

The Homebuyer Money Leak Guide

7 places buyers can quietly lose \$10k-\$50k before, during, and after buying a home

A short guide for first-time buyers who want to understand where money usually disappears during the buying process - before they trust a lender number, write an offer, negotiate repairs, or drain their savings at closing.

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Built from real deal patterns, negotiation problems, inspection surprises, lender issues, and closing mistakes that can quietly cost buyers thousands.

Most buyers don't lose money because they're careless.

They lose money because the expensive parts of buying are usually hidden in the details.

A buyer can do the "right" things on paper - get pre-approved, find a house, write an offer, schedule an inspection, get to closing - and still spend more than they needed to because no one slowed them down at the right moments.

The mistakes usually do not look dramatic in the beginning. They look normal.

- A buyer trusts the first lender they speak to.
- They shop at the top of their approval.
- They focus only on price instead of the full offer structure.
- They panic during inspection and negotiate the wrong things.
- They prepare for the down payment but forget what the first year of ownership can eat up.

This guide shows you seven places where buyers often lose money without noticing it until later.

This free guide shows you where the money leaks usually happen.

If anything in it raises a question about your own numbers, you can book a free 30-minute call with me. The link is on the last page.

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Shopping From the Lender's Number

Approved does not mean comfortable.

Your lender gave you a number.

But is that your real budget... or just the maximum number they can approve?

Before you shop at the top of that approval, ask yourself:

- Can I still save money after this payment?
- What happens when taxes, insurance, or HOA go up?
- Do I have cash left after closing, furniture, moving, and repairs?
- Am I choosing this price range because it works... or because the houses below it disappoint me?

A pre-approval helps you start shopping.

It does not tell you what your life feels like after closing.

THE DANGER: you buy a house that works on paper, then live with a payment that feels tight every month.

Sticking With the First Lender

The first yes may not be your best deal.

Getting approved feels good.

But did you compare the lender... or just accept the first person who said yes?

Before you commit, ask:

- Did I compare at least 2-3 lenders?
- Did I ask about local first-time buyer programs?
- Did I check credit unions or local banks?
- Am I comparing the full cost, or just the rate?
- Are there fees, points, or credits changing the real deal?

As harsh as it sounds, shopping around is on you.

A lender wants your business. That does not mean they are wrong. It just means they may not be the one telling you to compare them against other options.

THE DANGER: the same house can cost you more simply because you did not shop the financing.

Only Fighting Over the Price

The price is not the whole deal.

Most buyers ask:

“Can we get the seller to come down?”

Good question.

But not the only one.

Before you focus only on price, ask:

- Would a seller credit help me more than a small price drop?
- Are there repairs I can negotiate after inspection?
- How is buyer-agent compensation being handled?
- Does this offer protect me if the appraisal comes in low?
- Am I preserving cash, or just chasing a lower headline price?

A \$10,000 price reduction may sound big, but over a 30-year mortgage it may not help your cash today as much as better deal structure.

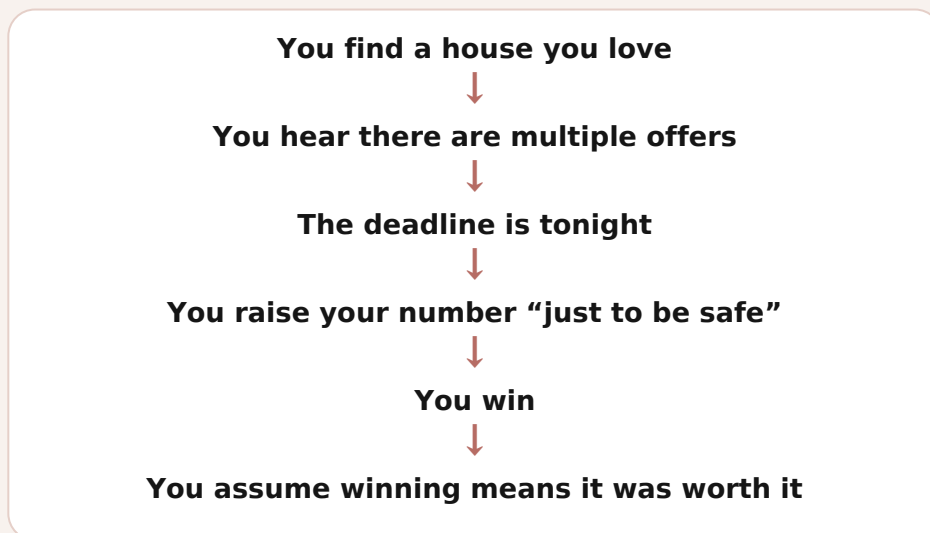
THE DANGER: you win the price negotiation but still leave money on the table.

Assuming Winning Means It Was Smart

A bidding war can make a bad number feel normal.

Most buyers do not overpay in one obvious moment.

It usually happens little by little.



Winning does not prove the deal was smart. It only proves your offer was the one the seller accepted.

THE DANGER: you can win the bidding war and still overpay for a house that becomes hard to justify later.

Reading the Inspection Report the Wrong Way

The report is not a repair wishlist.

Not everything on the report matters equally.

A long inspection report does not automatically mean the house is bad. A short one does not automatically mean it is safe.

Usually not the main fight	Usually worth serious attention
Paint touch-ups	Roof issues
Loose handles	Water intrusion
Minor cosmetic cracks	Structural concerns
Worn caulk	Electrical hazards
Small maintenance items	HVAC / plumbing / sewer problems

THE DANGER: you can waste negotiation power on small items and miss the repairs that actually cost real money.

Forgetting the Cash After Closing

The down payment is not the only cash problem.

DID YOU KNOW? A common rule of thumb is to budget around 1% of the home price per year for maintenance.

On a \$700,000 home, that is about \$7,000 a year. Not for renovations. For the boring things buyers forget: servicing systems, fixing small issues, replacing something that breaks, seasonal maintenance, and surprises after move-in.

Home price	1% maintenance reserve
\$500,000	\$5,000 / year
\$750,000	\$7,500 / year
\$1,000,000	\$10,000 / year

THE DANGER: you can afford the down payment and still feel broke after closing because you planned for buying the house, not owning it.

Buying When the Timing Is Wrong

Rent feels like money disappearing. But buying too early can cost more.

A lot of first-time buyers rush because they are tired of renting. I get it. Rent feels painful because you pay every month and do not build equity.

But buying only makes sense when the numbers and the timeline work.

If you buy, pay closing costs, move, furnish the place, make repairs, and then need to sell too soon... you may not own long enough to recover those costs.

You may be ready to buy if:

- You plan to stay in the home for at least 5 years.
- You can afford the payment without draining your life every month.
- You will still have cash left after closing.
- You can handle repairs without using credit cards.
- You are buying because the numbers work, not because you feel behind.

Buying can build wealth. But only if the purchase does not put you in survival mode.

THE DANGER: you can buy the right-looking home at the wrong time and spend years recovering from a decision you made under pressure.

Before You Start Shopping...

Do you actually know where your money is going?

If this guide made you pause even once, that is the point. Most buyers do not need more random information. They need a simple way to look at the numbers, compare options, and avoid walking into a deal blind.

That's what a free 30-minute call is for. We'll look at your budget, your lender quotes, and the towns you're considering before you make any expensive decisions. No cost and no obligation.

Book a free 1-on-1 call

What we'll cover:

- Your comfortable budget, not just your approval
- Comparing lender quotes on full cost, not just the rate
- Which towns and price ranges fit your plan
- How to write an offer that protects you

Book my free call

30 minutes on Calendly

More free tools at sergeyantonovhomes.com | Sergey Antonov, Coldwell Banker | NJ License #2550770