

North Carolina Homebuyers Guide

A practical guide to understanding homebuying costs, timelines, and opportunities across North Carolina

Buying a home in North Carolina can look very different depending on where you search, how much you earn, and what programs you qualify for. This guide breaks down the numbers behind buying, owning, down payment assistance programs (DPAs), and saving across the state.





1. What It Takes to Buy in North Carolina

Upfront Costs by County

How much buyers may need to get started

The cost of entering the market changes significantly across North Carolina. In some counties, buyers may need much higher upfront savings before they even begin shopping.

How to read this section

- 'Entry Cost' estimates the upfront cash needed for a typical purchase
- Estimates use 3% and 5% down payment scenarios
- Closing costs and loan structure may change actual totals

Higher Entry Cost Markets

County	<u>Typical Home Value</u>	Est. DP 3%	Est. DP 5%	What this market feels like
Dare	\$608,797	\$18,264	\$30,440	Coastal market with premium pricing driven by vacation-home demand
Chatham	\$571,137	\$17,134	\$28,557	Fast-growing market attracting buyers seeking space near the Triangle
Currituck	\$550,864	\$16,526	\$27,543	Coastal suburban market offering larger homes with higher price points



Moderate Entry Markets

County	<u>Typical Home Value</u>	Est. DP 3%	Est. DP 5%	What this market feels like
Gaston	\$302,643	\$9,079	\$15,132	Growing suburban market with commuter appeal and balanced pricing
Gates	\$302,643	\$9,079	\$15,132	Rural market offering affordability with a quieter lifestyle
Catawba	\$299,277	\$8,978	\$14,964	Established regional market with a mix of urban and suburban communities
Alamance	\$298,620	\$8,959	\$14,931	Mid-priced market benefiting from access to major employment hubs
Harnett	\$298,259	\$8,948	\$14,913	Expanding market attracting buyers looking beyond larger metro areas

More Accessible Entry Markets

County	<u>Typical Home Value</u>	Est. DP 3%	Est. DP 5%	What this market feels like
Washington	\$116,189	\$3,486	\$5,809	Rural market offering low-cost entry for first-time buyers



County	<u>Typical Home Value</u>	Est. DP 3%	Est. DP 5%	What this market feels like
Northampton	\$114,032	\$3,421	\$5,702	Budget-friendly market with affordable homeownership opportunities
Halifax	\$104,082	\$3,122	\$5,204	Lower-priced market providing strong value for cost-conscious buyers
Bertie	\$62,232	\$1,867	\$3,112	One of the state's most affordable markets for entry-level homeownership

How This Affects Homebuyers

Where you buy can dramatically change how long it takes to save and how much cash you may need upfront. Depending on your flexibility of location, some areas in North Carolina may prove to be much better than others. Having all the relevant information will help in choosing the most suitable options.

2. The Cost of Owning a Home

Ongoing Ownership Costs by County

Home prices are only part of the equation. Property taxes and insurance costs also shape long-term affordability.

How to read this section

- Annual cost combines estimated taxes and insurance
- Monthly cost shows the typical ongoing ownership burden
- Lower home prices do not always mean lower ownership costs
- Counties are grouped by annual cost pressure (tax + insurance, normalized by home value)



Low Burden ($\leq 0.70\%$)

County	<u>Median Property Tax</u>	<u>Est. Insurance</u>	Annual Cost	Monthly Cost	Cost % of Value
Watauga	\$898	\$2,040	\$2,938	\$245	~0.57%
Jackson	\$674	\$2,020	\$2,694	\$225	~0.60%
Transylvania	\$811	\$2,186	\$2,997	\$250	~0.63%

Moderate Burden (1.50% – 1.60%)

County	<u>Median Property Tax</u>	<u>Est. Insurance</u>	Annual Cost	Monthly Cost	Cost % of Value
Caswell	\$727	\$2,516	\$3,243	\$270	~1.51%
Carteret	\$949	\$6,305	\$7,254	\$605	~1.52%
Rockingham	\$853	\$2,276	\$3,129	\$261	~1.54%
Craven	\$961	\$3,452	\$4,413	\$368	~1.58%

Higher Burden ($> 3.50\%$)

County	<u>Median Property Tax</u>	<u>Est. Insurance</u>	Annual Cost	Monthly Cost	Cost % of Value
Bladen	\$680	\$4,935	\$5,615	\$468	~3.57%
Robeson	\$685	\$4,519	\$5,204	\$434	~3.72%
Bertie	\$498	\$3,465	\$3,963	\$330	~6.37%



Impact on Homebuyers

A lower purchase price does not always guarantee a lower monthly housing burden over time. For North Carolina, natural disasters are very limited, which keeps insurance rates relatively even throughout the state. However, tax rates can vary significantly and should be reviewed thoroughly.

3. How Long Saving May Take

Down Payment Savings Timeline

Saving for a home often takes years – especially in higher-priced markets. This section shows how timelines can vary across North Carolina cities, assuming an 8% savings rate and a 15% down payment target. This helps standardize comparisons across markets with different price levels.

Down Payment Savings Timeline in 10 Remarkable Cities in North Carolina

City	<u>Typical Home Values</u>	<u>Median Household Income</u>	Years to save
Raleigh	\$436,056	\$85,060	9.61
Charlotte	\$399,434	\$86,416	8.67
Durham	\$400,564	\$82,916	9.06
Greensboro	\$266,364	\$63,516	7.86
Fayetteville	\$227,387	\$54,562	7.81
Wilmington	\$422,872	\$63,165	12.55
Chapel Hill	\$642,319	\$85,989	14.01



City	<u>Typical Home Values</u>	<u>Median Household Income</u>	Years to save
Asheville	\$464,131	\$78,996	11.02
Greenville	\$238,644	\$52,016	8.60
Boone	\$494,937	\$30,065	30.87

Why This Data is Significant

Higher income does not always translate into faster homeownership when prices rise at the same time. In some locations, property values can outpace savings, which nullifies borrower down payment efforts.

4. North Carolina Down Payment Assistance (DPA) Programs that May Help

Statewide Programs

Program	Potential Benefits	Typical Fit	What to Know
NC Home Advantage Mortgage	Up to 3%	First-time and move-up homebuyers	Available as a 0% deferred second mortgage
NC 1st Home Advantage Down Payment	Up to \$15,000	First-time homebuyers or military veterans	Operates as a 0% deferred second mortgage, forgiven over 15 years
Community Partners Loan Pool (CPLP)	Up to 25% (maximum \$50,000)	Low- and moderate-income homebuyers	Provided as a zero interest, subordinate loan
Self-Help Loan Pool	Up to \$50,000	Low- and moderate-income SHLP members	Eligible for homes built or rehabbed by a SHLP member



Local Programs

Program	Potential Benefits	Typical Fit	What to Know
Durham Down Payment Assistance Program	Up to \$80,000	City of Durham	Available as deferred, forgivable loans for eligible first-time homebuyers
House Charlotte Program	Up to \$80,000	City of Charlotte	Forgivable assistance for income-eligible first-time buyers
Guilford County Homebuyer Assistance Program	Up to \$10,000	Guilford County	Operates as a 0% deferred second mortgage, forgiven over five years
Homebuying Hero Program	Up to \$30,000	City of Fayetteville	Available for income-qualified first-time homebuyers and local public service workers
Home Ownership Pool (HOP)	Up to \$25,000	City of Wilmington	Offered for eligible low- to moderate-income buyers
Greensboro Homebuyer Assistance Program	Up to \$25,000, plus up to \$5,000 in approved Redevelopment or Reinvestment Areas	City of Greensboro	Available for low- to moderate-income homebuyers and public service workers
Raleigh Homebuyer Program	Up to \$45,000 (up to \$60,000 in designated areas)	City of Raleigh	Available as deferred, forgivable loans for eligible first-time homebuyers



How to Utilize This Information

Many buyers use a combination of savings and assistance programs to bridge the gap between affordability and home prices. Additionally, many of these programs ‘stack’ to provide exceptional boosts to reaching downpayment thresholds.

It is also important to note that the programs listed aren’t exhaustive. Be sure to check out county, state, and local agencies for additional and/or updated program options.

5. A Simple Path to Homebuying

- ☐ Understand your monthly budget
- ☐ Estimate upfront savings needed
- ☐ Explore programs you may qualify for
- ☐ Compare counties and cities
- ☐ Speak with a mortgage professional
- ☐ Begin the pre-approval process

North Carolina Homebuying Snapshot

Market pattern	Where it appears in North Carolina
Highest upfront barriers	Dare, Chatham, Currituck
Balanced mid-priced markets	Gaston, Gates, Catawba, Alamance, Harnett
Lowest home prices	Washington, Northampton, Halifax, Bertie
Faster savings timelines	Greensboro, Fayetteville, Greenville
Longest savings timelines	Boone, Chapel Hill, Wilmington
Largest assistance ecosystem	Durham, Raleigh, Charlotte