Desire *and* Hope

FREE WORKSHEET · STAGE: YOUR NUMBER

One-Income *Affordability* Worksheet

For: Buying a home solo on one income

Prepared by Gustav Emilio. · **Sources checked:** 23 November 2026 · desireandhope.com



Note: This is general information, not financial advice. Rules, rates and limits change. Talk to a licensed professional before you decide.

WEEKLY MORTGAGE-RATE CONTEXT

7.28%

Freddie Mac PMMS 30-year fixed-rate average (week ending 19 Nov 2026) (freddiemac.com/pmms)[1]

This is a U.S. national weekly average from conforming purchase applications, not a lender quote for your credit score, down payment, or location.

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STEP 1

Income and Monthly Debt-to-Income (DTI) Check

Lenders measure your debt-to-income ratio (DTI) by dividing all monthly debt payments (including the proposed mortgage payment) by your gross monthly income (CFPB)[2]. **Lender maximums are not personal comfort targets** — one paycheck carries 100% of your household costs.

LINE	ITEM	YOUR MONTHLY FIGURE
A	Gross monthly income (before taxes; verify 2-yr history for bonus/overtime)	$
B	Existing monthly debt minimums (auto loan, student loans, credit cards, installment debts)	$
C	**Personal housing comfort cap** (choose your own sustainable % of Line A or net pay)	$
D	**Total debt check:** (Line B + Proposed Housing Payment) ÷ Line A × 100	%

OFFICIAL LENDER DTI CEILINGS FOR REFERENCE

FANNIE MAE CONVENTIONAL
36% → 45%

Manually underwritten: 36% maximum total DTI, up to 45% with qualifying credit score and reserves (Fannie Mae Selling Guide B3-6-02)[3].

FANNIE MAE DESKTOP UNDERWRITER (DU)
50%

Up to 50% maximum allowable DTI (Fannie Mae Selling Guide B3-6-02)[3].

FHA (MANUAL UNDERWRITING)
31 / 43%

31% housing / 43% total debt standard; up to 40% / 50% only with documented compensating factors (HUD Handbook 4000.1)[4].

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STEP 2

All-In Monthly Housing Payment

Your lender payment can include more than principal and interest. Fill in every line for a target home price:

LINE	MONTHLY COMPONENT	YOUR ESTIMATE	NOTES
1	Principal & interest (P&I) at lender quote rate	$	Fixed 30-yr or 15-yr quote
2	Property taxes (`Annual tax ÷ 12`)	$	Check county assessor / listing
3	Homeowners insurance (`Annual premium ÷ 12`)	$	Get a real property quote
4	Mortgage insurance (PMI or FHA MIP, if applicable)	$	Applies under 20% down (conv.) or FHA
5	HOA / condo fees (if any)	$	Counted in lender housing expense
6	**Total lender-qualifying payment (`1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5`)**	$	**Compare with Step 1**
7	Solo maintenance & repair sinking fund	$	Paid out of pocket, not to lender
8	**All-in monthly ownership budget (`6 + 7`)**	$	**Compare against net take-home pay**

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STEP 3

Cash to Close and Solo Post-Closing Cushion

Never let closing day empty your bank account. Fannie Mae's automated underwriting requires **no minimum post-closing reserves** on a 1-unit principal residence (Fannie Mae Selling Guide B3-4.1-01)[5] — so protecting an emergency fund is up to you (CFPB Emergency Fund Guide)[6].

LINE	CASH BUCKET	YOUR FIGURE	OFFICIAL BENCHMARK
C1	Total liquid cash available right now	$	Checking, savings, money market
C2	Down payment target (_____% of target price)	$	Conv. 3% (first-time / HomeReady) [7][8]; FHA 3.5% [9]
C3	Estimated closing costs (2%–5% of price)	$	CFPB typical range, excluding down payment [10]
C4	Moving & first-week setup cash	$	Locks, shutoff checks, safety alarms, utility deposits
C5	**Sole-earner emergency cushion (target 3–6 months)**	$	Kept untouched in liquid savings after closing
C6	**Total cash needed (C2 + C3 + C4 + C5)**	$	**Must be ≤ C1 before making an offer**

ILLUSTRATIVE ARITHMETIC BOX

How the pieces fit together *(Example Only – Not a Quote or Recommendation)*

To see how the pieces fit together, here is the illustrative example from Desire and Hope's Rent vs. Buy guide (using a fixed example rate of **7.11%**, PMMS week ending 12 Nov 2026):

EXAMPLE PURCHASE PRICE	EXAMPLE DOWN PAYMENT (3%)	EXAMPLE LOAN
$300,000	$9,000	$291,000

EXAMPLE 30-YEAR FIXED P&I AT 7.11%

$1,957.58 / month

(before property tax, homeowners insurance, PMI, HOA, and maintenance)

ILLUSTRATIVE CFPB 2%–5% CLOSING-COST BAND ON $300,000

$6,000 – $15,000

(actual lender, title, tax, and prepaid escrow costs vary by state and loan)

REFERENCES

Sources

All checked 23 November 2026

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4. HUD, *FHA Single Family Housing Policy Handbook 4000.1*. https://www.hud.gov/hud-partners/single-family-handbook-4000-1
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