



Next steps checklist

2026-04-02

Relax! You aren't on your own, we can either do these items for you, or guide you through them. It's simpler than it appears!

Each of the broad categories need not be one after another--you'll want to work through items 2, 3, & 4 simultaneously.

1 Set Budget Targets

- Talk with a lender (we recommend LMCU) to understand & establish your budget "comfort range"
 - They will help you understand the max they will lend, what that payment would be, and the down payment requirements
 - Think about your future plans, and determine your own comfort range on total investment
- Loosely divide what you'll invest into 4 categories:
 - Property 10% - 15% (Can be financed, but often cash)
 - Design 3% - 5% (This is cash, not financed)
 - Construction 70% - 80% (can be cash, but often financed)
 - Furnishing & Landscaping 3% - 10% (Can be financed, but often cash)
 - Optional: Hobby farm/cows 90% (*Just kidding. Sorta*)
- Ensure your construction budget is right
 - Take our Start Here quiz <https://www.rvaluehomes.com/start-here>
 - Read our cost guide <https://www.rvaluehomes.com/custom-home-pricing-guide>
 - Attend a local Parade of Homes and ask the builders the price of the homes. Focus on seeing homes similar in size to your concept. Compare that price with your construction budget.
 - Start a conversation with us! 616.299.3654
- Consider if buying & remodeling is a better option (search <https://www.rvaluehomes.com/blog> for "Build vs. Buy")

2 Secure & Prepare Land

- Learn what to look for (search <https://www.rvaluehomes.com/blog> for "choose lot")
- Evaluate potential properties (Recommended with builder)
- Purchase property
- Select location for the home (Recommended with builder)
- Clear the land (if required)
- Obtain a topographical survey (if the build area has a lot of contour)



3 Select & Engage Builder

- Understand difference between production, semi-custom, and custom home builders (search <https://www.rvaluehomes.com/blog> for “hands-on”)
- Clarify what things matters most to you in a relationship with your builder
 - Integrity, responsiveness, friendliness, company size, attention to detail, skill level, etc.
- Search for 1 - 3 builders that fit the objectives you identify above
 - BBB, Google, Houzz, referrals, etc.
- Learn about these builders
 - Explore their websites & photo galleries
 - Explore their social channels such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.
 - Consult review sites: BBB, Google, Houzz, etc.
 - Investigate Certifications & Memberships: Home Builders Association, GreenHome Institute, etc.
- Speak with (and vet) potential builders
 - This is the time to figure out who is going to be the best fit for you. It is not possible to figure out the timeline and cost of an undesigned home.
 - Testimonials
 - 3D Home walk-throughs
- Meet with builder(s) to understand process
 - Now is the time to make sure this is a builder you are confident in
 - Find out how timeline and cost are determined
- Engage the builder of your choice

4 Plan your timeline

- Will waiting make it more affordable? (search <https://www.rvaluehomes.com/blog> for “wait”)
- Understand typical timelines for: *(Varies by builder, and design process)*
 - Design
 - The selections process
 - Estimating
 - Financing and permitting approvals
 - Construction, and the consequences of starting at various times of the year
- Secure your slot to begin the design!



5 Begin your design

- Complete a MoSCoW report (List of: Must have, Could have, Will not have)
 - Here we begin to drill down on your home's features, materials, layout, and target budget.
 - At this step, and every step hereafter, the details of your home become more refined
- Meet with the design team to explore sizes, layout, and features that meet your objectives
- Preliminary drawing approval
- "First pass" budget approval
- Specifications
- Selections
- Final drawings
- Final pricing

Construction!