SOHO
REALTY & MORTGAGE

SOLD ON HELPING OTHERS

90-DAY PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Your Week-by-Week Action Plan to Homeownership

You're 3-6 months away from being ready to buy with confidence.

This checklist breaks down exactly what to focus on each week so you're not just "getting ready" you're making measurable progress toward your keys.

The 3 Phases:

- **Weeks 1-4:** Credit Optimization
- **Weeks 5-8:** Savings Acceleration
- **Weeks 9-12:** Pre-Approval Preparation

Your Information

Name:

Start Date:

Target Move-In Date:

My Comfort Payment: $

Phase 01

Credit Optimization

Weeks 1-4 | Building Your Strongest Credit Profile

Week 1: Credit Discovery

- [ ] Pull free credit reports from all 3 bureaus (AnnualCreditReport.com)
- [ ] Review each report for errors or inaccuracies
  - ✓ **Look for:** wrong addresses, accounts you don't recognize, incorrect balances
- [ ] Document your current credit scores from each bureau
  - ✓ Equifax: ______________________
  - ✓ Experian: ______________________
  - ✓ TransUnion: ______________________
- [ ] List all accounts in collections (if any)
- [ ] Calculate your current credit utilization rate
  - ✓ Total credit card balances: $ ______________________
  - ÷ Total credit limits: $ ______________ = ______________

Pro Tip

Mortgage lenders use the MIDDLE score of your 3 bureau scores. Focus on improving your middle number.

Week 2: Dispute & Correct

- [ ] File disputes for any errors found (online or by mail)
  - ✔ **Equifax:** equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services
  - ✔ **Experian:** experian.com/disputes
  - ✔ **TransUnion:** transunion.com/credit-disputes
- [ ] Request goodwill deletions for any old paid collections
- [ ] If you have medical collections, check if they're under $500 (often removed)
- [ ] Document all disputes filed (keep confirmation numbers)

💡 Pro Tip

Disputes typically take 30-45 days. File them NOW so they're resolved before you apply for pre-approval.

Week 3: Utilization Optimization

- [ ] Create a paydown plan for credit cards (target: under 30% utilization)
- [ ] Pay down highest-utilization cards FIRST

Card 1: $ ______________ balance ÷ $ limit

______________ % → Pay down $

Card 2: $ ______________ balance ÷ $ limit

______________ % → Pay down $

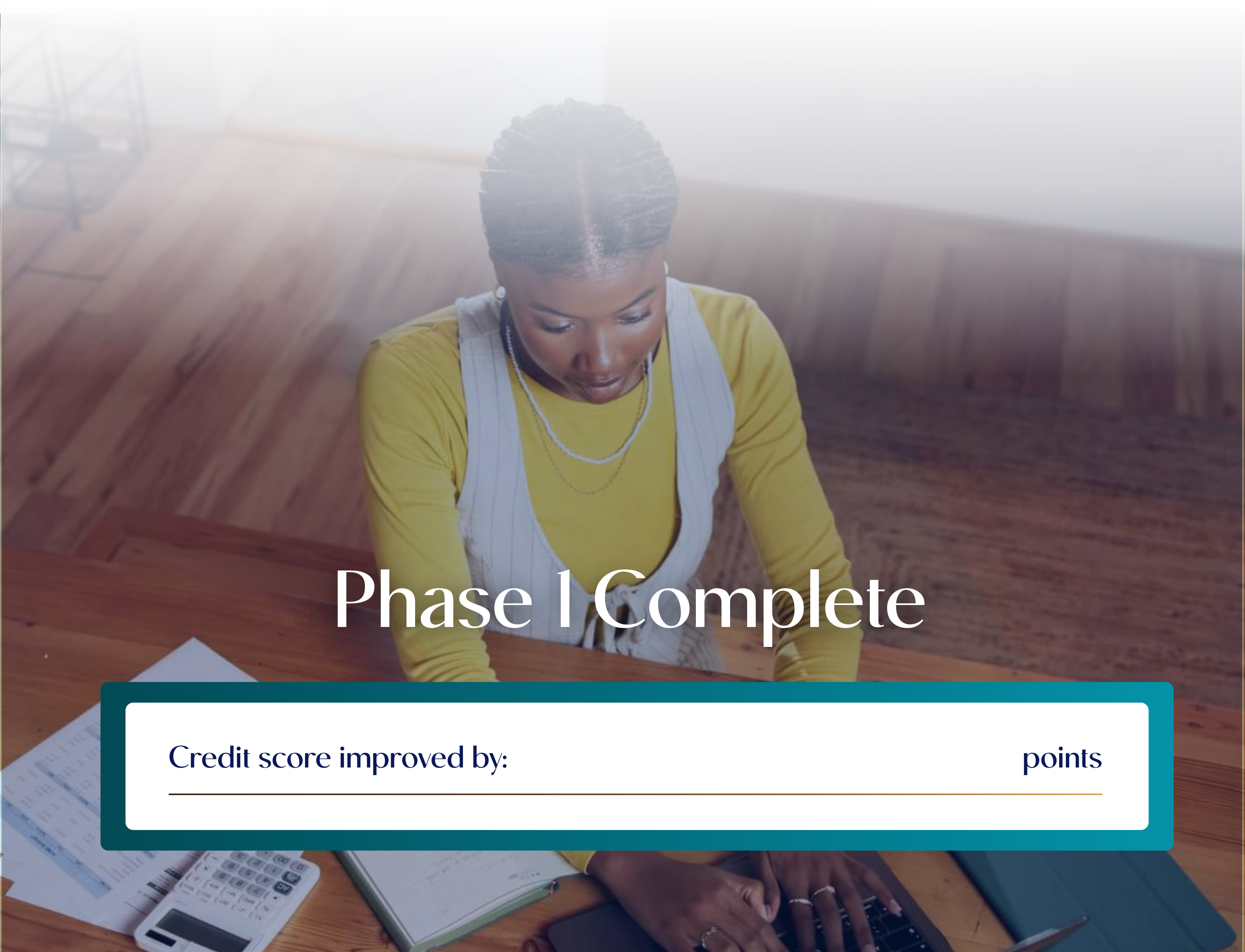
- [ ] Set up autopay on ALL accounts (at least minimum payments)
- [ ] DO NOT close any credit card accounts
- [ ] DO NOT open any new credit accounts

💡 Pro Tip

Utilization updates monthly when your statement closes. Pay down cards BEFORE the statement date for fastest score improvement.

Week 4: Credit Habits & Check-in

- [ ] Check dispute status for any filed disputes
- [ ] Verify all autopay setups are working
- [ ] Review credit scores (use free monitoring: Credit Karma, etc.)
    - ✓ Equifax: ____________________
    - ✓ Experian: ____________________
    - ✓ TransUnion: ____________________
- [ ] Commit to NO new credit applications for the next 6 months
- [ ] Set calendar reminder to check scores again in Week 8



Phase 1 Complete

Credit score improved by: ____________________ points

Phase 02
Savings Acceleration

Weeks 5-8 | Building Your Down Payment & Reserves

Week 5: Savings Audit

- [ ] Calculate your current liquid savings
  - ✓ Checking accounts: $ ____________
  - ✓ Savings accounts: $ ____________
  - ✓ Money market: $ ____________
  - ✓ **TOTAL LIQUID: $** ____________
- [ ] Determine your target down payment amount
  - Target home price: $ ____________ × 3.5% (FHA) = $ ____________ minimum
  - Target home price: $ ____________ × 5% (Conv) = $ ____________ recommended
- [ ] Calculate closing costs estimate (typically 2-4% of purchase price)
  - Target home price: $ ____________ × 3% = $ ____________ for closing costs
- [ ] Open a dedicated "House Fund" savings account if you don't have one

💡 Pro Tip

Keep your house fund in a SEPARATE account from daily spending.
Out of sight = out of mind.

Week 6: Down Payment Sources

- [ ] Identify ALL potential down payment sources:
  - ✓ Personal savings: $ ____________________
  - ✓ Gift from family (requires gift letter): $ ____________________
  - ✓ 401(k) loan option: $ ____________________
  - ✓ Down payment assistance programs: $ ____________________
  - ✓ Other sources: $ ____________________
- [ ] Research Houston down payment assistance programs:
  - ✓ Houston Housing Authority programs
  - ✓ TSAHC (Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation)
  - ✓ TDHCA (Texas Department of Housing)
- [ ] If using gift funds, alert family member and discuss timing
- [ ] If using 401(k) loan, check with HR on process and timeline

Pro Tip

Gift funds must be "seasoned" in your account for 60+ days OR have a clear paper trail. Plan ahead!

Week 7: Comfort Number Calculation

- [ ] Calculate your comfort payment (NOT your max approval!):
  - ✓ Current rent/housing payment: $ ____________________
  - ✓ Additional amount you could comfortably pay: $ ____________
  - ✓ YOUR COMFORT PAYMENT: $ ____________________

- [ ] Understand the REAL monthly cost of a $400K home in Houston:
  - ✓ Principal & Interest (~6.5%): ~$2,400
  - ✓ Property Taxes (~2.2%): ~$730
  - ✓ Homeowners Insurance: ~$200
  - ✓ PMI (if <20% down): ~$150
  - ✓ HOA (if applicable): $50-400
  - ✓ **TOTAL: ~$3,500+/month**

- [ ] Determine your target price range based on comfort payment

💡 Pro Tip

Lenders may approve you for WAY more than your comfort number. Know YOUR number and protect it.

Week 8: Reserves & Credit Check-in

- [ ] Calculate reserves needed AFTER closing:
  - ✓ Emergency fund (3-6 months expenses): $ ____________
  - ✓ Moving costs: $ ____________
  - ✓ Immediate repairs/updates: $ ____________
  - ✓ Furniture/appliances: $ ____________
- [ ] Re-check credit scores (Week 8 check-in) Updated scores:
  - ✓ Equifax: ____________
  - ✓ Experian: ____________
  - ✓ TransUnion: ____________
- [ ] Review dispute outcomes (should be resolved by now)
- [ ] STOP all large purchases or money movement

💡 Pro Tip

Reserves aren't just "nice to have" they're what keeps you from becoming house poor. Build them in.

Phase 2 Complete

Total funds identified: $ ____________

Phase 03

Pre-approval Preparation

Weeks 9-12 | Getting Ready to Move

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Week 9: Document Gathering (Income)

- [ ] Create a "Home Purchase Docs" folder on your computer
- [ ] Gather INCOME documents:
    - [ ] Last 2 years of W-2s
    - [ ] Last 2 years of federal tax returns (all pages)
    - [ ] Last 30 days of pay stubs
    - [ ] If self-employed: 2 years business tax returns + YTD P&L
    - [ ] If other income: documentation (Social Security, rental, etc.)
- [ ] Verify employment dates and salary with HR if needed

💡 Pro Tip

PDF format is best. Name files clearly: "2025_W2_Employer.pdf" makes everything easier.

Week 10: Document Gathering (Assets)

- [ ] Gather ASSET documents:
  - ✓ Last 2 months bank statements, ALL pages (even blank ones!)
  - ✓ Checking account(s)
  - ✓ Savings account(s)
  - ✓ Money market account(s)
  - ✓ Last quarterly retirement account statements (401k, IRA)
  - ✓ Investment/brokerage account statements
- [ ] If using gift funds, prepare gift letter (I can provide template)
- [ ] Ensure all large deposits (over $500) are documented/explainable

Pro Tip

Unexplained deposits are a RED FLAG for underwriters.
Have documentation ready for anything unusual.

Week 11: Document Gathering (Id & Other)

- [ ] Gather ID & OTHER documents:
  - ✓ Driver's license (front and back)
  - ✓ Social Security card
  - ✓ If divorced: divorce decree + settlement agreement
  - ✓ If applicable: bankruptcy discharge papers
  - ✓ If applicable: child support/alimony documentation
- [ ] Define your home criteria:

Target neighborhoods: ______________________

Bedrooms: ______________ Bathrooms: ______________

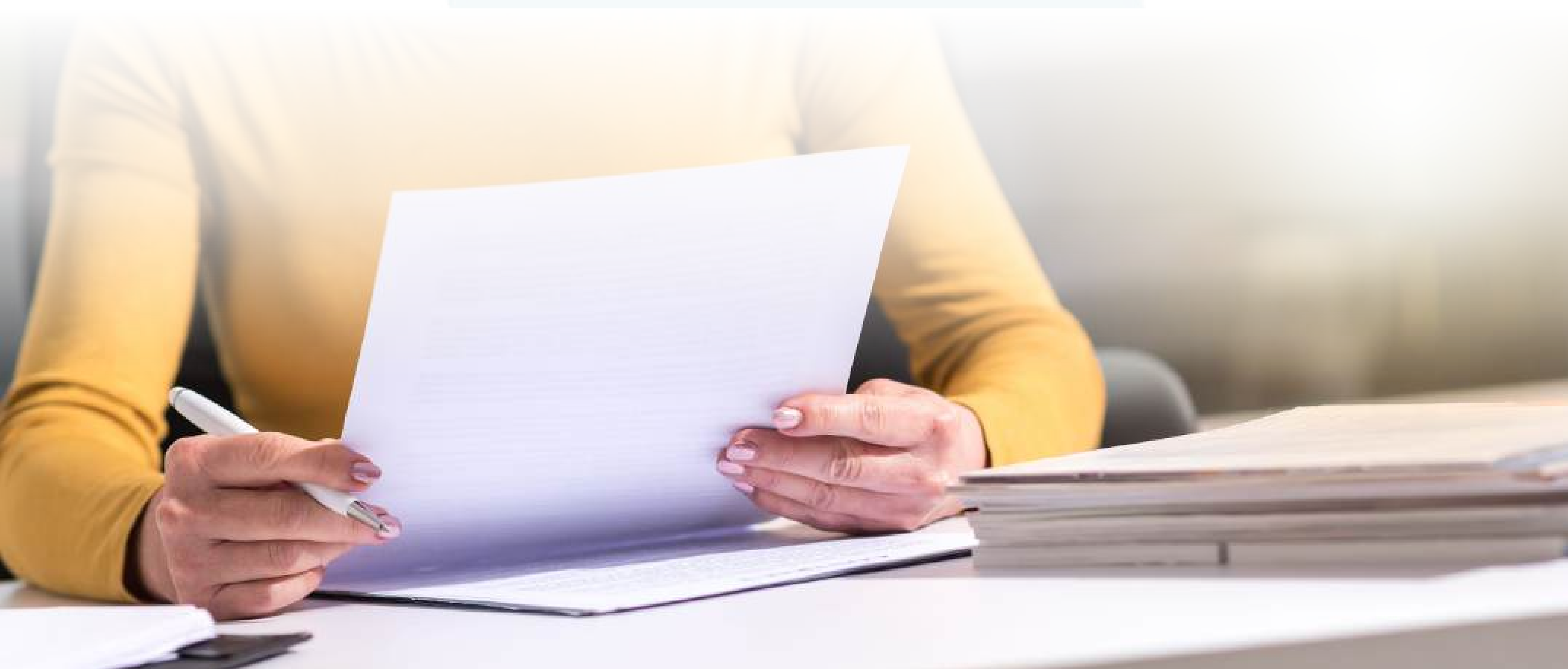
Sq Ft: ______________

Non-negotiables: ______________________

Nice-to-haves: ______________________

Pro Tip

Know your non-negotiables BEFORE you start shopping.
It prevents decision fatigue and buyer's remorse.



Week 12: Final Prep & Strategy Session

- [ ] Final credit check, confirm scores are stable or improved

Final scores:

- ✓ Equifax: ______________________
- ✓ Experian: ______________________
- ✓ TransUnion: ______________________

- [ ] Verify all documents are collected and organized
- [ ] Confirm down payment funds are "seasoned" and documented
- [ ] Review your comfort number one final time
- [ ] BOOK YOUR STRATEGY SESSION with Sharlene!

Phase 3 Complete

Ready for pre-approval! Date: ______________________

You're Ready for Your Strategy Session!

In your free 30-minute session, we'll go through your documents step by step, make sure your numbers are clear, find the loan options that work best for you, and create your personalized timeline to keys!

BOOK NOW!

Bonus

Complete Document Checklist

Everything You'll Need for Pre-Approval

Income Documentation

- ☐ W-2 forms (last 2 years)
- ☐ Federal tax returns (last 2 years, all pages and schedules)
- ☐ Pay stubs (last 30 days)
- ☐ If self-employed: Business tax returns (last 2 years)
- ☐ If self-employed: Year-to-date profit & loss statement
- ☐ Social Security income letter (if applicable)
- ☐ Pension/retirement income documentation (if applicable)
- ☐ Rental income documentation (if applicable)

Asset Documentation

- ☐ Bank statements, ALL accounts (last 2 months, ALL pages)
- ☐ 401(k)/IRA statements (most recent quarterly)
- ☐ Investment/brokerage statements (last 2 months)
- ☐ Gift letter (if using gift funds for down payment)
- ☐ Documentation for any large deposits (over $500)

Identification & Other

- ☐ Driver's license (front and back)
- ☐ Social Security card
- ☐ Divorce decree & property settlement (if applicable)
- ☐ Bankruptcy discharge papers (if applicable)
- ☐ Child support order (if applicable)
- ☐ Alimony/spousal support documentation (if applicable)
- ☐ Green card or work visa (if applicable)

Notes

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Questions?

Reply to any of my emails. I read every one.

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