

First-Time Homebuyer's Guide to South Denver

Q2 2026 EDITION

Everything You Need to Know to Buy Your First Home in South Denver

southdenverguide.com

2026 Market Snapshot: South Denver

The Denver metro housing market has stabilized in mid-2026. After the correction of late 2024 - early 2026, prices have essentially flatlined -- April 2026 DMAR posted a metro median of \$605,000, with homes selling in a median of just 14 days. Active inventory grew 17% month-over-month, giving buyers more selection without pushing prices lower.

What this means for first-time buyers: the market has normalized. Prices aren't dropping further, but you're also not fighting 2021 bidding wars. A 6.47% rate is the new baseline -- plan for it, and refinance when rates ease.

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Metro Denver Median Sale Price (Apr 2026) | \$605,000 |
| Denver Home Value / Zillow (May 2026) | \$540,000 |
| Avg. Days on Market (Metro) | 14 days (nearly flat YoY) |
| Price per Square Foot (Denver) | \$355 (-3.9% YoY) |
| New Listings (Apr 2026) | 6,642 in Apr 2026 |
| Closed Sales (Apr 2026) | 3,926 in Apr (+2.35% MoM) |

Neighborhoods at a Glance (Q1 2026 Median Prices)

Prices below reflect Redfin/Zillow data as of March 2026. Year-over-year changes show a buyer's market correction across most South Denver neighborhoods.

| Neighborhood | Median Price | YoY Change | Type | Schools | Walk |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------------|---------|------|
| Cherry Hills Village | \$3.8M | +27.7% YoY | Ultra-Luxury | Cherry | 2/10 |
| Cherry Creek | \$1.6M | -0.9% YoY | Urban Luxury | Denver | 8/10 |
| Belcaro | \$1.1M | flat YoY | Established Luxury | Denver | 6/10 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|------------|--------------------|-----------|------|
| Washington Park | \$1.4M | -16.1% YoY | Walkable Urban | Denver | 9/10 |
| Greenwood Village | \$1.55M | -6.4% YoY | Executive Suburban | Cherry | 4/10 |
| Bonnie Brae | \$895K | flat YoY | Charming Walkable | Denver | 7/10 |
| Platt Park | \$840K | -2% YoY | Earthy Walkable | Denver | 7/10 |
| Centennial | \$666K | +3% YoY | Family Suburban | Cherry | 3/10 |
| University Hills | \$588K | flat YoY | Quiet Suburban | Cherry | 4/10 |
| Observatory Park | \$660K | +1.5% YoY | Up-and-Coming | Denver | 6/10 |
| Englewood | \$595K | +3.5% YoY | Historic Walkable | Englewood | 8/10 |
| Hampden South | \$558K | +1% YoY | Modern Suburban | Cherry | 5/10 |

Colorado-Specific Buyer Programs (2026)

CHFA (Colorado Housing Assistance Corporation) -- Updated for 2026:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| CHFA Loan | Below-market rate, 3-5% down, no PMI required. Income limits updated annually (South Denver metro ~\$136K for 4-person household). Combine with DPA for minimal cash at closing. |
| CHFA Down Payment Assistance | Up to 4% of loan amount as deferred loan -- no monthly payments, repaid at sale/refinance. |
| Denver OED Programs | City-specific down payment assistance for Denver residents; income and purchase price limits apply. |
| VA Loans | 0% down for veterans, competitive rates, no PMI -- available throughout South Denver. |

6 Things First-Time Buyers Should Know in 2026

- Interest Rates** 30-year fixed at 6.47% as of July 2026 (Bankrate). Shop 3+ lenders -- even 0.25% saves \$15-25K over a \$500K loan life.
- Market Speed** Metro median days on market: just 14 days (DMAR Apr 2026). Well-priced homes move fast -- have your pre-approval letter ready.
- CHFA Programs** CHFA income limits updated for 2026 -- South Denver metro approx. \$136K for 4-person household. Combine with DPA for minimal cash at closing.
- HOA Caveat** Condo/townhome HOA dues continuing to rise statewide -- factor \$400-700/mo. Attached \$1M+ in South Denver has 5.5+ months inventory; negotiate aggressively.
- Stable Market Buy** Metro prices flat YoY for 3 years running (+0.2% per DMAR). You're not buying at the 2022 peak and not fighting pandemic bidding wars. Rational, plannable market.
- Cherry Creek Schools Value** Centennial (\$666K, +3% YoY), University Hills (\$588K), or Hampden South (\$558K) give Cherry Creek Schools access vs. Greenwood Village (\$1.55M).

The South Denver Homebuying Process

- 1 Assess Readiness** Check credit (620+ minimum, 740+ for best rates), calculate DTI (28/36 rule), save 3-5% down + 3% closing costs.

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------------|---|
| 2 | Get Pre-Approved | 3-5 days, multiple lenders. A local lender strengthens your offer in competitive situations. |
| 3 | Find Your Agent | Interview 2-3 agents. In 2026's slower market, a strong negotiator saves you more than ever. |
| 4 | House Hunt | Focus on neighborhoods matching your priorities. Days on market are up -- don't rush, but move fast on right homes. |
| 5 | Make an Offer | Write strong but not desperate. Use 80-day DOM as leverage. Demand inspection repairs or credits. |
| 6 | Inspections | Standard + radon (Colorado-specific, ~\$150-300) + sewer scope (~\$200-400 for older homes). Don't skip these. |
| 7 | Appraisal & Close | If appraisal comes in low, renegotiate. Closing costs ~3% of purchase price. Bring certified funds. |

southdenverguide.com/contact -- Free Buyer Consultation