2026 EDITION

Moving to Utah County

An honest guide to relocating, from someone who actually lives and sells here.

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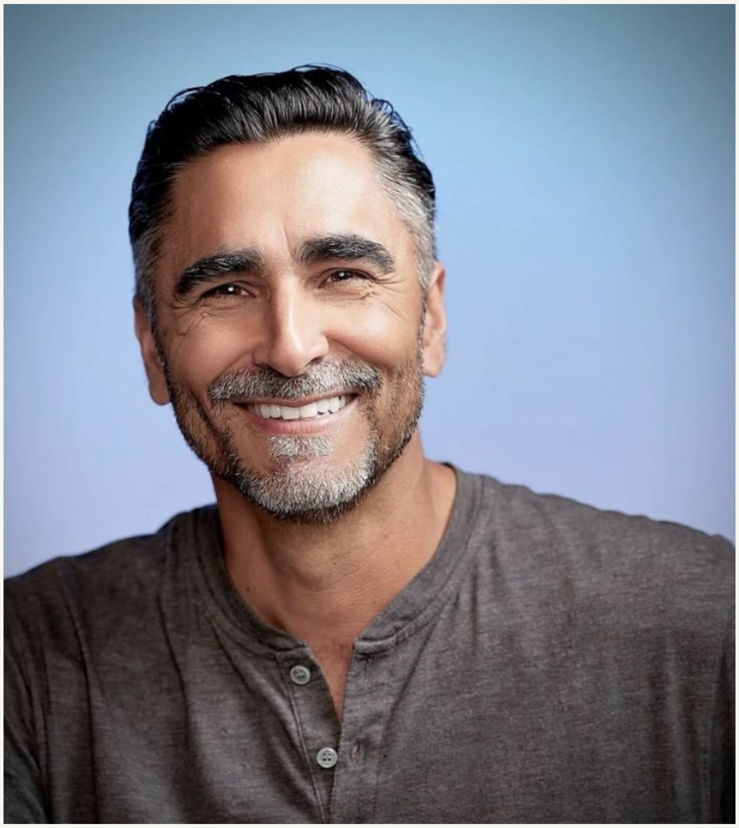
WHY THIS GUIDE

Why I made this guide

Most “moving to Utah” advice online is made by people who have never set foot here. I'm the opposite. I live in Utah County, I sell homes here every week, and as a certified appraiser I know exactly how these homes get priced.

So this isn't a sales pitch. It's the same honest rundown I'd give a friend who called and said, “We're thinking about moving out there. Where do we start?” By the end, you'll understand what it really costs, where you might want to live, what the market looks like right now, and how to buy with confidence even from out of state.



Andrew Diaz, licensed Realtor and certified appraiser, Utah County.

Let's get into it.

A neighborhood in Utah County, under the Wasatch

WHY HERE

Why people are moving here

Utah County sits at the south end of the Wasatch Front, anchored by Provo and Orem and stretching out to fast-growing communities like Lehi, Saratoga Springs, and Eagle Mountain. People move here for a pretty consistent set of reasons:

The tech economy.

The “Silicon Slopes” corridor runs along I-15 from Lehi toward Draper: Adobe, Qualtrics, and regional offices for Microsoft and Google. One of the strongest tech job markets outside the coasts. (Honest 2026 note: hiring has cooled from its peak, so plan for the fact that the jobs are concentrated in this one corridor.)

The money math.

Lower home prices plus Utah's flat 4.45% state income tax (versus California's higher, climbing brackets) can mean meaningfully more take-home pay. Always run your own numbers with a CPA, but the gap is real.

The lifestyle.

Mountains on your doorstep, four real seasons, world-class skiing and mountain biking, and a family-oriented culture.

Room to grow.

Compared to the pricier markets nearer Salt Lake City, Utah County offers more new construction and more negotiating room.

WHAT IT COSTS

What it actually costs

Utah County is more affordable than Salt Lake County, but it's not cheap, and it varies a lot by community. A rough 2026 snapshot (confirm current numbers with me before you decide, since these move):

A home in Utah County.

COMMUNITY	VIBE	TYPICAL PRICE (2026)
Provo / Orem	Established, near BYU & employers	$500K–$570K
Spanish Fork	Attainable family town, south county	Newer townhomes low $400s; SFR median ~$535K
Saratoga Springs	Lakefront family suburb	$500K–$680K
Eagle Mountain	Value & space, longer commute	Most affordable newer construction; median ~$525K
Lehi	Tech-hub, high demand	$600K–$720K
Highland / Alpine	Premium, big lots, mountains	~$860K–$890K+

Utah statewide median sale price is about $531K (mid-2026); Utah County runs a bit higher, around $548K across all home types and about $605K for single-family.

Beyond the mortgage, budget for what newcomers don't expect: rising home insurance, HOA fees in master-planned communities, and the cost of a longer commute if you buy further out.

> A useful rule of thumb: plan to stay about five years for a purchase to make solid financial sense.

A lot in Utah County

WHERE TO LIVE

How to choose your community

There's no single “best” place. It depends on what you're optimizing for. Here's the quick framework I use, then a straight-talk profile of each community.

Short commute to the tech corridor	**Lehi, Saratoga Springs**
Value and space	**Eagle Mountain** (biggest lot for your dollar)
Established and central	**Provo, Orem**
Premium, space, tight-knit	**Highland, Alpine**
Attainable first home with real square footage	**Spanish Fork**

TWO HONEST NOTES

The outer communities are among the fastest-growing in the country. Great new amenities keep arriving, but growth occasionally outpaces roads, retail, and schools, so ask about the infrastructure timeline for any specific neighborhood. And school quality varies by boundary, not by city, worth digging in street by street. On culture: there are welcoming communities here for every background; fit is more a neighborhood thing than a county thing.

Lehi

Silicon Slopes, young-professional pace

BEST FOR Tech workers and young professionals who want a brand-new home close to their commute, not a quiet cul-de-sac.

I toured the River Point community up in the northwest quadrant of Lehi, and here's the honest read: this is where Silicon Slopes lives. Adobe, Qualtrics, and the big regional tech offices are right there off I-15, and the new construction is built for the people who work at them. The Payton model, a 3-bed/2.5-bath, runs between $600K and $700K, with Mount Timpanogos out the primary bedroom window. The townhomes were a real mix: first-time buyers using the Utah grant, folks downsizing, parents of kids going to school up there, and they sold out three months before I got there.

But I'll tell you what it actually feels like. Right now there are more construction crews floating around than people actually living there, and the ones who do live there are gone before sunup and back after sundown. This isn't a bedroom community. It's a young-professional community. Nightlife is a walk to Costco or the bowling alley, and the restaurants lean more grab-your-plate-and-go than sit-down. One upside: the point gets windy, which clears out the winter inversion better than the valley floor.

> **THE HONEST TRADEOFF**
>
> The new-construction pricing sits above what's competing nearby. Slide north toward Harvest Hills in Saratoga Springs and you're looking at nearly a 10% difference for a similar commute.

If you're a young family in this price range, do yourself a favor and also walk Cedar Hills, Pleasant Grove, American Fork, and the southwest side of Lehi: less traffic, more amenities, and often more house for the money.

TYPICAL PRICE (2026)

~$600K–$720K (median ~$700K)

Saratoga Springs

Lakefront value beside Lehi

BEST FOR Families chasing the tech corridor who don't want to overpay for Lehi new construction.

When I was walking buyers through new construction on the northwest side of Lehi, the pricing just felt high for what you got. So I pointed them a little closer to Harvest Hills on the north side of Saratoga Springs, or a community just south of there. Here's the thing: they're so adjacent that your commute to the tech jobs comes out about the same, but you're looking at almost a 10% price difference on the new build. That's real money for essentially the same drive.

Saratoga Springs is the lakefront family suburb out here: master-planned neighborhoods stretched along Utah Lake, on the fast-growing western side of the Alpine School District. It has that fresh, everything-is-new feel, and it's full of young families for exactly that reason. If you want newer square footage near the jobs without Lehi's premium, this is where I send people.

> **THE HONEST TRADEOFF**
>
> It's growing fast, so the newer pockets are still catching up (roads, retail, and schools haven't fully arrived in some areas), and you're a touch further from the job centers than Lehi proper. Go in knowing you're a little early to the party.

> “Almost a 10% price difference, and you're around the same commute time. They're pretty adjacent to each other.”

TYPICAL PRICE (2026)

Single-family ~$500K–$680K (median ~$645K); townhomes and condos run lower

A home with room around it, Utah County

Eagle Mountain

Space and value, longer drive

BEST FOR Growing families who'll trade a longer commute for a bigger lot and the most accessible newer-construction pricing in the corridor.

Eagle Mountain is the value-and-space play out here, plain and simple. You get newer construction on bigger lots at the most affordable pricing in the corridor, and for a lot of families that longer-drive-for-more-space trade is well worth it. It's one of the fastest-growing communities in the whole country, it's in the Alpine School District, and there are brand-new schools going in to keep up. If what you want is that parks-and-rec, room-to-breathe family feel rather than a condo two minutes from the office, this is the direction you look.

Now the part I'd tell a friend over dinner: growth out here occasionally outpaces the roads, the retail, and the schools. That's not a knock. It's just what happens when a place fills in this fast. The neighborhood you're touring might be five minutes from a new grocery store and school, or those things might still be a couple years out. So before you fall in love with a specific street, ask about the infrastructure timeline for that exact neighborhood, not Eagle Mountain in general.

THE HONEST TRADEOFF

You're buying more house and more yard by spending time on the road. This is the longest commute to the Silicon Slopes job centers. Make sure your daily drive is one you can actually live with.

> **“For the right family, the extra fifteen or twenty minutes in the car buys you a yard your kids can actually use, and that math works out just fine.”**

TYPICAL PRICE (2026)

The most affordable newer construction in the corridor; single-family median ~$525K

Provo / Orem

Central, established, college-town core

BEST FOR Buyers who want to be in the middle of everything without paying a new-build premium.

Provo and Orem are the established heart of Utah County. This is the mature, built-out core, anchored by BYU and Utah Valley University, close to the big employers, the hospitals, the shopping, and right on the I-15 spine. You're not out in brand-new master-planned sprawl here; you're in real neighborhoods that have been around a while, with the trees to prove it. If being central matters more to you than having the newest finishes, this is where I'd point you.

It's generally the more attainable end of the county, which is a big deal in a market where the western suburbs keep climbing. You trade some of that for older housing stock and a busier, denser feel: more traffic, more rentals and students the closer you get to campus. That's the deal you're making: you're buying location and value instead of paying up for new construction further out.

> **THE HONEST TRADEOFF**
> Older homes mean more to keep an eye on, and the college-town energy near campus isn't for everyone, but you're central and established, and your dollar goes further here than almost anywhere else in the valley.

“This is where I send people who want to be central and established, not pay a premium for a brand-new build 20 minutes further out.”

TYPICAL PRICE (2026)

Roughly $500K–$570K (Provo ~$514K, Orem ~$568K), the more affordable side of Utah County


Hillside homes in Utah County

Highland / Alpine

Big lots, mountains, tight-knit

BEST FOR Move-up buyers and families who want space, quiet, and a real neighborhood.

I live in Alpine, so this one's personal. Highland, Alpine, and Cedar Hills are gorgeous. You're minutes from the trails, with big wide-open spaces and the mountains right on top of you. The community feel out here is the part I love most. Your neighbors actually know you. They wave at you in the morning. I take out my neighbor's garbage if she forgets, and she calls to make sure my garage door is closed if it gets late. Everyone keeps an eye on each other.

If you golf, this is your spot. I've got five golf courses within a 15-minute drive, from Alpine Country Club to Cedar Hills, Fox Hollow, and Thanksgiving Point. As an appraiser, I'll also tell you the best new builds here run Q2 quality at roughly $450 to $600 a square foot; anything well-built closer to $400 feels over and above. A community like Twin Bridges in northwest Highland has been very consistent for 15 years running.

THE HONEST TRADEOFF

Large lots rule up here, big homes on third- to half-acre lots, which is beautiful but doesn't lend itself to downsizing, and prices are high (Highland’s median runs around $860K, Alpine higher). You're tucked into the mountains, too, so it's 15 minutes just to get out of town before you reach a hospital or rec center.

> **“It's nestled in these beautiful mountains, but that also means you'll drive 15 minutes just to get out of town, then another 15 or 20 to wherever you're going.”**

TYPICAL PRICE (2026)

Premium market, ~$860K–$890K+; new downsizer townhomes starting near $900K. Nearby Cedar Hills / Pleasant Grove is more attainable. You can still find homes under $500K.

A single-family home in Utah County

Spanish Fork

More house than you'd guess

BEST FOR First-time buyers who want real square footage without leaving south Utah County.

I'll be honest: I did not think you could get this much house in Spanish Fork for the money. I walked up to a townhome that was over 2,000 square feet with a finished basement, three to four bedrooms, and my first thought was just “way more house than I expected.” Inside there's a gas range, soft-closing drawers, a big spacious master with a large walk-in closet, and a two-car garage. As an appraiser I can see exactly where the builder trimmed to hold the price down (some of the tile is faux, the flooring is vinyl instead of something pricier), but none of that hurts you day to day. It keeps the sale price low, and first-time buyers walk away happy.

Spanish Fork itself is a genuinely attainable, family-friendly town on the south end of the county. It doesn't try to be flashy. It's the kind of place where a young family can actually plant roots and grow into their home instead of stretching just to get in the door.

> **THE HONEST TRADEOFF**
>
> The backyards on these newer townhomes are small. If I had a dog, I wouldn't want that to be all the space he had. But it's still enough to get patio furniture out, put a barbecue in the corner, and do a fair amount with a little creativity.

> **“I did not think you could get this much house in Spanish Fork for this cost.”**

TYPICAL PRICE (2026)

Newer townhomes in the low $400s. The units next door originally sold around $425K. Single-family homes citywide run higher, median ~$535K.

THE 2026 MARKET

What the market looks like now

Inside a Utah County home.

This is where a lot of relocating buyers are working off outdated instincts. Pay attention here, because it works in your favor. The frenzy of a few years ago has cooled. Utah County has been sitting around five months of housing supply, which is more balanced than it's been in years. It still leans slightly toward sellers, but you have far more breathing room than in 2021.

You usually don't have to waive inspections anymore.

The desperate bidding-war behavior of 2021 is largely gone. Protect yourself: use your inspection.

You can negotiate.

Homes sit longer than they did in 2021, roughly 45 to 60 days, and about a quarter of listings take a price cut before they sell, so there's real room to negotiate, especially on a home that's been sitting. Well-priced homes still tend to sell close to list. Buyers regularly get concessions: closing-cost credits, repairs, seller-paid rate buydowns.

Rates are the main variable.

They've been in the high-6% range in 2026, right around 6.8%. Nobody times rates reliably, so buy on a payment you're comfortable with today, and refinance later if rates fall.

Don't wait for a crash.

Economists broadly don't see big price drops coming, and Utah's housing shortage plus population growth keep the outlook steady. Waiting usually just means paying rent instead of building equity.

MONEY ON THE TABLE

Programs & incentives most buyers miss

A living room in a Utah County home.

This section can save you real money, and most buyers don't know these exist. Verify current terms with me and your lender (these change), but as of 2026:

Builder incentives.

Nearly every major builder has been offering incentives that often run well into five figures to move inventory, most often rate buydowns, closing-cost credits, or upgrades. Quick-move-in (“inventory”) homes carry the heaviest incentives.

A note on buydowns.

Builders love to advertise a “2-1 buydown,” which lowers your rate for the first two years only. A permanent buydown that lowers your rate for the full loan is usually more valuable if it's offered. It protects you regardless of where rates go.

Down-payment assistance.

Utah’s state program offers $20,000 for first-time buyers on new construction priced under $450,000, structured as a deferred loan rather than a grant. Utah County offers up to $40,000 as a 0% deferred second mortgage, up to half of it forgivable, for buyers at or under 80% of area median income, though it excludes Highland, Fairfield, and Woodland Hills. Utah Housing adds up to 6% of the loan amount on its own first mortgage. These can stack, so first-time buyers sometimes combine assistance with builder credits and get in with very little out of pocket.

TAKEAWAY

Never buy a new-construction home in Utah County without asking what the builder is offering and whether you qualify for assistance. Leaving that money on the table is one of the most common mistakes I see.

FROM OUT OF STATE

Buying from out of state, and the honest tradeoffs

Buying remote, done right

Get pre-approved early.
Know your budget and get a lender letter first. Relocating for a job? Confirm remote-work policy and any pay adjustment before you commit.

Do one focused visit.
A couple of days seeing the shortlist in person, at different times of day. Commute, noise, and feel don't come through in photos.

Lean on live video walkthroughs.
I do them in real time for out-of-state buyers, so you're not relying on a listing agent's highlight reel.

Mind the two-market timing.
Selling there while buying here takes coordination. I'll walk you through the options for your equity and timeline.

Keep your contingencies.
Being remote is a reason to be more careful, not to skip inspections.

The honest tradeoffs

Know these going in, not dealbreakers

Growth and traffic.
I-15 and the tech corridor get busy; buying further out for value means a longer commute.

Winter air quality.
Mountains can trap pollutants during winter “inversions,” especially in the valleys; it varies by location.

Water and long-term planning.
Utah is a dry state; water is a genuine long-term topic. Part of being an informed buyer.

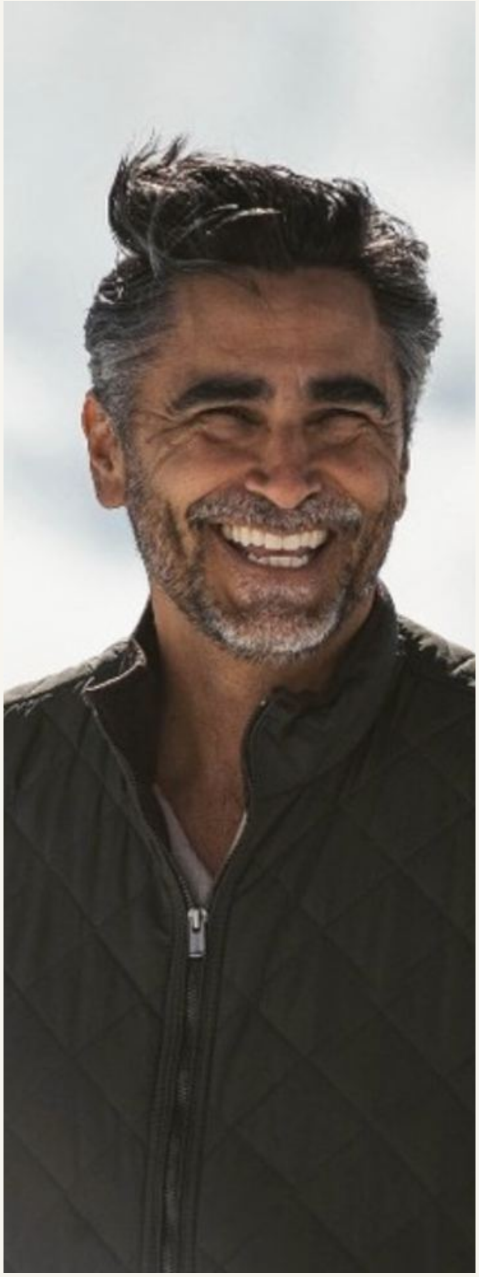
Culture fit.
A strong, family-oriented local culture. Many love it; some take time to find their footing. There are welcoming communities for every background.

YOUR CHECKLIST

Your relocation checklist

1. Get clear on your priorities: commute, budget, space, schools, lifestyle. Rank them.
2. Talk to a lender and get pre-approved so you know your real budget.
3. Confirm your work situation: job offer, remote policy, any relocation package.
4. Narrow to a few communities that fit your priorities (I can help fast-track this).
5. Visit if you can, or set up live virtual tours if you can't.
6. Ask about builder incentives and assistance programs on anything you're considering.
7. Make a protected offer: negotiate concessions, keep your inspection.
8. Plan the timing of selling where you are and buying here.

Inside a Utah County home.



LET'S TALK

Let's talk

If you're even thinking about a move to Utah County, I'm happy to be a resource, no pressure, no obligation. I can give you a straight read on your situation: what your budget gets you, which communities fit, and what the smart next step is.

Reply to the email this guide came in, or reach me directly.

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I know this area, I know these numbers, and I'll give you the honest version every time.

> “I asked Andrew to assist us as we considered relocating. We were grateful for his help and his extensive knowledge of the market.”
>
> VERIFIED 5★ ZILLOW REVIEW, RELOCATION CLIENT