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First-Time Homebuyers in the U.S. Now Average 38 Years Old

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The age of the average first-time homebuyer in the United States has reached an all-time high, rising to 38 years old. According to a study from John Burns Research and Consulting (JBREC), which specializes in independent housing industry analysis, the typical age of a first-time buyer in 2025 is now 38. That’s a noticeable jump from the 1993–2018 average of 31 and even up from 33 just five years ago in 2020.

Due to growing financial pressures, many young Americans are delaying homeownership longer than ever before. For decades, purchasing a home was seen as a rite of passage into adulthood. But in today's economy, it's increasingly a milestone pushed further down the road. Rising home prices, persistently high mortgage rates, and broader affordability challenges have shifted the landscape.

One of the biggest barriers for younger buyers remains the down payment. In 2024, the median down payment made by first-time buyers was 9% of a home's value. For a \$400,000 home, that's around \$36,000, an amount that's challenging to save while also paying rent and other living expenses. And that's just the start. Additional costs such as inspections, legal fees, moving expenses, and mortgage origination fees all add to the financial load.

Mortgage interest rates also continue to pose a challenge. As of mid-2025, the average rate on a 30-year fixed mortgage remains between 6% and 7%, significantly reducing the buying power of many households. On top of that, there are long-term financial obligations such as property taxes, homeowner's insurance, and upkeep, all of which further strain budgets already stretched thin.

In past generations, nearly half of Americans had purchased a home by age 30. Today, less than a third manage that, with many choosing to wait until their careers stabilize and their savings grow. The shift reflects broader changes in the job market and wage growth. Despite increased educational attainment, younger workers often face stagnant earnings and fewer long-term employment guarantees, making large financial commitments riskier.

Looking ahead, relief appears limited. Financial firm JP Morgan has projected that home prices will continue to climb by around 3% in 2025, with lending rates expected to remain largely unchanged. This suggests that housing affordability will not significantly improve shortly, especially for those just starting.

For many Americans, the dream of homeownership hasn't disappeared, but the path to achieving it is increasingly steep. With early financial planning and disciplined saving, however, homeownership remains possible. The message is clear: the earlier individuals begin preparing, the better their chances of owning a home in today's market.