

Is It a Good Time to Buy a Home?

For many potential buyers, the biggest question this year is whether now is the right time to purchase a home. With mortgage rates, affordability, and overall consumer confidence shifting, the answer depends on your financial situation—but current data provides helpful guidance. Recent reports show that mortgage rates are hovering near a three year low, with the average 30 year fixed rate around 6.09%. These lower rates have already encouraged more homebuying and refinancing activity nationwide, making ownership more accessible for buyers who were previously priced out.

Still, lower rates don't eliminate the affordability challenges many households face. Consumer confidence surveys indicate that Americans remain cautious about elevated prices and long term inflation concerns, even though job market perceptions have improved. According to the latest data, worries over the cost of goods and ongoing inflation continue to influence buyers' decisions, and while confidence ticked upward in February, expectations about future economic conditions remain well below recession threshold benchmarks.

So, is now a good time to buy? The answer depends on your stability and readiness. If you have a reliable income, strong credit, manageable debts, and savings for both a down payment and unexpected expenses, today's lower mortgage rates could offer a favorable entry point into the market. At the same time, persistent affordability challenges and mixed economic expectations mean buyers should act thoughtfully. Reviewing your long term plans and consulting an Interra mortgage professional can help ensure that a home purchase aligns with your financial goals. For prepared buyers, today's conditions present meaningful opportunities—but timing is personal, and the best decision is the one that supports your financial well being.



FINANCIAL WELLNESS

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Interra Credit Union does not provide tax advice. For questions regarding your individual tax situation, please consult a qualified tax professional.

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Pre-qualification timelines will depend on receipt of proper required documentation and business hour processing time. Loans are subject to credit and collateral requirements. Not all will qualify. Must have Interra membership account to close mortgage loan. Membership qualifications apply. NMLS# 623379

Phone System Tips for a Smoother Experience

As more of our member conversations begin with our phone system's Virtual Assistant, a few simple habits can make the experience faster, easier, and more accurate for everyone.

- **Listen carefully.**
Our Virtual Assistant is designed to guide callers through clear prompts. Taking a moment to listen fully before responding helps ensure you are routed to the right place the first time.
- **Keep it simple.**
Short, direct responses work best. When callers use long explanations or extra details, the system can have a harder time understanding the request. A few clear words go a long way, such as loan payment.
- **Minimize background noise.**
Quiet environments help the system recognize speech more accurately. Encouraging callers to limit background noise or avoid speakerphone when possible leads to a much smoother call.

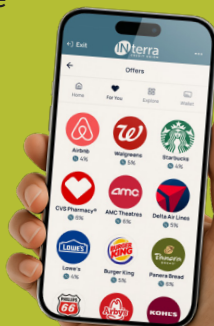
Thank you for helping us create a smoother, more efficient phone experience. These small adjustments truly make a big difference for members and for our team.

CashBack+ from Interra

We talk a lot about Interra's CashBack+. It's because we believe in it so much knowing that you can earn bonus cash when you purchase digital gift cards from popular brands in retail, dining, travel, and more. Offers are customized just for you, and rewards are added instantly to your CashBack+ Wallet. Use the bonus for future purchases or transfer it to your Interra account – typically within 48 hours.

Don't forget when you're making purchases online, you can use your CashBack+ Pay to receive instant purchase savings and seamless pay. Simply use the CashBack+ app or your browser.

Need more details to set up your CashBack+ today? Scan the QR code, visit interracu.com/cashback or visit any Interra office.



Why Is My Tax Refund Higher or Lower This Year?

If you noticed your tax refund looks different this year, you're not alone.



Changes in national filing trends and IRS processing patterns are affecting many taxpayers. Recent IRS data indicates the average refund issued so far this season is higher than it was last year, with some taxpayers seeing increases of more than 14%. Several factors may contribute to this increase, including adjustments to withholding, shifts in income, or updated tax credits that changed your overall tax liability. Even modest changes in your financial situation from one year to the next can have a noticeable impact on your refund amount.

At the same time, a refund decrease can also happen for perfectly normal reasons. For instance, if you earned more income, had fewer deductible expenses, or adjusted your W-4 to withhold less from your paycheck, your refund may naturally shrink. Seasonal filing patterns also play a role.

Ultimately, whether your refund is higher or lower this year comes down to how much tax you paid throughout the year compared to your final tax liability. Factors like life changes, updates to tax law, and shifts in the economy can all influence that balance. The best way to stay prepared is to review your withholding, monitor any major financial changes, and check your refund status directly through the IRS "Where's My Refund?" tool at irs.gov.

Understanding these moving parts can help you plan confidently each tax season—and avoid surprises next year.

Interra Credit Union does not provide tax, legal, or accounting advice. This information is for general educational purposes only and may not address your individual tax situation. For guidance specific to your circumstances, please consult a qualified tax professional.

Financial Wellness Tips for New Graduates

Graduation marks an exciting transition into adulthood, but it also brings new financial responsibilities that can feel overwhelming at first. Whether graduates are entering the workforce, continuing their education, or taking time to explore their future, building strong financial habits early can make a meaningful difference. This season is a perfect time to offer guidance that helps young adults start off confident and informed.

Start with a simple budget

One of the most valuable steps for new graduates is learning how to create and maintain a realistic budget. Tracking monthly expenses, understanding needs versus wants, and planning for both expected and unexpected costs can help reduce stress and prevent overspending.

Graduates who learn to manage their cash flow early are better prepared to handle rent, groceries, transportation, and the small expenses that add up quickly. Interra offers budgeting tools and digital banking features that make this easier.



Learn your paycheck and benefits

Graduates entering their first jobs should also take time to understand their paychecks and benefits. This includes becoming familiar with taxes, insurance options, retirement contributions, and direct deposit. Knowing what each deduction means not only prevents surprises but also helps young adults make informed decisions about their financial future. It is also an ideal time to start saving for emergencies. Even a small monthly contribution can create a cushion that provides peace of mind as they gain independence.

Build healthy credit

Another key part of financial wellness is understanding credit. Building healthy credit early can open doors to better financial opportunities later, such as lower interest rates or approval for an apartment. Graduates benefit from learning how credit scores work, how to use credit cards responsibly, and how to avoid common pitfalls like carrying unnecessary balances.

Set short and long-term goals

Finally, encouraging graduates to set short and long term goals helps them stay motivated. Saving for a car, planning for continued education, or simply building a safety net all become more achievable with clear objectives. As a community focused institution, a Interra can support graduates with personalized financial advice, education resources, and products built to help them grow.

By offering tools, education, and ongoing support, we can help new graduates feel empowered as they begin this exciting chapter. Financial wellness is a journey, and starting strong can make all the difference.

Saving Smart for Summer and Staying Safe from Fraud

As summer approaches, many families begin planning vacations, day trips, festivals, and other warm weather activities. It is an exciting season, but it can also be an expensive one. Setting aside a little each week in a dedicated Interra savings account can help cover travel, event tickets, and fuel without stretching your budget. Even small, consistent deposits add up quickly and make it easier to enjoy summer without financial stress.

Summer is also a time when fraud and scam activity tends to increase, especially for travelers. Criminals often target people on the go through fake travel deals, phony rental listings, public Wi-Fi scams, and messages claiming urgent account issues. Remaining cautious while traveling is one of the best ways to protect yourself. Avoid clicking unfamiliar links, use secure Wi-Fi or mobile data, and monitor your accounts regularly for unusual activity.

Interra provides several tools to help you stay protected. Account alerts, mobile card controls, and secure messaging through digital banking offer added layers of safety whether you are close to home or across the country. Staying up to date with current fraud trends and knowing how to spot red flags can make all the difference.

With a little planning and the right precautions, you can enjoy every moment of summer with confidence and peace of mind. For more information, visit www.interracu.com.

Annual Board Election Results

On Monday, March 16, Interra held its Annual Meeting, which included the announcement of the 2026 Board Election results.

Vince Beasley, Susan Cripe and Carmen Snider were reelected to the Board of Directors. Interra members

also reelected Mike Steinau to the Supervisory Committee. All individuals were elected to hold a three-year term. We appreciate their dedication and leadership in guiding Interra's continued success.

Thank you to the members who participated and voted!



Vince Beasley
Board of Directors



Susan Cripe
Board of Directors



Carmen Snider
Board of Directors



Mike Steinau
Supervisory Committee



Our member's favorite event is back this summer! Interra's Shred-It Days will be held on Friday, June 5, and Saturday, June 6, at Interra's Main Office in the Powerhouse parking lot. This helpful event is a great way for our members to properly and safely dispose of information that could otherwise compromise your accounts and your identity if thrown away with household trash.

In partnership with Waste-Away Group, Interra provides this FREE service to our members. **Each member can have up to 50 pounds of documents shredded at no cost**, regardless of the number of accounts the member has. Have more than 50 pounds to shred? **It's only 20 cents per pound after the first 50.**

This is all provided as a benefit to our members. Please be sure to bring your member card, checkbook, debit card or other evidence of Interra membership.

According to the FCC, proper destruction of confidential documents is important to keep your identity safe. Consider shredding items such as old documents, medical records, tax records, financial/ credit card/ investment statements, receipts, pre-approvals and other mail solicitations, pay stubs, expired ID cards, leases, contracts, expired credit cards, etc. Our heavy-duty shredding trucks can shred paper clips, staples, manila folders, duplicate check copies, old checkbooks and deposit books. No need to remove these items from your shredding.

Please don't bring garbage, 3-ring binders, cardboard, plastic or metal. (Interra Credit Union and Waste-Away Group reserve the right to refuse unacceptable items.)

Holidays & Important Dates

In recognition of upcoming holidays, please note these important dates when all Interra offices will be closed. Connect with us using Interra's technology banking—including our mobile app¹, online banking and ATMs.

¹Data carrier rates may apply.

May 25 – Memorial Day
June 19 – Juneteenth Day
July 4 – Independence Day

Get connected today!   



AMERICAN SHARE INSURANCE
Your savings insured to \$250,000 per account.

By members' choice, this institution is not federally insured. NMLS#: 623379

For Hours & Locations:

 interracu.com/hours-locations

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