt, Tyndall or NSA Panama City
- You want to keep your cash

Watch out for...

- The funding fee (some veterans don't have to pay it)
- Condos must be VA-approved
- VA appraisals check the home's condition

Example: family home in Crestview, \$400,000

Approach	Cash down	Funding fee	Note
0% down, first use	\$0	\$8,600	Fee can be added to loan
5% down, first use	\$20,000	\$5,700	Lower fee
Disability-exempt	\$0	\$0	Get your Certificate of Eligibility early

Questions to ask your lender

- Am I exempt from the funding fee?
- Can you count my income from new PCS orders?
- Can the seller pay up to 4% in concessions?
- Is there a VA loan on this home I could assume?

VA loans

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

Builder & place	D.R. Horton · Oxford Place · Crestview
Example prices	From \$315,900
Also nearby	DSL D Homes · Houston Place · Crestview · about \$324,990–\$394,990
Loan fit	VA, \$0 down, near Eglin and Hurlburt
Insurance picture	New builds away from the coast — often lower cost

Snapshot from builder and listing websites, October 2026. Prices and offers change often and may have ended — confirm with the builder.

Example buydown on a \$408,600 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	6.875%	\$2,684	—	—
\$3,064	6.625%	\$2,616	\$68	about 3.8 years
\$7,150	6.375%	\$2,549	\$135	about 4.4 years
\$12,258	6.125%	\$2,483	\$202	about 5.1 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English: In this example, paying \$3,064 saves about \$68 a month and takes about 3.8 years to earn back. A seller-paid 2-1 buydown might cost about \$9,469 and lower the payment about \$522 in year 1 and \$267 in year 2. The seller can usually pay VA points as normal closing costs.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

■ Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$2,684
■ Property tax (rough guess, about 1.1% of price for a main home)	\$367
■ Home insurance (estimate, newer inland home)	\$217
■ HOA dues (example)	\$40
Example total per month	\$3,308

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE

Some sellers still worry about VA offers. A strong pre-approval makes a VA offer compete just fine — I'll help you present it.

USDA loans

In plain English: A zero-down loan for people with moderate income buying in eligible areas — mostly north of the bay, not at the beach.

\$0

Down payment

1%

Upfront fee (usually added to the loan)

0.35%

Yearly fee, paid monthly

Often a good fit if...

- You're buying in an eligible area
- Your household income is under the county limit
- It will be your main home

Watch out for...

- Not for second homes or rentals
- Income counts everyone in the home, not just the buyers
- Approval can take longer

Example: new home near Freeport, \$280,000

Item	Example amount
Down payment	\$0
Upfront fee, added to loan	\$2,800
Total loan	\$282,800
Monthly fee	about \$82

Questions to ask your lender

- Does this exact address qualify? (Check the USDA map)
- What's the current income limit for my county and household size?
- Can the seller pay up to 6% of my costs?
- How much extra time should my contract allow?

USDA loans

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

Builder & place	Lennar · Bay Springs · DeFuniak Springs area
Example prices	From about \$239,000
Also nearby	DSL D Homes · Natureview · Freeport · from about \$289,990
Loan fit	USDA — only if the address and income qualify
Insurance picture	Inland new builds — often among the lowest costs

Snapshot from builder and listing websites, October 2026. Prices and offers change often and may have ended — confirm with the builder. USDA eligibility is checked address by address.

Example buydown on a \$282,800 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	6.875%	\$1,858	—	—
\$2,121	6.625%	\$1,811	\$47	about 3.8 years
\$4,949	6.375%	\$1,764	\$93	about 4.4 years
\$8,484	6.125%	\$1,718	\$139	about 5.1 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English:

In this example, paying \$2,121 saves about \$47 a month and takes about 3.8 years to earn back. A seller-paid 2-1 buydown might cost about \$6,553 and lower the payment about \$361 in year 1 and \$185 in year 2. The seller can usually pay points within USDA's 6% limit.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$1,858
USDA yearly fee, paid monthly	\$82
Property tax (rough guess, about 1.1% of price for a main home)	\$257
Home insurance (estimate, new inland home)	\$183
Example total per month	\$2,380

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE

If you work in Panama City or Crestview and don't need the water, USDA can stretch your budget. Check the map before you fall in love with a house.

Jumbo loans

In plain English: A loan for more than \$832,750. Common on 30A, in Destin and on the Gulf.

10–20%

Down often seen

700+

Credit score often seen

6–12 mo.

Savings cushion often required

Often a good fit if...

- You're buying a higher-priced home
- You have strong credit and savings
- You can show steady income or large assets

Watch out for...

- Rules change a lot from lender to lender
- Some loans need two appraisals
- Insurance and flood costs can be high

Example: second home on 30A, \$1,500,000

Down	Cash down	Loan
10%	\$150,000	\$1,350,000
20%	\$300,000	\$1,200,000
25–30%	\$375,000–\$450,000	\$1.05M–\$1.125M

Questions to ask your lender

- Could a first loan + second loan avoid jumbo rules?
- Do you offer interest-only options?
- Can I qualify using my investment accounts?
- Will you approve this building or community?

Jumbo loans

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

Area	Santa Rosa Beach / 30A
Example prices	Median listing price about \$1.125M (Realtor.com, March 2026); Miramar Beach about \$675K
Loan fit	Jumbo or conventional + second loan
Insurance picture	Gulf-front homes can run \$10,000–\$20,000+ a year (estimates); flood often required

Market figures from Realtor.com as reported in 2026. Prices change — ask me for current numbers on a specific community.

Example buydown on a \$1,200,000 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	7.500%	\$8,391	—	—
\$9,000	7.250%	\$8,186	\$204	about 3.7 years
\$21,000	7.000%	\$7,984	\$407	about 4.3 years
\$36,000	6.750%	\$7,783	\$607	about 4.9 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English:

In this example, paying \$9,000 saves about \$204 a month and takes about 3.7 years to earn back. A seller-paid 2-1 buydown might cost about \$28,594 and lower the payment about \$1,577 in year 1 and \$806 in year 2.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

■ Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$8,391
■ Property tax (rough guess, about 1.5% of price — no homestead discount)	\$1,875
■ Home insurance (estimate, near the Gulf)	\$1,250
■ Flood insurance (estimate)	\$250
■ HOA dues (example)	\$300
Example total per month	\$12,066

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE

At this price, whether the lender likes the building or community can matter as much as your credit. Have the lender check the property early.

Investor loans

In plain English: A conventional loan for a rental home, based on your tax-return income.

15%

Down often seen for a single rental

25%

Down often seen for 2–4 units

2%

Typical cap on seller help

Often a good fit if...

- Your tax returns show solid income
- You want a long-term rental
- You want one of the lower rental rates

Watch out for...

- Rates are higher than for a home you live in
- You need savings for each property
- Sellers can usually only help with about 2%

Example: long-term rental in Panama City Beach, \$450,000

Down	Cash down	Loan
15%	\$67,500	\$382,500
20%	\$90,000	\$360,000
25%	\$112,500	\$337,500

Questions to ask your lender

- How much of the rent will you count? (Often about 75%)
- How many months of savings do I need?
- Is there a limit on how many homes I can finance?
- Would a DSCR loan be a better fit for me?

Investor loans

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

Builder & place	Lennar · Magnolia Ridge · Panama City Beach area
Example prices	Move-in-ready homes about \$299,990–\$344,990
Loan fit	Investor loan, 15–25% down, as a long-term rental
Insurance picture	Newer home helps; check HOA rental rules

Snapshot from builder and listing websites, October 2026. Prices and offers change often and may have ended — confirm with the builder.

Example buydown on a \$360,000 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	7.750%	\$2,579	—	—
\$2,700	7.500%	\$2,517	\$62	about 3.6 years
\$6,300	7.250%	\$2,456	\$123	about 4.3 years
\$10,800	7.000%	\$2,395	\$184	about 4.9 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English: In this example, paying \$2,700 saves about \$62 a month and takes about 3.6 years to earn back. Temporary buydowns usually aren't allowed on rentals.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

■ Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$2,579
■ Property tax (rough guess, about 1.5% of price — no homestead discount)	\$562
■ Home insurance (estimate, PCB)	\$275
■ HOA dues (example)	\$75
Example total per month	\$3,492

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE

Run the rental numbers on the safe side: real insurance quotes, real HOA dues, some empty months. If it only works on the best-case rent, it doesn't work.

DSCR loans

In plain English: A rental loan based on how much rent the home brings in — not your paycheck. Popular for vacation rentals.

20–25%

Down often seen

640–680+

Credit score often seen

1.0+

Rent should cover the payment

Often a good fit if...

- You're self-employed or have lots of write-offs
- The rent can cover the payment
- You want to buy in an LLC

Watch out for...

- Rates are usually higher
- Many have a fee if you pay off early
- HOA or condo rules may limit rentals

Example: vacation rental condo in PCB, \$500,000

Item	Example amount
Down payment (25%)	\$125,000
Loan	\$375,000
Example monthly payment with taxes, insurance, HOA	\$4,168
Example expected monthly rent	\$5,000
Ratio (rent ÷ payment)	1.20 — rent covers it

Questions to ask your lender

- How will you figure the rent — booking history or a rent study?
- Is there an early-payoff fee, and for how long?
- Can I close in my LLC?
- Does the HOA allow short-term rentals?

DSCR loans

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

Area	Gulf-front condo towers · Panama City Beach
Example prices	12-month medians: about \$344K (Shores of Panama), \$615K (Gulf Crest), \$735K (Sterling Beach)
Loan fit	DSCR, 20–25% down; or cash
Insurance picture	HO-6 + building policy in HOA dues; check reserves and assessments

Building figures from a neighborhood data site, 2026, based on small numbers of sales. For learning only.

Example buydown on a \$375,000 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	8.000%	\$2,752	—	—
\$2,812	7.750%	\$2,687	\$65	about 3.6 years
\$6,562	7.500%	\$2,622	\$130	about 4.2 years
\$11,250	7.250%	\$2,558	\$193	about 4.8 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English: In this example, paying \$2,812 saves about \$65 a month and takes about 3.6 years to earn back.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

■ Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$2,752
■ Property tax (rough guess, about 1.5% of price — no homestead discount)	\$625
■ Condo HO-6 insurance (estimate)	\$142
■ HOA dues — includes building insurance (example)	\$650
Example total per month	\$4,168

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE
DSCR rates usually run higher. You're paying for flexibility, so it fits best when your tax returns don't show your real income.

Hotel-style & non-warrantable condos

In plain English: Some beach towers don't qualify for regular loans. Buying there usually takes a special lender and more cash down.

20–25%
Down often seen to live in or vacation

25–40%
Down often seen as a rental

6–12 mo.
Savings cushion often required

Often a good fit if...

- The building has a front desk or rental program
- Regular loans said no to the building
- You have a bigger down payment

Watch out for...

- Many of these loans have rates that can change (ARMs)
- Fewer buyers can finance it when you sell
- Low reserves or lawsuits can block a loan

Example: hotel-style unit in a PCB tower, \$350,000

Down	Cash down	Loan
25%	\$87,500	\$262,500
30%	\$105,000	\$245,000
40%	\$140,000	\$210,000

Questions to ask your lender

- Can you lend in this building?
- Is the rate fixed or adjustable?
- How much savings do I need after closing?
- Could I buy with cash and take money back out later?

Hotel-style & non-warrantable condos

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

What makes a building "non-warrantable"

Front desk and daily housekeeping, one owner with too many units, low reserves, lawsuits, or unfinished inspections under Florida's newer condo laws

What I do

Ask for the building's lender questionnaire and check how recent buyers paid — before you make an offer

Insurance picture

HO-6 + building policy; ask about the master policy deductible and assessments

Whether a building qualifies changes over time. Always check the specific building with a lender.

Example buydown on a \$262,500 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	8.250%	\$1,972	—	—
\$1,969	8.000%	\$1,926	\$46	about 3.6 years
\$4,594	7.750%	\$1,881	\$91	about 4.2 years
\$7,875	7.500%	\$1,835	\$137	about 4.8 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English: In this example, paying \$1,969 saves about \$46 a month and takes about 3.6 years to earn back. If the rate adjusts in 5–7 years, only pay for a buydown you'd earn back before then.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

■ Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$1,972
■ Property tax (rough guess, about 1.5% of price — no homestead discount)	\$438
■ Condo HO-6 insurance (estimate)	\$125
■ HOA / resort dues — includes building insurance (example)	\$900
Example total per month	\$3,435

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE

Fewer loan options can mean a better price when you buy — and fewer buyers when you sell. Plan for both.

Self-employed & other non-QM loans

In plain English: Loans for business owners and 1099 workers that look at your bank statements or assets instead of your tax returns.

12–24 mo.

Bank statements often reviewed

10–20%

Down often seen

640–700+

Credit score often seen

Often a good fit if...

- You own a business or work 1099
- Your tax returns show less income than you really make
- You have large savings or retirement accounts

Watch out for...

- Rates are usually higher than conventional
- Big deposits need explaining
- Mixed business/personal accounts make it harder

Example: self-employed buyer, Destin bay-side home, \$650,000

Down	Cash down	Loan
10%	\$65,000	\$585,000
20%	\$130,000	\$520,000

Questions to ask your lender

- Do you use personal or business statements — 12 or 24 months?
- Can I qualify using my assets instead?
- When could I refinance into a regular loan?
- What would a conventional quote look like side by side?

Self-employed & other non-QM loans

REAL LOCAL EXAMPLE

Builder & place	Holiday Builders · Windswept · Freeport
Example prices	From about \$433,990
Also nearby	DSLID Homes at Hammock Bay · Freeport · about \$399,990–\$689,990
Loan fit	Bank statement or asset-based loan, 10–20% down
Insurance picture	Newer homes inland of the Gulf — usually moderate

Snapshot from builder and listing websites, October 2026. Prices and offers change often and may have ended — confirm with the builder.

Example buydown on a \$585,000 loan

You pay at closing	Example rate	Monthly payment*	You save each month	Time to earn it back
\$0	7.875%	\$4,242	—	—
\$4,388	7.625%	\$4,141	\$101	about 3.6 years
\$10,238	7.375%	\$4,040	\$201	about 4.2 years
\$17,550	7.125%	\$3,941	\$300	about 4.9 years

*Loan payment only (principal and interest). Rates are made up for teaching.

In plain English: In this example, paying \$4,388 saves about \$101 a month and takes about 3.6 years to earn back.

What the whole monthly payment might look like

Loan payment (principal & interest)	\$4,242
Property tax (rough guess, about 1.1% of price for a main home)	\$596
Home insurance (estimate, Destin)	\$500
Flood insurance (estimate)	\$100
HOA dues (example)	\$50
Example total per month	\$5,487

Taxes, insurance and HOA are rough guesses for teaching. Real costs depend on the exact home — get quotes.

KINSEY'S TAKE

These loans are legitimate, not a last resort. Just compare them with a regular loan quote so you know what the flexibility costs.

Down payment help in Florida

Florida has programs for first-time buyers. Money is limited and can run out, and you must use a participating lender. Start early.

Program	How much	How it works	Who it may help
Hometown Heroes	Up to \$35,000	0% interest. No monthly payment. Paid back when you sell or refinance.	First-time buyers in jobs like teaching, healthcare, first responders, military
FL Assist	Up to \$10,000	0% interest. No monthly payment.	First-time buyers using a Florida Housing loan
FL HLP	Up to \$12,500	Small second loan with a low monthly payment	First-time buyers within income limits
County SHIP	Varies	Often forgiven or paid back later	Lower-income buyers in Bay, Walton and Okaloosa

Hometown Heroes: News reports say Hometown Heroes reopened July 13, 2026 with \$50 million. Money has gone fast in past rounds. Ask a participating lender if funds are still available.

Other ways to lower your cash to close

- **Builder deals:** many builders pay closing costs or lower your rate if you use their lender. Compare the whole offer.
- **Seller help:** often 3–9% conventional, 6% FHA and USDA, 4% VA.
- **Gift money** from family is often allowed for a home you'll live in.
- **"First-time buyer"** often means you haven't owned a home you lived in for 3 years — so past owners may qualify.

KINSEY'S TAKE
Down payment help is great, but most of it is paid back when you sell or refinance. Make sure the payment works for you without it.

Florida costs & your next steps

Costs that surprise out-of-town buyers

- **Florida loan taxes:** about \$0.35 per \$100 borrowed, plus 0.2% of the loan. On a \$400,000 loan, that's about \$1,400 + \$800.
- **Insurance:** get quotes during your inspection period, not after. Roof age and a wind mitigation report matter a lot.
- **Escrow:** lenders often collect a few months of taxes and insurance up front.
- **Condo papers:** check the budget, savings, inspections and any special assessments.
- **Property taxes:** the homestead discount only applies to your main home. Second homes and rentals pay more.

Your game plan

1

Talk to a lender first.

Get pre-approved. Ask to see 2–3 loan types side by side.

2

Match the loan to the home.

Condo, new build or rental can rule loans in or out. I'll flag it early.

3

Ask about every deal.

Down payment help, builder credits, seller help, buydowns, assumable loans.

4

Compare 2 Loan Estimates.

Look at the rate, points and total cash to close together.



Not sure which loan fits?

We move at your pace. I'm not a loan officer, but I'm happy to connect you with a trusted local lender who can go over your options and real numbers.

(850) 340-0646 · Book a free 15-minute call: tidycal.com/kinseycoldwellbanker

Important disclosures

IN MY OWN WORDS

I am not a licensed loan officer. This guide is just to educate, with examples of ways a loan might be set up. It is not factual data about your loan, and it is not a quote or a promise.

You will see the actual, correct numbers with the lender you choose. If you need help finding a good lender for the type of loan you want, I'm happy to give you a contact. They can talk through your options and show what may be possible on your loan journey.

Kinsey Haddock is a licensed Florida real estate broker associate (License #BK3253849) with Coldwell Banker Realty. Kinsey Haddock is not a mortgage lender, mortgage broker or loan originator. This guide is not a commitment to lend, a loan offer, a rate quote, or financial, legal or tax advice.

Loan programs, limits, fees and rules are summarized from public sources (FHFA, HUD, VA, USDA, Florida Housing Finance Corporation, Citizens Property Insurance, builder and lender websites, and news and data sites) as of October 2026. They may be incomplete or out of date. Where sources disagreed, this guide says so.

Builder names, communities, prices and offers are snapshots from public websites in October 2026, shown only as examples. They are not endorsements or offers. Builder rate offers often require using the builder's lender and have deadlines. Contact the builder for current terms.

Insurance figures are estimates from insurance agencies and comparison sites and vary widely. Get quotes for the specific property.

All payment, rate and buydown numbers are examples only. Starting rates are made up for teaching. Tables show principal and interest only unless noted. Points may be tax-deductible in some cases — ask a tax professional. All loans are subject to credit approval, underwriting and property eligibility. You are free to choose any lender. Down payment help depends on available funds and income and price limits.

Talk to a licensed loan officer, insurance agent, tax professional or attorney about your situation. Coldwell Banker Realty. Equal Housing Opportunity.

Sources (checked October 2026)

1. **FHFA — 2026 conforming loan limits**
fhfa.gov/news/news-release/fhfa-announces-conforming-loan-limit-values-for-2026
2. **FHA limits (Bay) — LendingTree**
lendingtree.com/home/fha/fha-loan-limits-in-florida
3. **FHA limits (Walton/Okaloosa) — Homebuyer.com**
homebuyer.com/mortgage-loan-limits/walton-county-florida
4. **FHA MIP rates — Mortgage Research**
mortgageresearch.com/articles/fha-mortgage-insurance-premiums-mip
5. **VA funding fee 2026 — VA Loan Network**
valoannetwork.com/va-funding-fee
6. **USDA FY2026 fees — Lower**
lower.com/mortgages/usda/usda-loan-guarantee-fee-explained
7. **Hometown Heroes reopening — iHeart / 93.3 FLZ**
933flz.iheart.com (July 14, 2026)
8. **D.R. Horton Park Place**
drhorton.com/florida/panama-city/callaway/park-place
9. **D.R. Horton Liberty / Panama City**
drhorton.com/florida/panama-city/panama-city/liberty
10. **Lennar Panama City communities & Fall Super Sale**
lennar.com/new-homes/florida/panama-city-communities
11. **Crestview new homes — NewHomeSource**
newhomesource.com/communities/fl/destin-fort-walton-beach-area/crestview
12. **DSL D Houston Place**
dsldhomes.com/communities/florida/crestview/houston-place
13. **Freeport new homes — Homes.com**
homes.com/new-homes/for-sale/freeport-fl
14. **Toll Brothers Panama City Beach**
tollbrothers.com/luxury-homes/Panama-City-Beach-FL
15. **PCB & 30A medians — Seltzer Real Estate (Realtor.com data)**
seltzerrealestate.com/new-home-developments-in-panama-city-beach
16. **PCB condo building medians — Momentum**
movewithmomentum.com/neighborhoods
17. **PCB insurance estimate — Momentum**
movewithmomentum.com/home-insurance-cost-panama-city-beach
18. **Destin insurance — Latent Insure**
latentinsure.com/florida-homeowners-insurance/destin
19. **Florida condo insurance — Insurance.com**
insurance.com/press-room/highest-lowest-cost-states-for-condo-insurance
20. **Flood costs by county — NerdWallet**
nerdwallet.com/insurance/homeowners/learn/flood-insurance-florida
21. **Citizens inspection rules**
citizensfla.com/inspections
22. **Panama City median sale price — Stacker / Redfin**
stacker.com/stories/florida/panama-city

Remember: These are public websites, not official loan quotes. Many are third-party sites. Numbers change often — use them to learn, then confirm with a lender, builder or insurance agent.