



SONDER
NORTHWEST

BUYER GUIDE

We'll Help You **Buy Your Dream Home**



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THANK YOU!



Thank you for your interest in working with us to buy your home. We appreciate that this is an important wealth building step for your future – and that everyone has a different level of knowledge when it comes to the home buying process and **we will meet you where you are at**. When you work with us you will find yourself surrounded by a team intent on being your guide through your entire real estate purchase and for the years to follow.

We've created this guide for your reference during our journey. The information included is based on years of representing home buyers and is intended to answer initial questions you may have about working together and the home buying process. We hope you will find it of value. With that said, please feel free to ask questions at any time if you feel you are missing an important piece of information. There is no question too small – our intention is to make sure you **feel comfortable and confident** every step of the way.

We are committed to education and advocacy. We empower our clients to make informed decisions about what is right for them. We give our clients the opportunity to learn about all the options available to them so that they can “choose their own adventure” based on the pathway that best meets their needs. We never want you to feel pressured or to not understand a step in a process. Spending extra time, allows us to have smoother closings, happier clients, and creates a win-win for all.

It's our goal to take such exceptional care of you that you will choose to work with us again for your future real estate needs. **There is no higher honor than repeat business and referrals from our clients**. You will find us to be honest, hardworking, extremely skilled, and enthusiastic about helping you achieve your real estate goals. Communication is incredibly important to our team and we tend to be very proactive.

Your needs drive how and when we start your search. From this day forward, everything we do will be motivated by your goals. And that includes timing – we are working on your timeline; if you are ready to begin your search, we will get started ASAP; and if you are in the initial discovery stages, we are here to support you through that as well.

We are fortunate to have an **excellent reputation** with other agents, lenders, and title/escrow individuals in our market which gives our clients an advantage when working with us.

When you choose to work with us, you're partnering with experienced agents who have the backing of the world's largest real estate company, consisting of 180,000+ associates around the globe.



MISSION / VISION / VALUES

We exist to **help people find a place to call home** and all that entails. We're in business to create a more equitable world and empower others to join us to do the same.

COMMUNITY IMPACT: 5-YEAR REPORT

165

Children's home
libraries built through
Children's Book Bank



2,188

Meals served at
Blanchet House



4,171

Books donated to
SMART Reading /
Children's Book Bank



25,940

Diapers donated to
PDX Diaper Bank



\$106,000

Money donated to
local non-profits



35

Kids that received weekend
and summer meals for the year
through **Portland Backpack**



20

Homes refitted with
safety bars by **ReFIT**



1,000 / 250

Jackets and shoes donated
to **Blanchet House**



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



We have a number of community partners who are meeting a need in our community. We support these organizations financially and through in-kind donations throughout the year. When you work with us we will be making a **donation on your behalf** upon closing.



ReFIT is single minded in its mission. ReFIT is built to refit homes, making them safer for physically and financially challenged homeowners regardless of age, gender, race, or reason for disability.

A DONATION IN YOUR NAME WILL REFIT A HOME WITH SAFETY BARS.

The **Children's Book Bank** fills homes and lives with engaging, culturally diverse books because all children deserve to have books of their own. The mission of The Children's Book Bank is to advance child literacy, encourage family bonding, and ignite curiosity through the power of books.



A DONATION IN YOUR NAME WILL PROVIDE 5 CHILDREN AGED 0-5-YEARS-OLD WITH A BUNDLE OF 14 CHILDREN'S BOOKS.



The mission of **Blanchet House** is to offer food, shelter and aid to all those in need of a safe place to be nourished and restored. And to assist the transformation of each life they touch with compassion and dignity.

A DONATION IN YOUR NAME WILL PROVIDE 86 NUTRITIOUS MEALS TO OUR UNHOUSED NEIGHBORS OR 5 NIGHTS IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING.

No family should have to choose between purchasing food or diapers for their children. The mission of **PDX Diaper Bank** is to provide no cost diapering supplies to low income and houseless families through community agency partnerships.

A DONATION IN YOUR NAME WILL PROVIDE 3 MONTHS WORTH OF DIAPERS FOR ONE CHILD.



MEET THE TEAM



Megan Jumago-Simpson

TEAM LEADER / OWNER / PRINCIPAL BROKER

An (almost) Portland native, I love all things that the great Northwest represents and believe that if someone is looking for changes in their community they need to be willing to put in the work. A second generation Realtor, I grew up exploring Portland and I love getting to show off our city.

I specialize in residential real estate throughout the Greater Portland Metro Area and Southwest Washington and am fortunate to work with many repeat clients and referrals as well as many folks moving to the area.

When I'm not working I love to head to the coast or Bend for the weekend, explore the city through our amazing restaurants, hang out with my daughter Maisy, and explore the world.

I am involved with and volunteer my time in many local non- profits and professional real estate organizations. I have taken leadership roles in those organizations to ensure that I have a full understanding of how the market is changing and its impact upon our community.

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MEET THE TEAM

Kelly Sandstrom

PARTNER AGENT

A native Oregonian by marriage. I moved to Portland in 1988 and met my husband a couple of years later. We ran away to Asolo, Italy to be married. We now have three adult children and a crew of four darling granddaughters. And as anyone who knows me can tell you – I am obsessed with our cat Roma. You would be too, she is adorable!

I love taking advantage of all that Portland has to offer, the foodie scene, theater, fashion, art, music, hiking, yoga (the harder the better!), easy access to both the beach and the mountains.

My biggest passion, however, is making a difference in the lives of others. I have volunteered for years with the ReFit, and have done work to benefit the YWCA, CASA, Habitat for Humanity, Blanchet House, Outside In, and The Humane Society to name a few.

So you can imagine the joy I feel to be a realtor. This career allows me to use my exceptional skills as a negotiator, compassionate ear, and stubborn advocate. Real estate is such a personal process. And it always happens in the context of some other life event; perhaps a new job, a marriage, a downsize.

I am passionate about being an exceptional resource and a trusted advocate for our clients. I am certified with the At Home with Diversity Realtors program because I believe all people should be treated with respect and compassionate advocacy.



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MEET THE TEAM



Emily Pfenning

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

I've spent nearly a decade working in real estate, and I truly enjoy helping people from all walks of life. My favorite part of the job is turning what can be a stressful experience into something special and enjoyable.

I've lived in Oregon for nearly 22 years and serve on our office's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, along with several other groups. Outside of work, I enjoy reading, teaching English through EngIN, leading book groups and workshops on social issues, volunteering in local mutual aid efforts, and spending time with my pets and partner.

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Anna Sweitzer

SHOWING SPECIALIST

I'm an adventure-seeker who's spent my life traveling and discovering new places. Now, I'm bringing that same energy to a career in real estate, ready to thrive in a fast-paced, self-driven industry. Originally from Chicago, I've found my home in Oregon, embracing the beauty and opportunities of the PNW. I'm passionate about connecting with people and creating meaningful experiences.



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Anne-Marie Nash

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Born in Portland, I've crafted a career focused on creating impactful designs and marketing solutions across many industries. Known for my collaborative and approachable style, I excel at building strong connections, which is so important in real estate. Outside of work, I enjoy trips to the Oregon Coast with my husband of 30+ years and our three daughters, and volunteering time with ReFIT and Breastfriends of Oregon. I'm also a proud member of our trivia team, The Nashinators.

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TESTIMONIALS


"Relocating from California to Portland, Oregon, was a big move, and we couldn't have done it without Megan Jumago-Simpson. From start to finish, she was incredibly professional, responsive, and knowledgeable about the Portland market. She provided excellent references for companies to work with such as roofers, crawl space contractors, and even a groomer! This made the process very easy and gave us great confidence. Working with Megan was an enjoyable experience due to her upbeat personality and friendly demeanor. We are thrilled with our new home and couldn't be happier with the outstanding service she provided. I highly recommend Megan to anyone looking to buy or sell a home!"

WENDY &
STEPHEN

"Megan's guidance as a first time home buyer made our experience seamless. Megan informed us at each stage of the process, giving us an opportunity to learn and to better understand what to expect next. She was always available to answer questions and made recommendations during the process that will pay dividends for years to come. We would recommend Megan to anyone considering buying a home based on our experience."

CAITLIN

TESTIMONIALS



"Hands down Megan is the best realtor around. I wouldn't go with anyone else. She made the whole buying process so quick and easy. I won't go to anyone else ever."

ARMAND

"Kelly was a pleasure to work with. Experienced, knowledgeable and eager to assist in any way possible. I'm so glad she was our representative. I felt secure knowing we were in good hands."

LISA



"We have now worked with Kelly as both sellers and buyers, and I would enthusiastically recommend her to anyone in need of a realtor in Portland. As out-of-town buyers, she toured houses and used videos and video calls so that we could see houses without having to drive hours on the weekend. This allowed us to put in an early offer and buy our dream house (for under list, no less). When we sold our house, we received multiple offers considerably above our asking price. She knows the market well and how to create the best strategy to achieve success. She is a top notch communicator and has a reliable network of contractors, inspectors and mortgage brokers who make the whole process seem effortless. On top of all that, working with her is a delight. She is optimistic, enthusiastic and passionate about Portland. I simply cannot recommend her highly enough, she is an exceptional realtor."

COLIN

TEAM WORK



LET'S MAKE THIS A SEAMLESS AND ENJOYABLE JOURNEY TOGETHER!

Our Responsibilities

Research & Find Listings: We'll actively search for properties that fit your needs and send you listings to consider.

Schedule Showings: We'll coordinate with sellers to arrange convenient times for you to view homes.

Market Knowledge: We'll provide you with insights on market trends, neighborhoods, and property values.

Vendor Referrals: If needed, we can recommend inspectors or contractors to help evaluate or improve potential homes.

Manage Offers: When you're ready to make an offer, we'll prepare all necessary documents and present your offer promptly to the seller's agent.

Negotiate on Your Behalf: We'll work to get you the best deal, negotiating terms, price, and any requests following the home inspection.

Track All Deadlines: We'll ensure you stay on schedule with financing, inspections, and closing steps, keeping you informed throughout.

Communicate Regularly: We'll keep you updated every step of the way, answering any questions and addressing concerns.

Guide You Through Closing: From reviewing the final contract to handing you the keys, we'll make sure every detail is covered.

Provide Exceptional Support: We are committed to being a great teammate. Knowing that this can be a stressful process, we will be with you every step of the way.

Your Responsibilities

House Hunting: Your home search is a joint effort and we encourage you to be on the lookout for any properties that are of interest and send them our way.

Stay Engaged & Responsive: Be available for showings, paperwork, and important deadlines. Quick responses keep the process moving.

Maintain Financial Readiness: Avoid major financial changes (like opening new credit lines) that could impact your loan approval.

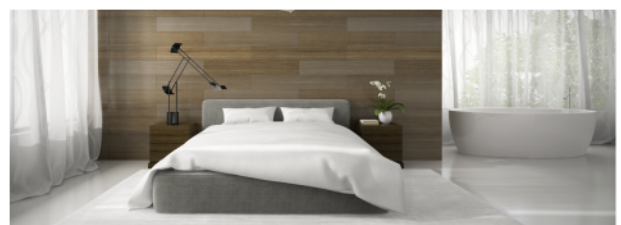
Inspect Properties Carefully: During showings, think about how each home fits your needs and envision living there.

Provide Documentation: When needed, submit loan paperwork and other requested documents promptly.

Follow Viewing Etiquette: Keep personal opinions private during showings, and avoid discussing terms directly with the seller or their agent.

Communicate Clearly: Let me know about any changes in your plans or contact information so we can adjust as needed.

Celebrate & Share: Enjoy the moment when you find the perfect home! Afterward, your feedback and referrals mean the world to us.



THE PROCESS



THE HOME BUYING PROCESS: STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

- 1. Choose a Realtor:** Selecting the right agent is crucial. We'd love to help you achieve your real estate goals.
- 2. Analyze Your Goals:** Together, we'll discuss your priorities to streamline your home search.
- 3. Get Pre-Approved:** Obtain a pre-approval letter to strengthen your offer. We can refer you to trusted lenders if needed. We will want you to be preapproved prior to touring any homes, this is to ensure you have a clear understanding of your budget.
- 4. Research & Select Properties:** As your agents and as a buyer, we will search for homes for you.
- 5. Schedule Viewings:** Some homes can be shown immediately, but others require advance scheduling, especially if occupied.
- 6. Make an Offer:** We'll prepare your offer, which includes the following details:
 - Purchase price
 - Downpayment amount
 - Earnest money amount (typically 1% of purchase price)
 - Loan type
 - Inspections
 - Closing date, if financing, closing typically takes 25 - 35 calendar days
 - A pre-approval letter or proof of funds
- 7. Submit Offer and Await Response:** The seller usually responds within 24-48 hours. Possible outcomes:
 - **Accepted:** We move forward with inspections (whole house, sewer scope, radon, etc.). These are out-of-pocket costs, and I'll advise you on fees.
 - **Rejected:** We return to searching.
 - **Countered:** We negotiate until we reach an agreement or move on.
- 8. Review Seller's Disclosure:** Address any concerns before moving forward.
- 9. Review Inspection Report:** We'll negotiate repairs or price adjustments based on the findings. All repairs must be negotiated and agreed upon within the typical 10 business day inspection period.
- 10. Finalize Loan Details:** Work with your lender to complete the mortgage application. They'll schedule an appraisal, another out-of-pocket expense.
- 11. Review HOA Documents (if applicable):** Address any concerns and release contingencies.
- 12. Examine Title Report:** Ensure there are no title issues and release the contingency.
- 13. Prepare for Closing:** The title company will provide your final closing costs and schedule your signing date. Expect a one- to two-day processing period post-signing.
- 14. Closing and Keys:** Once escrow records your deed, We'll deliver the keys, usually on the closing date specified in the sales agreement.
- 15. Move In: Congratulations on your new home!** It's time to make lasting memories.

THE PROCESS

UP-FRONT COSTS FOR BUYERS:

- 1. Credit report fees**
- 2. Earnest money deposit**
(at least 1% of offer price)
- 3. Inspection fees**
- 4. Appraisal fees**



AFTER FINDING YOUR DREAM HOME: THE LOAN PROCESS

- 1. Submit Earnest Money:** Your earnest money check acts as a deposit toward your down payment.
- 2. Loan Disclosures:** Approve loan disclosures. Once inspections are complete, the lender orders an appraisal.
- 3. Appraisal:** You pay for the appraisal. If the appraiser requires any repairs, they must be completed before closing. A re-inspection fee may apply.
- 4. Secure Home Insurance:** Arrange for homeowners insurance, which will be paid at closing.
- 5. Final Loan Approval:** The lender verifies employment and refreshes your credit report. Loan documents are then sent to escrow.
- 6. Escrow & Signing:** Escrow will arrange a signing appointment and provide the exact amount needed to close, often on short notice. Bring a cashier's check or wire the funds and two forms of ID to the signing.
- 7. Loan Funding & Recording:** Once loan documents are signed and returned to the lender they will send the full loan amount to the title company. Upon receipt the title company will record the sale and transfer of title with the county recorder.
- 8. Receive Your Keys:** Once recorded, the home is yours! Per sales agreement, we'll hand over the keys, and you can celebrate your new home!

THE REAL DEAL



WHAT YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE DURING YOUR HOME BUYING JOURNEY

Be Flexible with Showings: Sellers often need to vacate their homes for each showing. Be prepared for potential schedule changes or delays.

Rely on Us for Communication: If you encounter a seller or their agent during a viewing, refer any questions back to us to protect your interests.

Make Competitive Offers: Your initial offer may need to be strategic, especially in a competitive market. Sometimes it's about finances, but sometimes it's about other terms and conditions. We'll discuss your options based on the unique situation surrounding your desired home.

Discuss Closing Costs: It's not unusual to ask the seller to contribute to closing costs. We'll review the financial impact and negotiate appropriately.

Consider a Home Warranty: You may want to ask for a home warranty to cover potential repairs after closing. It can add peace of mind, especially if it's your first home.

Multiple Inspections: Be ready to schedule several inspections (e.g., whole house, radon, sewer scope). Additional inspections, such as roof or pest, may be necessary depending on the property. You will pay for inspections at the time of service, inspections typically run between \$700-\$1,500.

Repair Requests: You may need to ask for repairs following inspections, and the cost could vary significantly. We'll work together to negotiate fair solutions.

Appraisal Challenges: There's always a chance that an appraisal could come in lower than expected. If that happens, we'll explore options to address the difference.

Potential Financing Hiccups: Sometimes a buyer's financing can fall through due to unforeseen circumstances. We'll have backup plans and explore options if needed.

Sellers Feel Nervous or Make Requests: Just as you may feel anxious, sellers might make demands that seem unreasonable. Remember, negotiation is part of the process, and we don't have to agree to everything.

Expect Some Challenges, but You're Not Alone: There may be hurdles along the way, but we'll be by your side to navigate every step and ensure you're well-supported.



SMOOTH TRANSACTION



MAKING YOUR HOME PURCHASE GO SMOOTHLY: TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSACTION

Keep Us Informed of Any Changes: If your needs or decisions change after our initial meeting, please let us know right away. For example, if you decide you need a home with a larger garage or want to prioritize a specific school district, sharing this helps me better tailor your search and support you.

Stay Accessible for Critical Deadlines: There are important deadlines throughout the home buying process, such as submitting documents, reviewing inspection reports, and signing paperwork. We'll keep you updated, but it's crucial to be reachable for any last-minute needs to keep everything on track.

Ask Questions: Never hesitate to ask questions if you're unsure about any part of the process. We want you to feel confident and informed when signing documents or making decisions. Understanding each step ensures a smoother experience for you.

Vendor Referrals Are Available: If you need recommendations for home inspectors, contractors, or other professionals, we can share contacts we trust. Keep in mind that while we only recommend vendors with positive experiences, any agreements or contracts you make with them are your responsibility.

Discuss Upgrades or Repairs Thoughtfully: If the home you're considering needs some work, let's discuss whether certain upgrades are worth it or if negotiating repairs is a better option. It's wise to consider cost-effective improvements that add value. We can help you prioritize or refer you to resources like the "Cost vs. Value" report. Visit costvsvalue.com.

Be Prepared for Negotiations Post-Inspection: After the inspection, you may want to request repairs or price adjustments based on the findings. This is common, and sellers often expect it. Remember, the goal is to find a win-win solution. While you don't have to accept everything as-is, being open to compromise can help ensure a successful purchase.



COMMISSIONS

HOW REAL ESTATE COMMISSIONS WORK

Real estate commissions are how agents are typically paid for the services they provide – but it's important to know that commissions have **always been negotiable**. Traditionally, the **seller has paid the commission for both their listing agent and the buyer's agent**. While recent legal changes have introduced new disclosures and paperwork, they haven't dramatically changed how business is usually done in our experience.

This agreement also outlines the **services we'll provide you**, as well as the **circumstances under which we're entitled to be paid** – including when and how that payment occurs, and the reimbursement of certain expenses we may incur on your behalf.

Sometimes, despite all our work, a sale may not happen – and in those cases, we may not be compensated. When a transaction does go through, commissions can sometimes be split by the brokerage for reasons such as:

- Referral fees to other agents
- Payments to a team
- Covering transaction-related expenses

If for any reason the seller is **unwilling to pay part or all of our commission**, we'll communicate that clearly to you. In that case, you may have the option to roll those costs into your loan or pay through escrow. Rest assured – you'll always be informed and we'll help you explore solutions.



COMMISSIONS

BEFORE WE BEGIN LOOKING AT HOMES

There are **two important things** we need in place before we start viewing homes:

1. Preapproval Letter

Getting preapproved by a lender is essential – and courteous. Sellers are often asked to leave their homes, tidy up, and relocate kids or pets for showings. It's only fair that we demonstrate you're a serious, qualified buyer.

If you don't already have a lender, we'd be thrilled to recommend several **exceptional lending partners**. Not all lenders are created equally – the best ones offer multiple loan products, communicate clearly, respond quickly, and work creatively to find the best solution for your needs.

This step will not only determine **what you qualify for**, but more importantly, **what you're comfortable with**. Just because you can buy a \$10,000,000 home doesn't mean you want the monthly payment that comes with it. Real estate should fit your life.



2. Buyer Broker Agreement

Due to new federal laws, we now need a signed **Buyer Broker Agreement** before we can show you even one home. This agreement states that:

- We represent **you**, not the seller
- We will negotiate our commission as part of your offer
- You understand how compensation works

Again, while it's possible a seller might not offer to pay a buyer agent's commission, this is uncommon. If it does happen, we'll guide you through your options and ensure you're never caught off guard.

THE MORTGAGE PROCESS

LOAN PRE-APPROVAL: A CRUCIAL FIRST STEP

Getting pre-approved for a mortgage is essential before you start your home search

1. Increases Offer Acceptance Chances: Sellers prefer offers from pre-approved buyers.

Without pre-approval, a seller risks taking their home off the market unnecessarily.

2. Allows Time to Find the Best Loan: Pre-approval gives you the freedom to shop for the best loan package without pressure.

3. Respects Sellers' Time: Sellers must keep their homes ready for showings. Viewing homes only when prepared to make an offer is considerate.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOAN: KEY FACTORS

1. How Much You Can Afford:

- **Down Payment:** Depending on the loan type, your down payments may be as low as 0% depending on your loan type and qualifications.
- **Qualification:** Based on your credit, income, and assets.
- **Closing Costs:** Typically 2-5% of the loan amount, payable at closing. Sometimes these can be included in your loan.

2. Loan Payment Structure (PITI):

- **Principal (P):** The loan amount
- **Interest (I):** The cost of borrowing
- **Taxes (T):** Property taxes
- **Insurance (I):** Homeowners insurance

Lenders usually require that your PITI falls between 25-28% of your gross monthly income. Including other debts, your total obligations should be within 33-38%

THE MORTGAGE PROCESS



KEEPING FINANCES IN CHECK DURING THE LOAN PROCESS:

DO

- Stay current on your accounts.
- Use your credit as usual and keep detailed records.
- Reach out to your lender with any credit-related questions.

DON'T

- Apply for new credit or close accounts.
- Max out credit cards or consolidate debt.
- Pay off collections or charge-offs without consulting your lender.

STEPS IN THE LOAN PROCESS:

- 1. Complete Your Loan Application:** Submit your income and asset documentation, including bank statements, tax returns, and W-2s from the past two years.
- 2. Sign Application & Disclosures:** Return signed forms to your lender.
- 3. Processing & Underwriting:** The loan file goes through processing, then underwriting. You may be asked for additional information – respond quickly to expedite closing.

LENDER QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1. What type of loan do you recommend for me?** Why? There's no one type of mortgage loan that's superior to another—but whichever you choose, you need to know why it's best and how it works.
- 2. Will my down payment vary based on the loan I choose?** If you're tight on cash or don't want to be cash poor, let your lender know. Loans vary in their down payment requirements.
- 3. What is the interest rate and the annual percentage rate (APR)?** Everyone talks about the interest rate, but the APR is just as important. It combines the interest rate with the fees a lender charges to originate your loan.
- 4. Can I lock-in an interest rate?** If so, for how long? If you think rates will be moving up, ask if you can lock it in for a set period of time.
- 5. What will my closing costs be?** Are they a part of my loan, or will I pay them in cash at closing? Remember, closing costs usually run 3-6% of your loan value so you need to know how they'll be covered.

PRICING / MARKET VALUE

THINGS THAT DO NOT DETERMINE THE VALUE OF A HOME

The value of a property is determined by what a buyer is willing to pay, and a seller is willing to accept in today's market.

- What the seller paid
- What the seller needs
- What the seller wants
- What the neighbor says
- What another agent says
- What a contractor says
- The cost to rebuild it today
- The power of the brokerage behind the agent
- Buyers and sellers determine the value of a home

Appraisals are based on historical data, and not on projected increases that may happen in the immediate or distant future—not on pending sales, not on asking prices.



THE SEARCH

SEARCHING STRATEGICALLY: TIPS FOR FINDING YOUR PERFECT HOME

Start with a “Needs” and “Wants” List

- **Needs** are non-negotiable features you must have in your next home, such as enough square footage, sufficient bedrooms and bathrooms, a first-floor primary bedroom, proximity to work or school, or accessibility features.
- **Wants** are desirable but not essential and could be added later, like specific paint colors, a pool, upgraded kitchen amenities, or a fenced backyard.
- Spend time thinking about critical aspects like the lot, location, and budget, as these can't be changed.

Best Practices for Online Home Searching

- Use popular real estate sites like Realtor.com, Zillow, Redfin, or Trulia. Apply search filters but avoid narrowing your options too much. **DO NOT** request showings via any of these platforms, always contact us to arrange a showing .
- Keep your needs and wants in mind while searching. Expand your geographic range and consider increasing your max price slightly to view more options.
- Check out Google Street View to get a better sense of the home and neighborhood.
- Don't disregard homes marked as “pending” or “under contract” as deals can fall through.

After Narrowing Down Your Options

- Note down the MLS numbers or addresses of the homes you like. We'll contact the listing agents to gather details and assess the seller's motivation.
- We will schedule enough time for showings so you don't feel rushed, especially if you find a home you love.



THE SEARCH



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR SHOWINGS:

- **Stay Focused:** Before showings, review your needs and wants list and your budget to stay on task.
- **Take Notes & Photos:** Capture pictures or videos to help you remember details and discuss with friends and family later.
- **Evaluate the Lot & Location:** These cannot be changed easily, so ensure you're happy with both. We'll also help assess whether the home is well-priced within the neighborhood.
- **Avoid Being Distracted by Staging:** Focus on what truly matters, like the home's structure and layout, rather than decor that won't stay.
- **Take Your Time:** If you find a home you like, let us know if you'd like to spend extra time there to learn as much as possible before making a decision.
- **Decision Makers:** When possible, all decision makers should attend all showings.

Showing Checklist:

☐ Address of Home: _____

☐ First impression rating of exterior (1-10) _____

☐ First impression rating of interior (1-10) _____

☐ Three pros of the home:

☐ Three cons of the home:

☐ Not Interested

☐ Maybe

☐ Very Interested

☐ It's the one!

We're Under Contract... Now What?

CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR OFFER HAS BEEN ACCEPTED, BUT HERE ARE A FEW STEPS BEFORE CELEBRATING.

Key Steps to Closing Your New Home

- 1. Review Dates & Details:** We will outline crucial dates to keep everything on track, including a checklist of key milestones.
- 2. Secure Financing:** Meet with your mortgage lender to finalize your loan and lock in your interest rate. You have three days from the contract date to begin your mortgage application. The lender will complete the process over the next 25-30 days.
- 3. Schedule Inspections:** Arrange a home inspection to check for issues. Based on the report, we may negotiate repairs with the seller. The inspection period gives you the right to inspect and renegotiate or terminate if needed.
- 4. Appraisal:** The lender will order an appraisal to confirm the property's value. If the appraisal falls short of the purchase price, we'll negotiate terms. The contract depends on the appraisal meeting or exceeding the agreed purchase price.

Approaching Closing

- 1. Title Search & Insurance:** The title company will verify the property's legitimacy, checking for liens or restrictions. Once cleared, a title insurance policy will be issued, protecting you and your lender against ownership disputes. This cost is included in your closing fees.
- 2. Obtain Home Insurance:** Secure homeowners insurance to cover any potential damage or loss to your new home.
- 3. Clear-to-Close:** This means the underwriter has approved all your loan documents. Signing will be scheduled where you'll sign final paperwork. Closing usually happens 1-2 days after signing.

You're almost there — closing day is right around the corner!

HOME INSPECTIONS: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR BUYERS

- **What is a Home Inspection?** A home inspection is a professional evaluation of a property's condition. It uncovers any major issues and provides a detailed written report. Being present at the inspection is recommended so you can ask questions and gain a better understanding of any concerns.
- **What is the Inspection Period?** During the inspection period, you have the right to hire an inspector to assess the home. If issues are found, you can negotiate with the seller for repairs, a price reduction, or credits. If an agreement isn't reached, you may withdraw from the contract and have your earnest money returned.
- **Why Get a Home Inspection?** Even if the home appears to be in great shape, costly problems like leaks, foundation issues, or faulty wiring can be hidden. An inspection helps identify these before finalizing your purchase. Additionally, some lenders and insurance companies require specific inspections to secure financing and insurance.

UNDERSTANDING THE INSPECTION PROCESS

It's important to know that no home is without minor issues. The inspection aims to identify significant structural or functional concerns rather than provide a "to-do" list for the seller. While sellers are not obligated to address every item in the report, some may choose to make certain repairs to foster goodwill or facilitate the sale.

Inspections provide the buyer with confidence and a clear understanding of the home's condition, helping them make an informed decision. Our team will guide you through the inspection process, assist with any negotiations based on the findings, and ensure all terms are properly addressed in the contract.



Key Types of Inspections

1. Whole House Inspection: This is the most comprehensive inspection, covering the home's major systems, including:

- Electrical system
- HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning)
- Plumbing
- Roof & attic
- Foundation & general structure

The whole house inspection usually takes about three hours. It is a non-invasive review of the property, meant to identify any major issues rather than every minor defect. While buyers may request repairs or credits based on findings, sellers are not obligated to address every issue; instead, repairs can be negotiated based on mutual agreement. This inspection helps buyers fully understand the condition of the home and its upkeep needs.

2. Radon Inspection: Radon is a naturally occurring gas that can accumulate in some homes. During a radon inspection, a monitor is placed in the home to assess radon levels, requiring windows and doors to remain closed (except for normal entry/exit). If radon is detected, ventilation can be added to mitigate its presence.

3. Sewer Scope Inspection: This inspection uses a flexible camera to check the sewer line* for issues such as root intrusion, cracks, pooling, pipe separation, or holes. Ensuring the sewer line are functioning properly helps avoid future costly repairs.

4. Specialized Inspections:

- **Lead-Based Paint Inspection:** Lead-based paint testing is recommended for homes built before 1978.
- **Well Water Testing:** For homes on a well system, professionals collect water samples to test for contaminants like bacteria and nitrates, ensuring the water's safety.
- **Septic System Inspection:** This includes a detailed review of the septic system's history, layout, and functionality to ensure it is operating as intended.
- **Tank Scan and Soil Samples:** Many older homes used oil as the fuel to power their heat source and a tank scan is to confirm whether or not a tank is on the property and if so assessed if it has been properly decommissioned.
- **Environmental Testing:** Recommended for people with sensitivities to mold.

* From the home to public line

APPRAISAL

An appraisal is an estimate of the value of the property by a licensed professional appraiser. Once we complete repair negotiations, the appraisal will be ordered by the lender and paid for by the buyer. The goal of the appraisal is to verify the value of the property for the lender. The contract is contingent upon whether the appraisal comes in at or above the purchase price. If the appraisal comes back below purchase price, we will be back to the negotiating table.



It's Closing Time!

Congratulations! You've received the "clear-to-close"! Here's what you need to know about signing and closing and the final steps of your home sale.

Common Questions

Q: When do we do the final walk-through?

A: Please note that a final walk through is actually not part of our real estate contracts so if you want to ensure you have the opportunity to do a walk through prior to closing, please let us know. A final walk-through is a chance for the buyer to confirm that agreed-upon repairs have been completed and to ensure no new issues have developed since the home went under contract. We typically schedule the walk-through right before the closing.

Q: Who will be at the closing?

A: Attendance can vary, but typically you can expect the title officer and yourself; your agent will also likely attend as well.

Q: What happens at closing?

A: Be prepared to sign numerous documents. You will sign all your loan documents and the documents to transfer the title into your name. Note: Remember that closing and possession can be separate. While the closing date marks the official transfer of ownership, the possession date—when the buyer can move in—may be different based on the terms agreed upon in the purchase agreement.



UNDERSTANDING THE ESCROW AND CLOSING PROCESS

The Role of Escrow

The escrow process is an essential part of closing, managed by the title company, which acts as a neutral third party. Unlike real estate agents, who represent either the buyer or the seller, the title company ensures that all conditions for both sides of the sales contract are fulfilled. Here's what the title company does:

- Orders title insurance and ensures a clean title transfer
- Collects all funds and necessary documentation from both agents and lenders
- Prorates insurance, taxes, and rents as needed
- Prepares and distributes final financial statements for both parties
- Records the deed and other necessary documents

Signing and Closing

In Oregon and Washington, the signing and closing are two separate events:

- **Signing:** You'll meet with an escrow officer from the title company to sign the required documents, including loan paperwork and title transfer forms.
- **Closing:** This typically occurs a day or two after signing. The title company will record the transaction once all paperwork is processed, and funds are transferred. At that point, the buyer receives the keys, and the home officially changes hands.

Post-Closing Support

Even after closing, our relationship doesn't end! We are always here as your friends and real estate resource, whether you're staying local or moving cross-country. Need a contractor recommendation? We've got a curated list ready for you. And if you, or your family and friends, have real estate needs in the future, don't hesitate to reach out. We're always honored to help.

Customary Closing Costs

BUYERS TYPICALLY PAY FOR:

- One-half of the escrow fee (per the contract)
- Lender's title insurance premiums
- New loan charges, document preparation fees, and interim interest
- Recording charges for documents in the buyer's name
- Homeowner's insurance for the first year and prorated property taxes
- Real estate commission per buyer's representation agreement and sales agreement.
- Document preparation if applicable
- Tax pro-ration from date of acquisition
- Recording charges for all documents in buyer's names
- Homeowner's insurance for the first year
- Home warranty (according to contract)
- Inspection fees (according to contract)
- New loan charges
- Interim interest on new loan from date of funding to first payment date

SELLERS TYPICALLY PAY FOR:

- One-half of the escrow fee (per the contract)
- Real estate commission; per listing contract and sales agreement.
- Owner's title insurance premiums
- Judgments, tax liens, or assessments as applicable
- Recording charges to clear documents and any excise tax due
- Work orders (according to contract)
- Any judgments, tax liens, etc, against the seller
- Home warranty (according to contract)
- Any bonds or assessments (according to contract)
- Any loan fees required by buyer's lender (according to contract)
- Recording charges to clear all documents of record against seller
- Payoff of any existing loans, including accrued interest and reconveyance fees
- Interest accrued to lender being paid off, reconveyance fees and prepayment penalties
- Excise tax (based on county and sale price)

MOVING PREPARATION TIMELINE & TIPS

Moving can be a complex process, but with proper planning and organization, it can be manageable and even enjoyable. Use this timeline to stay on track as you prepare for your move.

4-6 Weeks Before Moving

- 1. Declutter, Discard & Donate:** Go through your belongings and decide what to keep, donate, or discard. This is a great time to simplify and reduce the amount you'll need to move.
- 2. Collect Moving Quotes:** Research and collect estimates from multiple moving companies to find the best option for your needs.
- 3. Research Your New Area:** Identify schools, healthcare providers, and other essential services near your new home.
- 4. Secure Off-Site Storage:** If you need extra space during the move, arrange for off-site storage.

3-4 Weeks Before Moving

- 1. Notify Key Contacts of Your Address Change:**
 - Banks & financial institutions
 - Post office
 - Credit card companies
 - Insurance providers
 - Family & friends
- 2. Choose a Mover & Sign the Contract:** Make your final selection and confirm your moving company's details.
- 3. Create a Moving File:** Organize important moving-related documents, receipts, and contracts in one file.
- 4. Contact Insurance Providers:** Discuss coverage for your move and arrange insurance for your new home.

2-3 Weeks Before Moving

- 1. Notify the DMV:** Update your address with the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- 2. Cancel Home Services:** Arrange to discontinue services like housekeeping, lawn care, and other recurring services.
- 3. Use Up Perishables:** Start consuming any food and household items that can't be moved, such as frozen or perishable goods.
- 4. Notify Utility Companies:** Schedule the discontinuation or transfer of services, including:
 - Electric
 - Gas
 - Water
 - Internet
 - Trash
 - TV
- 5. Set Up New Bank Accounts:** If necessary, close existing accounts and set up new ones in your new location.

1 Week Before Moving

- 1. Confirm Arrangements:** Double-check all moving and travel plans with your moving company.
- 2. Plan for Pets and Plants:** Arrange transportation for your pets/plants to ensure they're safely moved.
- 3. Review Moving-Day Plan:** Discuss the logistics and timeline with your moving company.
- 4. Arrange Child & Pet Care:** Organize care for children and pets on moving day to minimize stress.
- 5. Notify the HOA:** If applicable, inform your homeowner's association about the move and reserve elevator usage if needed.
- 6. Contact Your Insurance Agent:** Confirm your homeowners' insurance covers your belongings during the move.
- 7. Take a Final Picture:** Capture a special memory of your home before leaving.
- 8. Pack an Essentials Box:** Include items you'll need immediately upon arrival, such as:
 - Snacks & water
 - Toiletries & medications
 - Important documents
 - Laptops & chargers
 - Children's toys
 - Toilet paper

Packing Tips & Tools

- 1. Label Boxes:** Clearly label each box with the room it belongs in and note if it is fragile. This will simplify unpacking.
- 2. Reinforce Box Bottoms:** Use extra tape to strengthen the bottoms of boxes for added security.
- 3. Manage Box Weight:** Keep boxes under 40 lbs., especially if you'll be carrying them up stairs at your new home.
- 4. Avoid Hazardous Items:** Do not pack flammable, combustible, or corrosive materials like paint, gasoline, or ammunition.
- 5. Pack a "First-Day Bag":** Include essentials for your first day in your new home, like bottled water, snacks, hygiene items, and children's necessities.

Once You Arrive

- 1. Set Up Beds First:** Assemble beds and lay out bedding as soon as you arrive. You'll be grateful for a comfortable place to rest later.
- 2. Unpack Hygiene Items Next:** Have personal hygiene products and towels ready for use.
- 3. Keep Track of Your Keys:** Know exactly where you've placed your keys to avoid stress.
- 4. Pace Yourself:** Unpacking can be mentally and physically exhausting. Take breaks, stay organized, and don't overexert yourself.
- 5. Celebrate Your New Home:** Turn on some great music, enjoy a glass of wine, and celebrate your successful move!



CUSTOMIZED TO YOU



This comprehensive **Buyer's Guide** will help ensure a smooth and organized moving experience. Please let us know if you need additional information or have any questions. We look forward to working together.



GLOSSARY

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Collective income from everyone in your household before taxes or other deductions are taken, investment income or dividends, Social Security benefits, alimony, and retirement fund withdrawals.

APR

APR refers to the annual percentage rate, which is the interest rate you'll pay expressed as a yearly rate averaged over the full term of the loan. APR includes lender fees in the rate, so it's usually higher than your mortgage interest rate.

APPRAISAL

A written justification of the price paid for a property, primarily based on an analysis of comparable sales of similar homes nearby.

APPRAISED VALUE

An opinion of a property's fair market value, based on an appraiser's knowledge, experience, and analysis of the property. Since an appraisal is based primarily on comparable sales, and the most recent sale is the one on the property in question, the appraisal usually comes out at the purchase price.

CLOSING COSTS

Generally 2-5% of the purchase price include lender fees, recording fees, transfer taxes, third-party fees such as title insurance, and prepaids and escrows such as homeowner's insurance, property taxes, and HOA fees.

CLOSING DISCLOSURE

A document that provides an itemized listing of the funds that were paid or disbursed at closing.



CONTINGENCY

A contingency clause in a home offer allows buyers to cancel the purchase if certain conditions aren't met, protecting their earnest money deposit. Common types include home inspection, mortgage, appraisal, title, and home sale contingencies.

DEED

Legal document conveying title to a property.

DOWN PAYMENT

A cash payment of a percentage of the sales price of the home that buyers pay at closing. Different lenders and loan programs require various down payment amounts such as 3%, 5%, or 20% of the purchase price.

EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT

Also known as an escrow deposit, earnest money is a dollar amount buyers put into an escrow account after a seller accepts their offer. Buyers do this to show the seller that they're entering a real estate transaction in good faith.

ENCUMBRANCE

Anything that affects or limits the fee simple title to a property, such as mortgages, leases, easements, or restrictions.

EQUITY

A homeowner's financial interest in a property. Equity is the difference between the fair market value of the property and the amount still owed on its mortgage and other liens.

ESCROW

Putting something of value, like a deed or money, in the custody of a neutral third party until certain conditions are met.

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION FEE (HOA)

A fee required when you buy a home located within a community with an HOA that typically pays for maintenance and improvements of common areas and may include the use of amenities.

HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE

Insurance that provides you with property and liability protection for your property and family from damages from natural disaster or accident. Lenders usually require borrowers to buy homeowner's insurance.

HOME WARRANTY

A contract between homeowner and home warranty company that provides for discounted repair and replacement service on home's major components, such as the furnace, air conditioning, plumbing, and electrical systems.

LENDER FEES

Part of the closing costs of a home purchase and may include an application fee, attorney fees, and recording fees. The lender's underwriting or origination fee is usually 1 percent of the loan amount.

LOAN TYPES

Mortgages have different terms ranging from 10 to 30 years and are available with fixed or adjustable interest rates. Your lender can discuss down payment, insurance, credit requirements, and other specifics of various loan types.

MONTHLY DEBT

The minimum payment on credit card debt; auto, student, and personal loan payments; and alimony or child support. Rent or mortgage for property that you will pay after your home purchase must also be included.

MORTGAGE

A loan from a bank, credit union, or other financial institution that relies on real estate for collateral. The bank provides money to buy the property, and the borrower agrees to monthly payments until the loan is fully repaid.

MORTGAGE INSURANCE

Insurance that protects the lender and repays part of the loan if the borrower defaults and the loan can't be fully repaid by foreclosure sale. Usually required on loans with less than 20 percent down payment.

PROPERTY TAXES

Typically imposed by local governments on real property including residential real estate. The tax rate can change annually, and the assessed value of your property is usually recalculated annually.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

A class of property that can include any asset other than real estate. The distinguishing factor between personal property and real estate, or real property, is that personal property is movable; that is, it isn't fixed permanently to one particular location.

PREPAIDS

Prepays are expenses paid at the closing for bills that are not technically due yet, such as property taxes, homeowner's insurance, mortgage insurance, and HOA fees.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

A special assessment in an HOA (Homeowners Association) is a one-time fee charged to homeowners, in addition to regular dues, to cover unexpected expenses or major projects that aren't included in the annual budget—like roof replacements, emergency repairs, or legal costs.

THIRD-PARTY FEES

Any closing costs charged by someone other than your lender, typically including fees for an appraisal, property survey, title search, owner's and lender's title insurance, and sometimes an attorney.

NOTES





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