

**Better
Homes**
and Gardens.
REAL ESTATE

WELCOME HOME

MAY 2024



may 2024

MARKET REPORT



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We at BHG Welcome Home, love our Active Duty, Reservist and Military Veterans. We are in awe of the contributions made by these brave men and women. We also respect those family members at home and the sacrifices they've made waiting for their loved ones to return home.

Our Veterans Advantage Program is simple and offers a cash reward program at closing, when you Buy or Sell your home through one of our certified MRP-Military Relocation Specialists.

This is one of the many ways we want to say "Thank You".

May you find Butte County as active or restful as you like!

MARKET REPORT APRIL 30TH, 2024

WELCOME HOME

Single Family Residences (Home, Manufactured on Land, Condo) Excluding Multi-Family									Monthly	
Active Listings/ Pending	Total Current Listings	Under \$100K	\$100K- \$200K	\$200K- \$300K	\$300K- \$400K	\$400K- \$500K	\$500K- \$600K	\$600K+	Expired This Month	Sold This Month
Chico Listings	233	0	5	19	38	50	35	86	4	76
Active	129	0	4	13	15	17	19	61		
Pending	104	0	1	6	23	33	16	25		
Not Sold	55%	0%	80%	68%	39%	34%	54%	71%		
Paradise Listings	118	0	1	15	43	31	16	12	5	23
Active	80	0	0	9	28	24	12	7		
Pending	38	0	1	6	15	7	4	5		
Not Sold	68%	0%	0%	60%	65%	77%	75%	58%		
Magalia Listings	64	5	6	28	18	4	1	2	4	14
Active	48	3	5	19	14	4	1	2		
Pending	16	2	1	9	4	0	0	0		
Not Sold	75%	60%	83%	68%	78%	100%	100%	100%		
Oroville Listings	158	0	8	44	45	31	11	19	5	27
Active	113	0	4	31	27	26	9	16		
Pending	45	0	4	13	18	5	2	3		
Not Sold	72%	0%	50%	70%	60%	84%	82%	84%		



home/budget conscious planning homebuying 101: mortgage approval

The BHGRE Life-bhgrelife.com

Getting mortgage approval is inevitable for most homebuyers unless you pay cash. A mortgage pre-approval letter is a powerful way to get an edge in a bidding war. Plus, mortgage pre-qualification lets buyers know how much house they can afford. Discover how to get through a successful mortgage approval, one of the most crucial steps in the homebuying process.

Consult with a Mortgage Lender First

Eager homebuyers may feel tempted to attend open houses before obtaining a mortgage. However, most sellers expect qualified buyers to receive a lender pre-approval letter. Therefore, the first step to housing success is meeting with a mortgage lender. Your real estate agent can often refer you to reliable resources based on your unique circumstances. Always be honest, so you have the groundwork for turning your situation into approval.

Pre-Qualification vs. Pre-Approval

Often buyers use online loan calculators to see how much money can borrow. While these are helpful tools, they are meant to provide information rather than approval. Usually, a soft credit check is required for pre-qualification, while a hard credit check is necessary for pre-approval. Many factors, such as your current credit score and time at employment, play a role in the approval process. Only a formal letter from your lender stating the mortgage approval amount proves you're a qualified buyer.

Time to Shop Around

Once you understand the differences between pre-qualification and pre-approval, it's time to shop around for the best lender. Some lenders may offer better rates and terms than others, depending on your creditworthiness and resources. If you don't get immediate approval or the rates are high, work with your real estate agent and fi-

nanacial advisor to find a viable lender who works with buyers in your circumstances. Additionally, some borrowers get pre-approval with conditions that must be met before qualifying for a mortgage loan.

Start With a Budget

While mortgage qualification and approval indicate how much house you can afford, budgeting is crucial to maintaining this asset. A home is often the most significant investment of a lifetime. Though you may qualify to buy a house up to a specific amount, consider expenses such as taxes, homeowners' insurance, mortgage insurance, and home maintenance. Then think about your monthly budget and how much you want to pay for a monthly mortgage. Some buyers decide to get a lower-priced home to ensure they can afford it. Ideally, your housing payment should be about 25 percent of your monthly income.

What Should I Expect for Mortgage Pre-Approval?

A mortgage pre-approval requires a hard credit check, and borrowers often must provide documentation to prove certain financial information. For example, lenders typically look at your credit history, income, employment history, and FICO score. Also, lenders consider your debt-to-income (DTI) ratio and the loan-to-value (LTV) ratio on a potential home for sale. As a result, an appraisal is ordered on the house you want to buy to ensure you don't pay more for the home than it is worth. Finally, the lender also considers the home's condition and works with a title company to confirm ownership of the house and verify there are no claims or liens against it before issuing a formal mortgage pre-approval letter.

How Do I Get Mortgage Pre-Approval?

Lenders will look at your finances and expect the documentation to prove the numbers, such as:

- Employment verification
- Personal identification
- Proof of income, including child support, disability, and other payments
- Credit history, often a score of 600 or higher is

- required, with some exceptions
- Proof of assets, including bank accounts, property, and vehicle
- Debt-to-income ratio (DTI) to show you have the income to cover all financial obligations
- Bank statements for the past sixty days
- Recent pay stubs
- W-2 statements
- Social security number
- Tax returns and Schedule K-1 (Form 1065) for the previous two years, especially for those who are self-employed, who may also need to supply a profit and loss statement
- Divorce papers, if applicable
- Death certificate, if applicable, such as a widowed spouse applying for a VA mortgage
- A gift letter, if all or part of the downpayment is a gift

Once you submit this evidence to the lender, it takes up to three business days to get your loan estimate and determine whether you are pre-approved for a mortgage. Depending on the mortgage loan, the downpayment may be between zero and twenty percent of the property price. Usually, a pre-approval lasts for one to six months, which gives you enough time to find your dream home. Always check the expiration date to avoid going through this process again.

What if I Don't Get Pre-Approval?

Some borrowers may be declined by several lenders. Instead of getting frustrated, use the process to determine if financial areas need improvement. For example, paying down debt and saving for a larger down payment could mean the difference between mortgage approval and denial. Determined buyers often change their circumstances within months or a year to get into the right situation to purchase a house.

What is the Difference Between Pre-Approval and Final Mortgage Approval?

A pre-approval letter proves to sellers you are a qualified buyer. A pre-approval can put you ahead of other buyers making an offer in a hectic housing market. Once you make an offer on a home, the formal mortgage approval process begins. First, a home inspection is scheduled to ensure the house is in the proper condition to qualify for a mortgage loan. An appraisal is also done to verify that the house is worth your price. Then the underwriting process begins when your lender verifies your income, debts, and assets to qualify for a loan. If the lender contacts you for more information or documents, respond quickly to ensure you close the deal. Once the formal mortgage approval is issued, you're ready to schedule a closing.

The homebuying process starts with a dream and mortgage approval. Knowing how much house you can afford makes it easier to shop around and make an offer. With some financial planning, you'll soon enjoy the advantages of homeownership!



home/getting ready for guests! entertaining outdoor activities

by The BHGRE life bhgre.com

Entertaining Outdoor Activities

Explore new ways to enjoy your outdoor space. Whether you have a graceful front porch, expansive lawn, a rooftop deck, or inviting patio, there are numerous activities for adults, kids, and entire families that can inspire and entertain. From romantic date-nights to creative family-fun days, read on as we reveal some of our favorite outside activities.

Outdoor Movie Night

Warm nights call for entertainment under the stars. Whether you want a romantic evening as a couple or are hoping for family fun, setting up a backyard movie night takes relatively little work and yields many happy memories. You can order a formal movie screen, or go the DIY route using some cut bamboo poles and older bed sheets. But you can just as easily use one of the outside walls of your home or rooftop deck, white fencing, or your garage door. The surface needs to be relatively flat and solid, without windows or breaks to distort the picture. Move your outdoor furniture into position or put down sleeping bags and big pillows for some comfortable seating for you and your family. From there, as our editors at Better Homes & Gardens reveal, it's showtime as soon as you start "[streaming] a movie from [your] laptop or office-standard projector." And, of course, don't forget the snacks!

Sun-filled Art Projects

For adults, paint-and-sip classes have been popular, particularly among groups of friends looking for creative, low-pressure activities. Art and wine lovers have found ways to bring the paint-and-sip party experience into their own home (or their backyards, patios, and porches). If you have the equipment, set up your easel, canvas, and paints in an outside spot that allows for the sun to warm you, but not overwhelm you or dry out your paints. Join your favorite group of artistic friends on Zoom and connect to any of the local artists currently offering virtual art sessions. Don't forget to keep something chilled by your side. Whether that's a crisp Sauvignon Blanc or a refreshing lemonade is entirely up to you.

For kids, this is an excellent opportunity not only

to grab the watercolors and color pencils, but pieces of vibrant chalk. Parents applauds the idea of creating a chalkboard by "[applying] two coats of [chalkboard] paint to a large piece of plywood" and then "[hanging] the finished drawing station at kid height with heavy-duty picture-hanging hardware." Of course, your home's front walk and sidewalk are also prime canvases for some serious chalk creativity. You might be surprised at how delighted your neighbors are to see your kids' vivid chalk creations as they enjoy an evening stroll.

Catered Picnics

Discover which local restaurants offer tantalizing take-out specials that include everything from family meals to dinners for two with wine pairings or margarita night specialties. There are even exclusive events that allow you to buy expertly prepared cuisine or award-winning vino via take-out or curbside pick-up, followed by a Zoom get-together with the chef or winemaker that crafted it. Imagine sitting in your backyard with your partner as the late summer sun sets, talking with your favorite local chef as you savor every bite. Whether you go big or intimately casual, a picnic on a covered blanket in a space marked off with tea lights or overhead bistro lights will make even an average Tuesday night dinner feel special. You may love the experience so much that date-night picnics in your home's backyard or patio may become one of your favorite activities.

Dances Under the Bistro Lights

In much the same way that twilight picnics tempt, a special night under the bistro lights can create a romantic date-night activity. If you have a patio, balcony, or deck, you can easily string bistro lights above it to create a sparkling effect. If you have an open lawn, designate a dance space by using planters or electric candles; string bistro lights from the tree-tops or along a fence-line for some dazzling illumination. If you have portable Bluetooth speakers, all you need to do is press play on your smart-device for your favorite digital playlist. If not, you can also play tunes off of your laptop, which you can discreetly tuck away for safety.

Backyard Camping

You have a tent, gear, and the desire to be out-of-doors with your family. Get a little creative and enjoy your own backyard. Start by setting up your tent in the backyard, patio, or rooftop deck. The space does not need to be huge; it just needs to accommodate your tent and a small amount of cooking gear or a cooler filled with

drinks and snacks. You then prepare for a night of outside fun. The experts at Real Simple suggest: "Bring sleeping bags or blankets, flashlights, and mosquito repellent for everyone. And arm yourself with enough ghost stories to keep little ones up thrillingly past their bedtimes."

Home Waterpark Games

The temperatures are rising. The good news is you might be surprised at how easy it is to create your own home waterpark – all you need is a patch of lawn to get started. Real Simple recommends that you "buy or borrow a kiddie pool, turn on the sprinkler, unravel the hose, and commandeer as many spray bottles, buckets, tubs, and water pistols as possible." Start with classic games like Cannonball Toss using water balloons before letting your kids fire up their imaginations as they create their own activities while also enjoying some slip-and-slide fun.

Porch-side Performances

Are your kids missing theater camp? Do you have a teenager or college-aged musician in the family who wants a chance to play in public again? Parents raves about the opportunity performers of all ages have in their own backyard or front porch. For young kids, they will love creating an impromptu stage because it inspires imaginative play. For older performers, it gives them a chance to try new material without requiring much additional equipment. For backyard stages, Parents recommends "no-sew theater curtains" using red burlap, curtain rings, and a clothesline that is run around two trees. Similarly, if you have a front porch with descending stairs, you can easily hang up two pieces of red fabric using clothesline across the top landing. And voila! You can part the theater curtains to allow the performer the feeling of a real stage. The kids can perform for family, and if you have an ample enough space to safely social distance, you can create viewing pods out of Hula Hoops for your neighbors.

Balance Courses and Homemade Games

Obstacle courses and homemade backyard games can be crafted using many of the items you may already have in your home. These activities are fun, and they are challenging enough to help the family stay fit and engaged in something that is not screen-oriented this summer. Start by setting up a tennis ball or bean bag toss by arranging tiers of small baskets or even unused plastic containers in your backyard. If you don't have bean bags, you can either take sealable plastic bags or old fabric and fill them with rice before sewing the newly formed bags shut. Don't forget the treats to reward those making the most baskets.

Parents adores the idea of adding a balance challenge to your backyard activities. The Magazine recommends using tree stumps of varying heights that are then "[spaced] ... far enough apart so kids have to carefully plot each step as they walk the path." If you don't have easy access to tree stumps, but do have spare balance-beam-width wooden planks, Real Simple suggests a balance game called "Walking the Plank." The rules, according to the Magazine, are simple: "Let kids take turns walking across a long wooden plank. Whoever finishes first without touching the ground wins. (If someone does touch it, yell 'Shark bait!')" Hula Hoops, homemade tunnels, lawn furniture, and

drink/refreshing & fun!

green tea float

We adore the double green tea look of this ice cream float and the flavor the matcha ice cream lends as it melts into the drink, but if you can't find matcha ice cream, vanilla will do.

Ingredients

1 - 2 scoops matcha green tea ice cream

½ cup brewed (chilled) green tea

¼ - ½ cup ginger ale

Directions:

Add 1 to 2 scoops matcha green tea ice cream to a tall glass. Pour ½ cup brewed (chilled) green tea and ¼ to ½ cup ginger ale over the ice cream.



FROM PG 5

pool noodles can serve as supplies for additional challenges for your spontaneous obstacle course.

Homemade Boat Races

If you are feeling particularly crafty, and have a backyard pool, consider planning a family boat race. Boat bases can be made from cutting into old pool noodles, rinsed plastic containers, or light metal lids, while duct tape, fabric, and string can create the sails. If you want to create racing lanes, Parents has an ingenious idea to get your boat races started. The Magazine explains: "Kids can race homemade boats down ... tracks

made from large-hole pool noodles cut in half lengthwise." Let the races begin!

Hidden Forts and Hideaways

Building special hideaways, whether playhouses, forts, or other uniquely magical abodes, can provide a "getaway" for kids. These structures can be as simple or elaborate as you want to make them. Beach towels draped over lawn furniture can create a quick, make-shift fort, while clotheslines run around trees and draped with patterned sheets, towels, or blankets are among Real Simple's favorite hideaways.

Parents loves the idea of creating a hanging

retreat perfect for family "tea parties, secret club meetings, or games of hide-and-seek." Large hoops made from pool noodles or extra-large Hula Hoops can be draped with strips of vibrant fabric or vivid sections of crepe paper and hung from a nearby tree. The strips float down to the ground, creating a secret world inside the hoop-covered material. Pergolas can be enclosed with elaborate builds from cardboard boxes covered in glitter designs, markers, fabric, or even leftover wallpaper. Give the kids ample room to be part of the design and building process. You'll be amazed at how creative they can be!



home/reducing waste can you reuse coffee grounds?

by *The BHGRE life bhgre.com*

If you're used to starting your day with a cup of coffee or two, you've likely noticed how quickly used coffee grounds start to accumulate—and you might have wondered whether you can put them to work again to brew another cup.

But while reusing coffee grounds to brew more coffee might seem like a good way to save money and reduce food waste, you probably want to avoid doing so. Brewing a second cup of coffee with coffee grounds that have already been used will result in a less flavorful, less potent cup of coffee.

"You typically do not want to make a second cup of coffee with grounds that have already been brewed once," says Matt Foster, the general manager for Century Coffee Co. and owner of Sol Luna Coffee Whiskey. "This is largely because the

pleasant flavors in coffee grounds are extracted in the first few minutes of brewing—or in less than a minute if you're making espresso. If you attempt to brew the used coffee grounds again, you will likely get an unpleasant cup that tastes weak and bitter. There simply isn't enough left in the coffee grounds for the water to pull from."

That said, there are plenty of other fun ways to make the most of used coffee grounds.

Culinary Uses for Used Coffee Grounds

While you probably want to skip using spent coffee grounds to brew more coffee, there are other ways you can repurpose those grounds in cooking, baking, and making cocktails. Foster recommends using leftover coffee grounds to make a coffee saccharum (similar to oleo saccharum, a citrusy syrup used in cocktails) to add to espresso martinis or nonalcoholic drinks.

To make a coffee saccharum:
Combine equal parts used coffee grounds (freshly used or frozen), granulated sugar, and brewed drip

coffee.

Mix thoroughly.

Strain through a paper filter (this will take a fair amount of time if the grounds are small). Small amounts of finely ground coffee—typically just a tablespoon or two—are also a popular ingredient in baking, and can even sub in for espresso powder in a pinch. Try adding just a bit of ground coffee to fudgy brownies, chocolate cake, or chocolate chip cookies. Coffee also works wonders in many savory recipes. Used coffee grounds are often employed in barbecue rubs and seasonings, and you can also put them to work in our recipes for coffee-braised pot roast, coffee-crusting beef tenderloin, and coffee-rubbed salmon sandwiches. Editor's Tip: Finely ground coffee works best for culinary applications. If your used coffee grounds are still quite coarse, try crushing them into a fine powder with a mortar and pestle.

Gardening Uses for Used Coffee Grounds

Outside of the culinary world, used coffee grounds are commonly composted and can be repurposed occasionally in gardening. "Used coffee grounds can be used for compost as part of the 'green' component since they are a source of nitrogen," Foster says. "Small amounts of used coffee grounds can also be added directly to the soil for vegetables such as tomatoes, carrots, and potatoes or flowers like roses and daffodils."

Cleaning Uses for Used Coffee Grounds

Coffee grounds can also be used in household cleaning—try using them to remove stubborn buildup on pots and pans, to deep-clean your oven racks and grill grates or to get scuffs out of wooden furniture and floors. Next time you have leftover coffee grounds, don't throw them out! Put them to good use in recipes, your compost pile, or save your grounds for cleaning throughout your home.



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