



Buyer FAQ's

HOME SEARCH

How do I know if now is a good time to buy a home?

It depends more on *you* than the market — your lifestyle, budget, and buying power. If you're renting, buying can help you build equity and improve your credit mix, but it also comes with maintenance costs. The key is comparing your current costs to what ownership would look like and making sure it aligns with your goals.

What are the first steps I should take before starting my home search?

Start by meeting with an agent to review your goals and timeline. From there, connect with a lender for a pre-approval to know your budget. Once you're pre-approved, your agent will walk you through preferences, showings, and offer strategies.

How do I know if a property is priced fairly?

Your agent will run a comparative market analysis (CMA) showing recent sales of similar homes nearby. This helps you see whether the price is in line with the market and where there might be room to negotiate.

What should I look out for when touring homes?

Check for signs of leaks, roof wear, water stains under sinks, loose tiles, or uneven flooring. Also note the temperature, smells, and overall upkeep — they can reveal how well the home's been maintained. Remember, you'll have a chance to formally inspect the property before you purchase it.

Can you help me find off-market or new construction homes?

Yes. We can target off-market homes by contacting expired listings, FSBOs, and specific neighborhoods. As a certified new-home co-broker, I also have access to builders and can help you compare new builds to resale homes for value and condition.

FINANCING & OFFERS

How much do I need for a down payment?

Down payments typically range from 3% to 20%, depending on your loan type and financial profile. Your lender can help determine what works best for you.

What other upfront costs should I expect besides the down payment?

Expect to cover inspection fees, appraisal, earnest money, and closing costs—usually 2–5% of the purchase price.

How do I get pre-approved, and why is it important?

You'll submit income, credit, and asset info to a lender for review. Pre-approval shows sellers you're financially ready and strengthens your offer.

What types of loans are available, and how do I know which one is right for me?

Common loan types include FHA, Conventional, VA, and USDA. Your lender will match you with the best fit based on your goals, down payment, and credit.

How can I make my offer stand out for a home that's in demand?

Strong offers often include a solid pre-approval, flexible terms, and limited contingencies. I'll help structure your offer strategically to stand out.

What happens after my offer is accepted?

Once accepted, we'll schedule inspections, the appraisal, and finalize your loan. You'll move toward closing while I guide each step of the process.

Can I negotiate the price or closing costs?

Yes. Depending on market conditions, we can negotiate price adjustments, seller credits, or repairs to improve your terms.

What is an earnest money deposit, and do I get it back?

It's a good-faith deposit (usually 1–3% of the price) showing commitment. It's applied to your purchase at closing or refunded if you cancel within your contingencies.

INSPECTIONS & APPRAISALS

Do I really need a home inspection?

Yes. An inspection helps uncover hidden issues and protects you from costly surprises. Most lenders also require it before closing to ensure the property's condition meets loan standards.

What if the inspection reveals issues?

If major issues come up, you can ask the seller to make repairs, request a credit at closing, or walk away during the inspection period if you can't reach an agreement.

What is an appraisal, and how does it affect my loan?

An appraisal is ordered by the lender to confirm the home's market value and protect their investment before final loan approval.

What happens if the home doesn't appraise for the offer amount?

If the appraisal comes in low, you can renegotiate the price, ask the seller to adjust, or bring the difference in cash to close.

What are contingencies, and how do they protect me?

Contingencies let you back out or renegotiate if key conditions—like inspection, appraisal, or financing—aren't met, keeping your deposit protected.

CONTRACTS & CLOSING PROCESS

How long does it take to close on a home?

Most closings take about 30 to 45 days after your offer is accepted, depending on your loan type and how quickly inspections and paperwork are completed.

What happens during escrow?

During escrow, all funds and documents are held by a neutral third party while inspections, appraisals, and loan approvals are finalized before closing.

What are closing costs, and how much should I budget for them?

Closing costs cover lender, title, and government fees—usually around 2–5% of the purchase price. Some can be negotiated or covered by the seller.

What could delay the closing?

Common delays include financing issues, appraisal gaps, title problems, or unfinished repairs. Staying proactive and responsive helps keep things on track.

WORKING WITH ME

How do you get paid as my agent?

My commission has always been paid by the seller at closing, so there's no direct cost to you as the buyer.

Do I have to pay you any fees directly?

In most cases, no. My compensation comes from the seller's side unless a unique situation requires otherwise, which I would explain upfront.

What makes your approach different from other agents?

I follow a clear, step-by-step process, give you all the tools and resources you'll need, and connect you with a trusted local network for a seamless experience.

How often will we communicate, and what's the best way to reach you?

We'll start with a consultation, then stay in touch as needed throughout the process. You'll also meet your transaction coordinator and key providers early on. Text or email works best unless it's time-sensitive. I may also call from time to time outside of your work hours to explain key details if needed.

What if I find a home myself online—should I still call you?

Yes. You can "like" and share it directly through your app, or send me the address and your preferred time for a showing by text or email.

Can you represent me if I'm buying new construction?

Absolutely. As a new-home co-broker, I can show you off-market and pre-construction options and help you access builder incentives that could save you money at closing and on your monthly payment.

OWNERSHIP & POST CLOSING

What should I do after closing?

Set up utilities, update your address, and save your closing documents. I'll also send post-closing tips to help you settle in smoothly.

When is my first mortgage payment due?

Usually about one month after closing—for example, if you close in June, your first payment is due in August.

What happens with property taxes and insurance after I buy?

If you have an escrow account, your lender pays them for you. If not, you'll be responsible for paying them directly when due.

Can I back out of the purchase if something changes before closing?

Yes, as long as your contingencies (like inspection, appraisal, or financing) allow it. If those are still active, you can cancel without penalty.

Should I get a home warranty?

It's optional but recommended—it can cover unexpected repairs for major systems and appliances during your first year.

How do I handle utilities, HOA, and mail transfers?

You'll set up utilities and HOA accounts before moving in. Update your address with USPS and all key services to ensure a smooth transition.