

Virginia Homebuyers Guide

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

Buying a home in Virginia 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 Virginia

Upfront Costs by County

How much buyers may need to get started

The cost of entering the market changes significantly across Virginia. 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
Arlington	\$825,578	\$24,767	\$41,279	Premium urban market with high demand
Loudoun	\$806,960	\$24,209	\$40,348	Affluent suburban market showing strong growth
Fairfax	\$776,707	\$23,301	\$38,835	Established high-value market with steady competition
Fauquier	\$656,732	\$19,702	\$32,837	Higher-priced rural market offering more space and privacy



Moderate Entry Markets

County	<u>Typical Home Value</u>	Est. DP 3%	Est. DP 5%	What this market feels like
Caroline	\$363,916	\$10,917	\$18,196	Affordable market attracting value-focused buyers
Rockingham	\$362,461	\$10,874	\$18,123	Balanced market near growing communities
Franklin	\$360,311	\$10,809	\$18,016	Lower-cost market with more buying flexibility
Prince George	\$359,527	\$10,786	\$17,976	Stable suburban market near employment centers
King William	\$355,967	\$10,679	\$17,798	Small-town market offering relative affordability

More Accessible Entry Markets

County	<u>Typical Home Value</u>	Est. DP 3%	Est. DP 5%	What this market feels like
Russell	\$139,207	\$4,176	\$6,960	Most affordable market for budget-conscious buyers
Wise	\$133,317	\$4,000	\$6,666	Lower-cost market offering attainable homeownership
Dickenson	\$116,970	\$3,509	\$5,849	Rural market centered on affordability



County	Typical Home Value	Est. DP 3%	Est. DP 5%	What this market feels like
Lee	\$116,391	\$3,492	\$5,820	Entry-level market appealing to cost-focused buyers
Buchanan	\$77,773	\$2,333	\$3,889	Lowest-cost market for maximum affordability

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 Virginia 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
Goochland	\$1,708	\$1,957	\$3,665	\$305	~0.62%
Clarke	\$1,996	\$1,785	\$3,781	\$315	~0.66%
Frederick	\$1,226	\$1,742	\$2,968	\$247	~0.68%
Albemarle	\$2,219	\$1,705	\$3,924	\$327	~0.70%
King George	\$1,328	\$2,016	\$3,344	\$279	~0.70%

Moderate Burden (1.40% – 1.60%)

County	<u>Median Property Tax</u>	<u>Est. Insurance</u>	Annual Cost	Monthly Cost	Cost % of Value
Accomack	\$650	\$2,854	\$3,504	\$292	~1.42%
Scott	\$537	\$2,000	\$2,537	\$211	~1.47%
Smyth	\$500	\$1,902	\$2,402	\$200	~1.50%
Sussex	\$661	\$2,273	\$2,934	\$245	~1.53%

Higher Burden ($> 2.00\%$)

County	<u>Median Property Tax</u>	<u>Est. Insurance</u>	Annual Cost	Monthly Cost	Cost % of Value
Dickenson	\$368	\$2,079	\$2,447	\$204	~2.09%



County	<u>Median Property Tax</u>	<u>Est. Insurance</u>	Annual Cost	Monthly Cost	Cost % of Value
Lee	\$421	\$2,063	\$2,484	\$207	~2.13%
Buchanan	\$284	\$2,082	\$2,366	\$197	~3.04%

Impact on Homebuyers

A lower purchase price does not always guarantee a lower monthly housing burden over time. For Virginia, 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 Virginia 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 Virginia

City	<u>Typical Home Values</u>	<u>Median Household Income</u>	Years to save
Newport News	\$294,247	\$68,927	8.00
Norfolk	\$312,659	\$65,797	8.91



City	<u>Typical Home Values</u>	<u>Median Household Income</u>	Years to save
Chesapeake	\$425,007	\$89,265	8.93
Manassas	\$559,785	\$113,590	9.24
Richmond	\$378,605	\$63,390	11.20
Leesburg	\$867,977	\$145,205	11.21
Fairfax	\$796,179	\$132,348	11.28
Charlottesville	\$525,079	\$74,824	13.16
Arlington	\$824,859	\$113,582	13.62
Winchester	\$406,564	\$50,120	15.21

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. Virginia Down Payment Assistance (DPA) Programs that May Help

Statewide Programs

Program	Potential Benefits	Typical Fit	What to Know
HOMEowner ship Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance program (DPA)	Up to 10-15% and up to \$2,500 in closing costs, capped at \$40,000	Low-to moderate-income first-time homebuyers	Available as a deferred loan
Virginia Pilot Down Payment Assistance Program	Up to \$50,000	Low-income first-time homebuyers	Structured as a forgivable assistance
Virginia Housing Down Payment Assistance Grant	Up to 2% on Conventional and 2.5% on FHA	Eligible first-time homebuyers and repeat buyer purchasing in Areas of Economic Opportunity	Must be used with eligible Virginia Housing loans
Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) Program	10-to-1 down payment savings match, up to \$10,000	Income eligible borrowers with credit score of at least 580	Operates as a matched savings program rather than direct DPA



Multi-County Programs

Program	Potential Benefits	Areas	What to Know
Hampton Roads 'You're HOME' Program	Up to \$14,500	Participating Hampton Roads localities	Regional program for income-eligible first-time homebuyers

Local Programs

Program	Potential Benefits	Areas	What to Know
Moderate Income Purchase Assistance Program (MIPAP)	Up to 25% of the home's purchase price or up to \$112,500	Arlington County	Available as a deferred-payment, zero-interest second mortgage
First-Time Homebuyers Program	Up to \$50,000	Fairfax County	Designed for low-to moderate-income buyers
Homebuyer Assistance Program	Up to 10% or up to \$70,000	Loudoun County	Forgivable loans for income-eligible borrowers
County First-Time Homebuyer Program	20% or 30% down payment assistance	Prince William County	Total gross household income cannot exceed 80%



Local Programs

Program	Potential Benefits	Areas	What to Know
HOME Down Payment & Closing Cost Assistance	Up to \$13,000 (in some cases, up to \$25,000)	City of Chesapeake	Offered as forgivable loans or grants
First-Time Homebuyer Assistance	Up to \$10,000	City of Newport News	Structured as a forgivable, 0%-interest, deferred-payment second mortgage

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



Virginia Homebuyers Snapshot

Market pattern	Where it appears in Kentucky
Highest upfront barriers	Arlington, Loudoun, Fairfax, Fauquier
Balanced mid-priced markets	Caroline, Rockingham, Franklin, Prince George, King William
Lowest home prices	Russell, Wise, Dickenson, Lee, Buchanan
Faster savings timelines	Newport News, Norfolk, Chesapeake
Longest savings timelines	Winchester, Arlington, Charlottesville
Largest assistance ecosystem	Norfolk, Suffolk, Arlington