

Guide to Buying a Used Car

If you are in the market for a used car, use this guide to set yourself up for success!



- Decide how much you can spend, including taxes, insurance, registration, and future repairs.
- Learn about the vehicle registration process in Oklahoma by going to [Service Oklahoma's Ready, Set, Tag webpage](https://oklahoma.gov/service/popular-services/readyssettag.html) (https://oklahoma.gov/service/popular-services/readyssettag.html).
- Estimate the tax on your vehicle on the [OK Cars website](https://okcars.service.ok.gov/) (https://okcars.service.ok.gov/).
- Estimate your vehicle's yearly tag cost by visiting [Service Oklahoma's Fees and Exemptions webpage](https://oklahoma.gov/service/all-services/auto-vehicle/fees.html) (https://oklahoma.gov/service/all-services/auto-vehicle/fees.html).
- Pre-qualify for a loan by applying on the [Oklahoma ABLE Tech Financial Loan Program webpage](https://www.okabletech.org/core-programs/financial-program/) (https://www.okabletech.org/core-programs/financial-program/).

Step 1 - Set Up a Budget

When deciding how much to spend on a new vehicle, you should consider how much you can afford. A good guideline to follow is to budget 10 to 15% of your monthly income. A car should not cost more than 20% of your monthly income.

Monthly Income Breakdown

Melissa's monthly income is \$4,000 times 15% equals \$600. The vehicle cost her \$17,000 and was financed at an 8% interest rate for 60 months. One way to look at her budget is to subtract car expenses from her monthly car budget. Melissa could create a budget similar to the one below:

Car Related Expenses	Expenses Cost
Monthly Car Budget	\$600
Subtract Car Insurance	\$120
Subtract Gas	\$100
Subtract Maintenance	\$25
Total Affordable Car Payment	\$355

With Melissa's \$17,000 vehicle purchase financed at 8% for 60 months, she would pay \$345 per month.

You can budget for your monthly car payment using the table below.

Your monthly income is \$_____ times 0.15 equals \$_____.

Car Related Expenses	Cost
Monthly Car Budget	\$600
Subtract Car Insurance	\$120
Subtract Gas	\$100
Subtract Maintenance	\$25
Total Affordable Car Payment	\$355

Step 2 – Define Your Needs

Ask yourself:

- How many passengers do I need to carry?
- What kind of driving do I do (city, highway, off-road)?
- Do I need all-wheel drive or good fuel economy?
- Do I prefer a sedan, SUV, truck, etc.?
- Does the modification fit my needs?

Step 3 – Start Your Search

Where to look:

- Online Listings – Autotrader, CarGurus, Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace, Edmunds, [Cars.com](https://www.cars.com/), and private sellers. Online listings can be cheaper but offer no warranties or guarantees.
- Dealerships – Certified Pre-Owned (CPO) options often come with warranties. Oklahoma ABLE Tech and the Oklahoma Assistive Technology Foundation (OkAT) make no recommendations on mobility van dealerships in Oklahoma. Dealerships that offer used mobility vehicles include:
 - Liberty Truck
 - Mobility Works
 - Newby Vance
 - United Access

Step 4 – Check the Vehicle History Guide

Use the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) to check:

- Accident history
- Title status (clean, salvage, rebuilt)
- Number of Owners
- Service Records

Popular websites that detail a vehicle's history include [Carfax](https://www.carfax.com/) (https://www.carfax.com/) and [AutoCheck](https://www.autocheck.com/vehiclehistory/) (https://www.autocheck.com/vehiclehistory/).

Step 5 – Inspect the Car

When inspecting the car, check for these characteristics:

- Complete a visual inspection - tires, lights, windows, and check under the car for leaks and rust.
- Test everything - windows, AC, heat, lights, wipers, etc.
- Take a test drive - listen for odd noises.
- Test brakes, acceleration, and alignment.
- Drive on different road types, if possible.
- Check the battery.
- Look for uneven wear & tread left on tires.

Step 6 – Get a Mechanic Inspection

Pay for a pre-purchase inspection (PPI) by a trusted mechanic, which can save you from costly surprises. OkAT requires a PPI for your loan if you are purchasing a vehicle from a private seller.

Step 7 – Complete the Paperwork

Use [Service Oklahoma's Ready Set Tag website](https://oklahoma.gov/service/popular-services/readyssettag.html) (https://oklahoma.gov/service/popular-services/readyssettag.html) to learn about this process in Oklahoma. There are a few differences in the process depending on whether you buy from a dealer or a private seller.

- **When working with a dealer**, they usually handle title transfer, registration, and temporary tags.
- **From a private seller**, you will have to get the following documentation:
 - Get a signed title.
 - Complete a bill of sale.
 - Check local DMV rules for title transfer and registration.
 - Ensure there are **no liens** on the title.

Step 8 – Finalize Payment

For private sales, use a cashier's check or meet at a bank for safety. Once the purchase has occurred, get a receipt and copies of all documents.

Step 9 – Get Insurance and Register the Car

You should insure your new car before driving it. As the buyer, you should register the vehicle under your name at a Service Oklahoma location (tag agency) within the legal time window. See [Service Oklahoma's website](https://oklahoma.gov/service/popular-services/readyssettag.html#step-3) (https://oklahoma.gov/service/popular-services/readyssettag.html#step-3) for more information