



# Single Women Are Buying More Homes Than Ever: What the Numbers Reveal

A SHIFT IN HOMEOWNERSHIP THAT'S REDEFINING WEALTH



Homeownership has long been viewed as a milestone tied to marriage or dual incomes. Today, that narrative is changing. Single women are emerging as one of the fastest-growing segments of homebuyers—quietly reshaping long-standing assumptions about wealth, stability, and financial independence.

According to the National Association of REALTORS® 2024 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers, single women accounted for 20% of home purchases, representing the largest share of buyers after married couples.<sup>1</sup> This shift reflects more than changing demographics. It signals broader economic and social progress, driven by factors such as narrowing wage gaps, longer life expectancy, the rise of multigenerational households, and a growing emphasis on long-term stability.

Homeownership has historically been one of the most reliable paths to wealth creation, offering protection against rising housing costs while enabling equity growth and long-term financial security. For women in particular, this milestone carries added significance. Just over fifty years ago, women were not guaranteed the right to apply for a mortgage independently, a restriction that wasn't fully prohibited until the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974.<sup>2</sup>

Against that backdrop, the fact that single women now trail only married couples in homeownership is more than a statistical milestone. It represents meaningful progress toward financial autonomy and generational wealth. In this paper, we examine the data behind this trend, explore why homeownership remains a powerful wealth-building tool, and unpack the financial realities single women navigate on the path to ownership.



## What National Data Reveals About Women Homebuyers

Recent national data suggests that single women are approaching homeownership with a high degree of deliberation – balancing affordability, longevity, and independence in a market shaped by fluctuating inventory and interest rates.

According to the [National Association of REALTORS® 2024 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers](#), women own more homes than men in 31 major U.S. metropolitan areas. Just as notable, the median age of female homeowners, which is 57, nearly mirrors that of men, indicating that women are achieving homeownership on comparable timelines, often while navigating the financial realities of buying on a single income.

Those realities are evident in the types of homes women choose. Compared to married buyers, single women are more likely to purchase older and less expensive properties. With a median income of \$76,685 and a median home value of \$264,037, these buyers appear to be making pragmatic trade-offs, prioritizing affordability, cash flow flexibility, and long-term sustainability over newer construction or higher price points.<sup>3</sup>

Geographically, the data reinforces this measured approach. In large metropolitan areas such as Philadelphia, Atlanta, Phoenix, and Chicago, women account for more than 60% of homeowners. Meanwhile, the highest concentrations of single women homeowners are found in smaller, lifestyle-oriented markets, particularly across Florida, where homeownership often aligns with retirement timing, longevity planning, and downsizing decisions.

Rather than signaling constraint alone, these patterns point to a disciplined approach to ownership. In an environment shaped by rising costs and tighter financial margins, single women are demonstrating how thoughtful planning and selectivity can translate into sustainable homeownership, even without the benefit of a second income in the household.

## The Barriers Single Women Still Navigate in Homeownership

While single women are outpacing single men in homeownership and closing the gap with married couples, the path to ownership is rarely straightforward. Reaching this milestone often requires navigating structural and financial barriers that persist despite decades of legislative progress.

The Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974 was a turning point, granting women the legal right to apply for mortgages without a male co-signer. Yet legal access has not fully eliminated disparities in practice. According to a LendingTree report, nearly 30% of single female mortgage applicants were more likely to be denied than male applicants.<sup>4</sup> Income remains a central factor. On average, women earn approximately 85% of what men earn, a gap that continues to influence borrowing power.<sup>5</sup>

That income disparity can create a cascading effect throughout the homebuying process. Lower earnings may increase debt-to-income ratios, limit the ability to save for a substantial down payment, and reduce overall purchasing power. When buyers are unable to contribute at least 20%, private mortgage insurance (PMI) adds to monthly costs, further stretching cash flow. For single women purchasing on one income, these dynamics can mean higher relative housing expenses and less financial flexibility.

Gender-based income disparities are only part of the picture. Racial inequities introduce another layer of complexity. Ten-year averages of single female homebuyers show that white women account for 84% of purchases, compared to 7% for Black women, 6% for Hispanic/Latina women, and 3% for Asian/Pacific Islander women.<sup>6</sup> These differences in homeownership between races that we see today reflect a long history of housing discrimination that shaped who could obtain property and who could not.

Throughout much of the 20th century, Black and Latino families were systematically excluded from wealth-building opportunities through redlining, discriminatory FHA lending practices, denial of G.I. Bill benefits, and government-led displacement of established communities.<sup>7</sup> While the Fair Housing Act of 1968 outlawed overt discrimination, the long-term effects remain visible today in lower rates of generational wealth transfer, higher student loan burdens, and elevated mortgage denial rates among women of color.

Taken together, these structural factors underscore an important reality: although more single women are becoming homeowners, the journey often demands resilience, strategic planning, and financial discipline in ways that are not evenly distributed across demographics. The progress is meaningful, but it has not been uniform.

## How Women Are Approaching Homeownership More Strategically

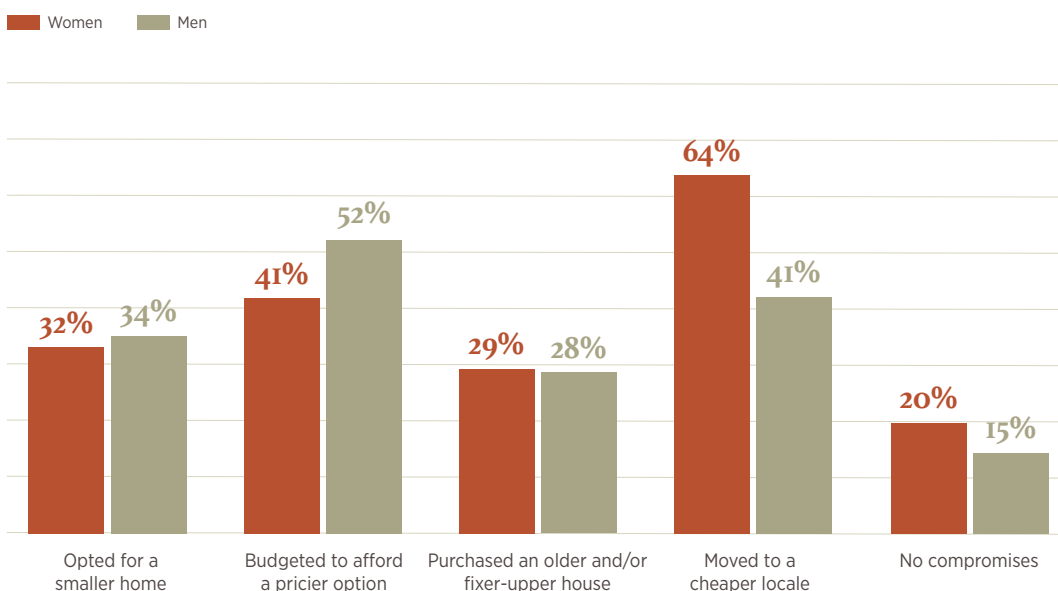
The purchasing patterns of single women differ in meaningful ways from those of their male counterparts. While both single men and women are more likely than married couples to purchase townhomes, rowhouses, cabins, or cottages rather than detached single-family homes, the motivations behind those choices often reflect practical considerations.<sup>8</sup> These property types typically offer features like a more affordable entry point into ownership, lower maintenance obligations, and proximity to neighbors, which can be particularly appealing for single buyers seeking community and security.

Where single women begin to diverge is in the degree of flexibility they are willing to exercise to become homeowners. For many, ownership is not simply a lifestyle preference; it is a deliberate financial strategy. Rising rents, limited housing inventory, and the long-term benefits of equity accumulation have made homeownership a priority, even if it requires trade-offs.

Research from Maxwell's Single Women Home Buyer Report found that nearly two-thirds of single women relocated to more affordable areas to make ownership attainable, with 67% purchasing homes in traditionally lower-cost regions such as the South and Midwest.<sup>9</sup> Rather than waiting for ideal market conditions or stretching beyond their financial comfort zones, many women are choosing markets that align with their income realities and long-term plans.

### COMPROMISES TO ACHIEVE HOMEOWNERSHIP

## Single Women vs. Single Men





This willingness to compromise on geography, home size, or property type reflects a disciplined approach to entering the market. For first-time buyers—especially those purchasing on a single income—the ability to build equity early can be transformative. Without the advantage of proceeds from a prior home sale, the initial step into ownership is often the most challenging. By prioritizing affordability and sustainability, single women are positioning themselves to establish that foundation and participate in long-term wealth accumulation.

In many cases, this is less about settling and more about sequencing—entering the market strategically today to expand options tomorrow.

## **Why Guidance Matters in the Mortgage Journey**

For many first-time homebuyers, the mortgage process can feel opaque and intimidating. When you are navigating that process alone, the literacy gap around lending terms, underwriting standards, and long-term financial implications can become an even heavier burden, creating anxiety and, at times, costly missteps.

According to Maxwell's Single Women Home Buyer Report, nearly 30% of single women reported feeling unprepared entering the mortgage process.<sup>10</sup> Much of that uncertainty stems from not fully understanding how mortgages work or what to expect at each stage of approval. Compounding that concern, roughly a quarter of respondents indicated they did not trust their loan officer (the individual responsible for evaluating and recommending approval of their mortgage application)



A lack of clarity, coupled with limited trust in key decision-makers, can leave buyers feeling as though they are navigating one of the largest financial commitments of their lives without a clear roadmap. Even after closing, confusion about payment structures, escrow, or rate adjustments can persist, potentially increasing financial strain over time.

While educational resources from banks and lenders are widely available, information alone does not always translate to confidence. What many prospective buyers benefit from most is a trusted professional relationship with someone who can answer questions in real time, provide context beyond the transaction itself, and help connect a home purchase to broader financial goals.

This is where a financial advisor can play a meaningful role. Homeownership is not simply a real estate decision; it is a balance sheet decision. A home affects liquidity, cash flow, retirement planning, insurance coverage, tax considerations, and long-term lifestyle flexibility. An advisor can help clarify how a prospective purchase aligns with your broader financial strategy, whether that includes saving for retirement, funding education, managing risk, or preserving generational wealth.

Just as importantly, an advisor can help demystify the terminology and structure of the mortgage process, explaining interest rate dynamics, debt-to-income ratios, loan types, and insurance considerations in the context of your full financial picture. That clarity can turn what feels overwhelming into a deliberate, well-informed decision.



## WHERE OUR ADVISORS CAN SUPPORT

If you are considering homeownership—or evaluating how a property fits into your broader wealth plan now may be the right time to have that conversation with one of our advisors.

Our advisory practice works with clients to integrate major financial decisions, such as purchasing a home, into a comprehensive wealth strategy. We welcome the opportunity to explore how your home and the decisions surrounding it can align with the future you envision.



## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Martin, E. J. (2025, April 15). More single women are purchasing homes: Here's why. *Mortgage Rates, Mortgage News and Strategy : The Mortgage Reports*. <https://themortgagereports.com/118718/more-single-women-are-purchasing-homes#trend>
- <sup>2</sup> What is the Equal Credit Opportunity Act? (2023, January 19). *Capital One*. <https://www.capitalone.com/learn-grow/money-management/equal-credit-opportunity-act/>
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- <sup>5</sup> Graf, N. (2025, April 24). Gender pay gap in U.S. has narrowed slightly over 2 decades. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/03/04/gender-pay-gap-in-us-has-narrowed-slightly-over-2-decades/>
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- <sup>7</sup> Historic housing discrimination in the U.S. | *Habitat for Humanity*. (n.d.). *Habitat for Humanity*. Retrieved February 10, 2026, from <https://www.habitat.org/historic-housing-discrimination-us>
- <sup>8</sup> Dehan, A. (2024, March 8). Single women homebuyer statistics and tips 2024. *Bankrate*. <https://www.bankrate.com/mortgages/single-women-pursue-homeownership/#statistics>
- <sup>9</sup> Maxwell. (2024, April 9). *Maxwell Single Women Home Buyer Report - Maxwell*. <https://himaxwell.com/resources/ebooks-white-papers/2023-single-women-home-buyer-report/#downloadnow>
- <sup>10</sup> Maxwell. (2024, April 9). *Maxwell Single Women Home Buyer Report - Maxwell*. <https://himaxwell.com/resources/ebooks-white-papers/2023-single-women-home-buyer-report/#downloadnow>



## DISCLOSURES

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