COASTAL OWNERSHIP · FLORIDA PANHANDLE + COASTAL ALABAMA

The tax bill after you buy.

A Florida buyer's guide to reassessment, exemptions and escrow.

THE CLIENT COLLECTION · SEPTEMBER 2026

Gregg Costin
Practical guidance for your next real estate decision.
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THE TWO-MINUTE ORIENTATION

What matters. Where to find it.

THE SHORT ANSWER

A seller's Florida property-tax bill can substantially understate a new buyer's future bill. A qualifying ownership change generally resets the assessment to just value the following January 1, so build your budget using the buyer's expected assessment and exemptions.

1 **Reset**
The seller's assessed value may not be your value.

2 **Estimate**
Use the parcel, tax year and buyer circumstances.

3 **Apply**
Confirm homestead, portability and deadlines.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Use this with your team

Official figures carry sources and dates. Worked examples are hypothetical, not current quotes or promises of approval. Your signed contract, lender requirements, insurance policy and military orders control the actual transaction. Keep private documents in the responsible professional's secure channel.

01 Why the seller’s bill can mislead

The purchase changes the owner and may change the tax calculation.

A long-term owner may have accumulated a large Save Our Homes assessment difference. That protection generally does not transfer to an unrelated buyer simply because it appears in the listing’s tax history.

The property appraiser determines the assessment; a sale price is relevant evidence, but it is not a promise that the tax assessment will equal that exact price.

Four values to keep separate

Term / Meaning for your budget

Term	Meaning for your budget
Purchase price	What you agree to pay for the property
Just value	The property appraiser’s market-value determination
Assessed value	Value after applicable assessment limits or portability
Taxable value	Assessed value after applicable exemptions; can differ by taxing authority

KEEP IN MIND

The reset rule has exceptions

Florida lists certain transfers between spouses, some transfers upon death, corrections of title, and other qualifying changes that may avoid reassessment. Ask the property appraiser and closing professional about your actual ownership structure.

YOUR WORKING NOTES · CONFIRM WITH THE RESPONSIBLE PROFESSIONAL

Bring these records

Parcel number / county / taxing district: ____________________

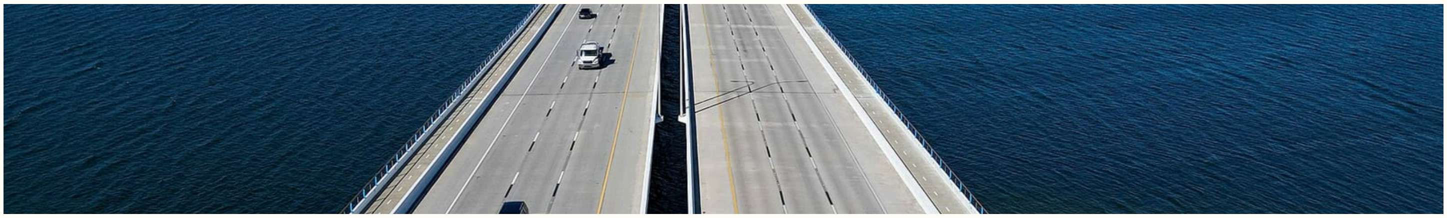
Seller’s just, assessed, and taxable values: ____________________

Buyer estimate requested from / date: ____________________

Sources reviewed 2026-09-06: Florida DOR: Save Our Homes and portability · Florida DOR: Property tax forms and publications

02 Build a buyer estimate

Calculate the change before it becomes an escrow surprise.



Ask for a purchase-based estimate using your intended occupancy, expected exemption eligibility, and any documented portability. Identify which millage rates apply to which taxable values. Include non-ad valorem assessments such as charges appearing separately on the tax bill. A broad county percentage is less useful than the correct parcel, taxing district, and buyer circumstances.

Teaching example, not a parcel estimate

Assumption	Annual amount
Hypothetical school taxable value $400,000 × 6 mills	$2,400
Hypothetical other taxable value $375,000 × 10 mills	$3,750
Hypothetical non-ad valorem charges	$300
Illustrative annual tax / monthly reserve	$6,450 / $537.50

One mill is $1 per $1,000 of taxable value. The values and millages above are invented to teach the calculation; they are not current local rates or standard exemption amounts.

If a seller's historical bill were $3,000 while your buyer estimate were $6,450, the annual difference would be $3,450, or $287.50 per month.

A lender collecting only the old amount could later need to increase the payment and address a shortage. Ask the lender which assessment it used and whether the initial escrow matches the buyer estimate.

KEEP IN MIND

Compare the right years

Closing-year prorations and next-year ownership costs answer different questions. A credit at closing does not guarantee that your next full-year bill will match the seller's bill.

Sources reviewed 2026-09-06: Florida DOR: Property tax forms and publications · Florida DOR: Save Our Homes and portability

03

Homestead is an application

Eligibility belongs to the owner and the facts of residency.

Discuss January 1 ownership and permanent-residency requirements with the county property appraiser. The ordinary filing deadline is March 1; ask the office about any applicable late-filing process rather than assuming an exception applies. A primary-home mortgage designation does not itself file a Florida property-tax exemption.

Prepare for the property appraiser

- ☐ Verify the deed and parcel information after recording.
- ☐ Collect the identity and residency evidence requested by your county.
- ☐ Disclose any other residence-based property-tax benefit you or relevant household members claim.
- ☐ Ask about portability, surviving-spouse, disability, military, or other exemptions when applicable.
- ☐ Retain the submitted application, supporting documents, receipt, and approval.

KEEP IN MIND

Use the current exemption calculation

Florida’s additional homestead exemption has an inflation adjustment and does not apply identically to school and non-school taxes. Use the current county/DOR calculation; a flat “subtract $50,000 everywhere” shortcut can be wrong.

YOUR WORKING NOTES · CONFIRM WITH THE RESPONSIBLE PROFESSIONAL

Your application calendar

January 1 eligibility confirmed with: ______________________

Application deadline / submission confirmation: ______________________

Other exemptions or portability to evaluate: ______________________

Sources reviewed 2026-09-06: Florida DOR: Property tax forms and publications · Florida DOR: Save Our Homes and portability

04 Portability is separate from the cap

An existing Florida benefit may help, but the calculation matters.

Save Our Homes limits annual assessed-value increases on qualifying homesteads after the initial year to the lower of 3% or the change in CPI. It does not cap the total tax bill at 3%: millage, assessments, exemptions, and other circumstances can change. The accumulated difference is an assessment benefit, not a cash credit.

A move from a prior Florida homestead may allow portability of all or part of that assessment difference. DOR says the new homestead must be established within three years of January 1 of the year the previous homestead was abandoned. That is not simply three years after the closing date. File the required transfer application with the new homestead application and obtain the county's calculation.

Questions that change the answer

Question / Who confirms it

Was the old property a qualifying Florida homestead?
Previous county property appraiser

When was the old homestead abandoned?
Property appraiser using your circumstances

How much benefit transfers to this new property?
New county property appraiser

Does ownership or a move by one owner affect the share?
Property appraiser and closing/tax adviser

KEEP IN MIND

Do not budget a benefit twice

Portability affects assessed value. Homestead exemptions affect taxable value. Ask for a worksheet showing each step rather than subtracting the same benefit twice.

Sources reviewed 2026-09-06: Florida DOR: Save Our Homes and portability

05 Your tax and escrow checklist

Turn the research into a documented decision.

Save the dated documents supporting your decision with the transaction file. Write down who confirmed each open issue and when the answer is due.

If the answer affects affordability, financing, insurability, legal use, or resale, resolve it while your contract still gives you the relevant choices. Your agent coordinates the process; the lender, insurer, association, government office, or closing professional confirms the fact within its role.

YOUR WORKING NOTES · CONFIRM WITH THE RESPONSIBLE PROFESSIONAL

Your decision record

Buyer-based annual tax estimate / assumptions:

Monthly tax reserve / lender escrow amount:

Homestead / portability application status:

Next assessment notice review date:

Before removing a contingency

- ☐ Review the actual documents and written estimates, including exclusions and assumptions.
- ☐ Separate recurring costs, immediate cash needs, and possible future liabilities.
- ☐ Confirm unresolved items, the person responsible, and the contractual response deadline.
- ☐ Ask whether a new fact changes your price, terms, financing, or decision to proceed.

KEEP IN MIND

A useful question for every professional

What would make this estimate or approval change before closing, and what evidence would tell us that has happened?

Sources reviewed 2026-09-06: Florida DOR: Property tax forms and publications · Florida DOR: Save Our Homes and portability

FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE

The original guidance.

Consult the source before relying on a changing amount, deadline, policy or contact. Source review: 2026-09-06.

01

Florida DOR: Save Our Homes and portability

https://floridarevenue.com/property/Documents/pt112.pdf

02

Florida DOR: Property tax forms and publications

https://floridarevenue.com/property/Pages/Forms.aspx

Apply the rule to your situation

This is an educational resource. Your lender, closing professional, insurer, property appraiser and installation offices confirm matters within their roles. No government agency, military installation or lender sponsors or endorses this publication. Source review dates change only after actual verification.

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RECOGNITION

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Levin Rinke Realty / Forbes Global Properties

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20 years of military service. 11 personal PCS moves.

$25M+	60+	99.89%	8.1%
Transaction volume	Families helped in the past year	List-to-price ratio Seller clients	Average price reduction Buyer clients

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RENE®	Real Estate Negotiation Expert
MRP®	Military Relocation Professional
MCA®	MORE Certified Agent
SRS®	Seller Representative Specialist
HFR®	Home Finance Resource
FMS®	Florida Military Specialist
FAA	Part 107 Certified

Let's plan your next move.

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