Claude Loan

2026 STATE GUIDE

Conventional Loans in South Carolina: The Numbers

Conforming limit, down payment and monthly cost on the state median at 3%, 5%, 10% and 20% down, the month PMI ends, and the South Carolina rules that touch the loan.

A conventional loan in South Carolina follows Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's national rules; the state supplies the prices, the taxes and the closing customs. This guide works the numbers on the state median and lists the South Carolina rules that touch the loan.

South Carolina at a glance

Conforming limit (2026, one unit)	$832,750 baseline — higher in any FHFA high-cost county
Median home price (approx.)	$300,000
Property tax (effective)	about 0.53% — roughly $1,590 a year on the median
Closing practice	Attorney closing state
Transfer / recording taxes	South Carolina's deed recording fee is $1.85 per $500 (0.37%), paid by the seller; there is no mortgage tax.

Conforming or jumbo?

A one-unit loan above $832,750 is jumbo in South Carolina in 2026. With 20% down you can buy up to about $1,040,938 and stay conforming; with 5% down, up to about $876,579. On the $300,000 median, a 20% down loan of $240,000 is inside the limit. Check your county on FHFA's lookup (fhfa.gov); two- to four-unit homes have higher limits.

What it costs on the South Carolina median

Illustrative 6.5% 30-year fixed rate, principal and interest; mortgage insurance at typical market rates by down payment (credit score moves it); property tax at the state's approximate 0.53% effective rate. Add homeowners insurance and any HOA. Not an offer.

Down payment	Cash down	Loan	P&I	PMI (est.)	Tax	Monthly total
3%	$9,000	$291,000	$1,839	$218	$133	**$2,190**
5%	$15,000	$285,000	$1,801	$178	$133	**$2,112**
10%	$30,000	$270,000	$1,707	$113	$133	**$1,953**
20%	$60,000	$240,000	$1,517	—	$133	**$1,650**

When PMI ends

Under the federal Homeowners Protection Act you may request cancellation at 80% of the original value; the servicer must cancel at 78% and, if you are current, at the loan's midpoint. On scheduled payments alone at 6.5%:

Down payment	Monthly PMI (est.)	80% reached (request)	78% reached (automatic)	PMI paid by then (est.)
3%	$218	about 11 years and 1 months	about 12 years	$28,994
5%	$178	about 10 years and 4 months	about 11 years and 3 months	$22,072
10%	$113	about 7 years and 11 months	about 9 years and 1 months	$10,735

Shorten the clock. Extra principal payments, or a cancellation request based on a new appraisal after enough seasoning (Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac typically allow 75% LTV after two years or 80% after five on current value), end PMI sooner than the schedule.

Closing in South Carolina

South Carolina is a strict attorney-closing state: since State v. Buyers Service Co. in 1987, the Supreme Court has held that title examination, preparing the deed and mortgage, recording and disbursing the loan proceeds are the practice of law, and later decisions (Doe v. McMaster, Matrix Financial v. Frazer) confirmed that a lender who closes without attorney supervision risks losing its lien priority. Funding is wet, with the attorney disbursing at the table. Buyers choose their own closing attorney, and state law requires the lender to tell them so in writing.

No mortgage tax or intangible tax is levied on the note in South Carolina; recording a mortgage with the county Register of Deeds costs a flat filing fee. The state deed recording fee of $1.85 for every $500 of value (Code § 12-24-10, combining a state and a county share) is a transfer tax on the deed that the seller pays and is unrelated to the loan amount. South Carolina closings are conducted by attorneys; buyer costs — attorney, title, lender fees and prepaids — typically total 2% to 3% of the price.

South Carolina rules that touch a conventional loan

Prepayment. South Carolina's Consumer Protection Code restricts prepayment penalties on smaller residential first mortgages and the High-Cost and Consumer Home Loans Act bars them on high-cost home loans, while larger conventional loans may carry a penalty only within the federal qualified-mortgage limits. Because the dollar thresholds in Code Title 37 have been amended over the years, treat any penalty clause as something to confirm with the Department of Consumer Affairs before signing.

Spouses and title. South Carolina is an equitable-distribution state, not a community property state, so a house bought during the marriage belongs to whoever holds title until a divorce court divides marital property. Because the state has no statutory dower or spousal homestead joinder, a non-borrowing spouse generally does not need to sign the mortgage, although lenders often ask anyway when title is held jointly. A spouse's separate debts stay out of the borrower's qualifying ratios.

Homestead. The South Carolina homestead exemption in Code § 15-41-30 protects equity in a residence up to an amount that is indexed to inflation and currently sits in the range of roughly sixty to seventy thousand dollars per owner, doubled when spouses own the home together; verify the current year's figure with the state. It does not defeat a mortgage, tax liens or liens for improvements. For property taxes, an owner-occupied legal residence is assessed at a 4 percent ratio rather than 6 percent, is exempt from school operating millage under Act 388 of 2006, and reassessment increases are capped at 15 percent over five years; homeowners 65 or older or disabled also receive the $50,000 Homestead Exemption on the home's value.

Your South Carolina checklist

- [ ] Pull a tri-merge credit report; conventional pricing steps at 680, 700, 720, 740 and 760 — know your middle score before you shop.
- [ ] Decide the down payment with the table above: the monthly total, not the cash down, is what the lender qualifies you on.
- [ ] Confirm the conforming limit for your county on FHFA's site; structure the loan to stay under it if you can.
- [ ] Get three Loan Estimates on the same day at the same rate and zero points; compare Section A fees line by line.
- [ ] Ask whether the automated underwriting returned an appraisal waiver — it saves money and time.
- [ ] Calendar the month your balance reaches 80% of the purchase price and send the PMI cancellation request in writing.
- [ ] Read the South Carolina closing customs above and budget the recording and transfer taxes.
- [ ] After closing, file the homestead exemption with your county if the state has one.

The method, in five steps

1. Find your county's conforming loan limit on FHFA's site; above it, you are shopping jumbo rules.
2. Know your middle credit score from a tri-merge pull — pricing steps at 680, 700, 720, 740 and 760.
3. Compute your back-end DTI with the full housing payment (taxes, insurance, PMI, HOA), not just principal and interest.
4. Compare three Loan Estimates at the same rate and zero points; compare Section A fees line by line.
5. If you put less than 20% down, calendar the month your balance reaches 80% of the original value — that is when you can request PMI cancellation.

Keep reading on Claude Loan

- Conventional loan requirements: credit, down payment, DTI, reserves, property — https://claude-loan.com/guides/conventional-loan-requirements/
- Conventional vs FHA vs VA vs USDA: the four loan types compared — https://claude-loan.com/guides/conventional-vs-fha-vs-va-vs-usda/

- Conforming loan limits: how the FHFA number works and what happens above it — https://claude-loan.com/guides/conforming-loan-limits/
- 30-year vs 15-year mortgage: the real trade-off, with the numbers — https://claude-loan.com/guides/30-year-vs-15-year-mortgage/
- ARM vs fixed-rate mortgage: when an adjustable rate makes sense — https://claude-loan.com/guides/arm-vs-fixed-rate/
- Jumbo loans: requirements, rates and how they differ from conforming — https://claude-loan.com/guides/jumbo-loans/

Sources

- Fannie Mae — Selling Guide — https://selling-guide.fanniemae.com/
- Freddie Mac — Seller/Servicer Guide — https://guide.freddiemac.com/
- FHFA — Conforming loan limits — https://www.fhfa.gov/data/conforming-loan-limit-cll-values