

# ULTIMATE HOME BUYERS GUIDE



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# Texas Home Buyer Roadmap 1

## 1. Schedule a Buyer Consultation (In Person, Phone, Facetime, or Zoom)

Meet with your real estate agent (that's us!) to discuss your home goals, budget, timeline, and must-have features. We'll guide you step-by-step and help you plan your path to homeownership.

## 2. Get Pre-Approved for a Mortgage

Connect with a trusted & vetted lender to review your finances and secure a pre-approval letter. This shows sellers you're a serious buyer and helps define your price range.

## 3. Set Your Budget & Priorities

Determine your comfortable budget and make a list of "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves." Don't forget to factor in property taxes, HOA dues, and insurance when calculating monthly costs.

## 4. Start Touring Homes

We'll schedule showings and help you evaluate homes, neighborhoods, and features to find the best match for your lifestyle and goals.

## 5. Submit an Offer

When you find the right home, we'll prepare and negotiate a strong offer based on market conditions and comparable sales.

## 6. Enter the Option Period (Texas Only)

As part of your offer we negotiate an Option Fee, which is a typically \$10-\$20 a day that gives you the right to cancel the contract for any reason during a set period (usually 5-10 days).

✔ This is your due diligence window — use it to schedule inspections and fully evaluate the property.

## 7. Schedule a Home Inspection

During the option period, hire a Texas licensed professional home inspector to evaluate the property's foundation, structure, major systems, and safety.

✔ This helps you identify potential issues and protects your investment.

# Texas Home Buyer Roadmap 2

## ***8. Negotiate Repairs or Credits (if necessary)***

If the inspection reveals major issues, we'll help you negotiate repairs, request credits, or adjust the terms of the contract before the option period ends.

## ***9. Appraisal Ordered by Lender***

Your lender will order an appraisal (Only after option period) to verify the property's value. If the appraisal comes in lower than expected, we'll discuss strategies like renegotiating the price or adjusting your financing plan.

## ***10. Secure Homeowners Insurance***

Before closing, shop for and secure homeowners insurance — your lender will require proof of coverage before issuing final loan approval.  Tip: Compare quotes and consider bundling with auto insurance for savings.

## ***11. Finalize Financing***

Submit any final documents to your lender and complete underwriting. Once everything checks out, you'll receive your official "Clear to Close (CTC)."

## ***12. Final Walk-Through***


We'll conduct a final walk-through right before closing to ensure the home is in the agreed-upon condition and that all negotiated repairs are completed.

## ***13. Closing & Funding***

At closing, you'll sign all final documents, finalize your loan, and pay any remaining closing costs. After signing, the lender will fund the loan, and the title company will record the deed with the county — officially transferring ownership. You must valid drivers license, state ID or Passport at signing.

 This step finalizes the sale and makes you the legal owner of the property.

## ***14. Close & Get Your Keys!***

Once the loan is funded and the transaction is recorded, you'll receive the keys to your new home.  Time to celebrate — you're officially a Texas homeowner!

# ABOUT KEITH & SHEILA

Your Trusted Real Estate Advocates—We are husband-and-wife real estate team with over 25 years of combined experience in the industry. Our diverse life and career paths complement one another, allowing us to bring a unique balance of insight, strategy, and compassion to every client relationship.

When you hire Keith & Sheila Realty Group, you're not just hiring REALTORS® — you're partnering with a professional team that is honest, experienced, hardworking, and deeply committed to serving your best interests.

## What You Can Expect from Us

- **Integrity and Transparency:** You'll always receive honest, straightforward answers about the buying and selling process.
- **Innovative Marketing:** Our expert marketing and creative home-selling strategies ensure maximum market exposure.
- **Client-First Commitment:** Your goals come before our commission. We are dedicated to protecting your best interests in every transaction.
- **Professional Excellence:** We pride ourselves on professionalism, promptness, resilience, experience, and a passion for real estate.
- **Skilled Negotiation:** With decades of experience, we know how to negotiate effectively to secure the best results for your family.
- **Veteran Advocacy:** As a U.S. Army Veteran, Keith brings specialized expertise in serving military families. His designations include MRP, CMR, CMRS, and CPE, providing advanced training in VA and military relocation services.
- **We understand the PCS process and are proud to serve those who serve our country.**
- **Comprehensive Support:** From the first consultation to long after closing, you'll receive exceptional communication and continued support.

We're passionate about helping families buy, sell, and invest in real estate — and we do it with integrity, excellence, and care. Whether you're purchasing your first home, selling your current one, or relocating, we're here to be your trusted advocates every step of the way.

**Our mission is simple: to make your real estate experience the best it can be.**

Keith has lived in the San Antonio metro area for most of his life and proudly served in the U.S. Army's 25th and 9th Infantry Divisions. A lifelong entrepreneur, Keith has built and sold several successful ventures, including a wholesale irrigation supply company and an aftermarket performance business.

As a former Texas Professional Home Inspector with over 13 years of experience and more than 3,500 homes inspected, Keith brings a unique eye for detail and property condition that benefits every client. He also holds an IRC general contractor license and has personally renovated or restored over 100 homes and historic buildings through Campbell Custom Builders, LLC. Beyond real estate, Keith is an ordained minister and active pastor who has served in various ministry roles — from youth and associate pastor to lead pastor and church planter. His leadership, service-minded heart, and commitment to helping others are the foundation of his professional life.

Sheila is a lifelong resident of the San Antonio area, Sheila grew up in a proud military family — her father is a retired U.S. Air Force Senior NCO. She understands firsthand the unique lifestyle and challenges that come with military life. Sheila earned her degree in Speech Pathology from Our Lady of the Lake University in 2002 and spent 11 years as an elementary educator before transitioning to real estate in 2012. Her teaching background and attention to detail empower clients to make informed, confident decisions throughout their home-buying and selling journey.

Faith, family, and service are at the heart of everything we do. As a blended family with four adult children, we know what it means to work hard, stay grounded, and live with gratitude. We believe that every client relationship is an opportunity to serve — guided by God's grace, love, and purpose.

**Your real estate needs are our mission. We look forward to serving you with excellence.**

# OUR MISSION – VISION – VALUES

As real estate agent professionals we aren't selling a product. No, we are serving, educating and empowering individuals and families to establish their own sanctuary and build wealth. We are not just looking to make a commission check, but rather serve our clients best interest!

To be a successful real estate agent, it takes hard work, experience, perseverance, expertise, and determination. To be a professional real estate professional, it takes love, passion, experience, tenacity, and constant education and industry evolution.

We obtain our goal of exceptional real estate service and results by making sure we never settle for just a job well done or a pat on the back. We strive to be the most up-to-date professional advocates for our clients by utilizing technology, trends, and market changes.



We are your Advocate for all real estate needs. As a Professional REALTOR® husband and wife Team, we take our responsibility as seriously as we would if we were buying a home for our family. We know your home is probably the largest asset you will own.

We know it will play a paramount role in your future financially and relationally and it should only be placed in the hands of the most competent experts available. We take that responsibility and fiduciary duty profoundly serious!

We always try to treat our clients the way we want to be treated. We will always put your families' best interest above making money. That is our promise to you and your family!

# OUR PROMISE

- We Will Be Your Advocates -We will always put your best interest before making a commission
- We Will Serve You With Professionalism – We will always be a professional
- We Will Communicate Well– We will always keep you informed of the progress of your transaction
- Integrity – We will serve you with integrity “We Treat Others The Way We Want To Be Treated”
- Knowledge – We will be experts in our industry or we will find the expert to help us
- Exceptionalism – We will do our best to serve you with exceptional service
- Work Ethic– We will work hard and smart to help you meet your real estate goals
- Honesty – We will tell you the truth no matter what
- Confidential – Whatever you tell us, stays with us no matter what



- We Will serve you with Exceptional Real Estate Service and To LISTEN to you. We Will fight tooth and nail to get you the biggest return on your investment. We Will tell you what you NEED to hear, not necessarily what you want to hear. We Will never force you into a deal - but please take our professional opinion seriously as we have your best interest in mind. We Will return your call quickly. You will always get a return call as soon as we are available. We Will be with you through every step of the transaction.
- We Will give you our full attention during our meetings with you. (i.e. not taking phone calls, etc.) We
- Will not abandon you after the sale is complete. We are your life long real estate professionals.
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# NEW REAL ESTATE RULES 1.0

What the NAR Settlement Means for Home Buyers and Sellers On March 15, The National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) reached an agreement with plaintiffs that would, if approved by the court, end litigation claims brought on behalf of home sellers related to broker commissions.

The Settlement also includes some changes to real estate transactions, but importantly, consumers will continue to have choices regarding real estate services.

**These changes went into effect on August 17, 2024:** Real estate agents who use and list properties for sale on a Multiple Listing Service (MLS)—a local marketplace used by real estate professionals (both buyer brokers and listing brokers)—share information about inventory in a particular area—will be required to enter into written agreements with buyers before touring a home.

Those written agreements must include:

- A specific and conspicuous disclosure of the amount or rate of compensation the real estate agent will receive for this amount will be determined. Compensation that is objective (e.g., \$0, X flat fee, X percent, X hourly rate)—and not open-ended (e.g. “buyer broker compensation shall be whatever the amount the seller offers offering to the buyer”). A term that prohibits the agent from receiving compensation for broker services from any source other than the amount or rate agreed to in the agreement with the buyer; and a conspicuous statement that broker fees and commissions are fully negotiable and not set by law. NAR has encouraged its members to use written agreements with buyers because they help consumers understand what services they have agreed to, the roles and responsibilities, and the amount. For this reason, several states already have laws requiring buyer agreements.



# NEW REAL ESTATE RULES 1.1



There are also changes to how and where real estate professionals may communicate with each other regarding offers of compensation. **These offers are no longer allowed on Multiple Listing Service (MLS) platforms. Agents can still offer compensation off an MLS. Sellers can offer buyer concessions on an MLS (for example— for buyer closing costs).**

Things to know as a home buyer or seller: If you are a buyer and your agent is using an MLS, you will need to sign a written agreement (BAC) with your agent before touring a home so you understand exactly what services will be provided, and for how much. 1. 2. 3.

Written agreements are required for both in-person and live virtual home tours. You do not need a written agreement if you are just speaking to an agent at an open house or asking them about their services.

Agent compensation for home buyers and sellers continues to be fully negotiable. When finding an agent to work with, ask questions about their services, experience, knowledge, expertise, and what their buyer compensation is for them to represent you.

# HOW WE GET PAID



- In order for anyone to see a home effective 8/17/24, any potential home buyer must be represented and have signed a Buyer Representation Agreement. The Buyer Representation Agreement binds you to us and us to you, for us to be able to show you any properties and represent you. We negotiate what our fee will be to be your fiduciary representative You would be paying us to be your agents to represent your best interest in any real estate transaction Our first option is to always get the seller to pay us our fee as part of the total offer to the seller. We can either have the seller's broker pay us through a Compensation Agreement Between Brokers or the seller can give you a seller concession credit that can be used to pay our fee as a line item at closing. We will always try to get the seller to pay us! We can always adjust our BRA fee based on what the seller or listing broker is offering to buyer's agent commission. Commissions are and have always been negotiable! The Buyer Representation Agreement can be for one house showing or a specific time period binding agreement. We always want you to feel To get you in to look at any property, we must have a signed Buyer Representation Agreement or one of our brokerage showing agreements in place. We need to decide if this is going to be a exclusive Buyer Representation Agreement or a nonexclusive Buyer Representation Agreement We do not want to tie you to us long term unless we have proven our value and earned your business. You don't know what we can do for you till we work together.
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# THE BUYING PROCESS

**Many people think real estate goes something like this...**

Step 1: Search online for houses in your desired area

Step 2: Set up a showing

Step 3: Make an offer, which is immediately accepted

Step 4: Close the deal

Step 5: MOVE IN

**Unfortunately, buying and selling real estate can be a complex matter.**



No two properties or transactions, regardless of how identical they are on paper, are alike. In this maze of forms, financing, inspections, marketing, pricing and negotiating, it makes sense to work with professionals who actively know the community and its market. **WE ARE THOSE PROFESSIONALS.**

Whether you are a first-time home buyer or entering the marketplace as a repeat buyer, real estate transactions can be a stressful and confusing process because of the constantly changing laws and market.

We strive to make the process as simple and enjoyable as possible. To make our goals a successful reality we must provide you with as much information and assistance as possible while also learning precisely what you want out of this real estate transaction.

This packet will provide you, as the buyer, with the answers to the real estate who, what, when, where, and why.

# LENDERS & MORTGAGES 1.0

**Most people do not have the money to pay cash for a home? According to the National Association of Realtors nearly 9 of 10 buyers finance their purchase of a home.**

Purchasing a home and financing are closely intertwined. (Financing is the difference between the purchase price and your down payment.) The good news is, new and innovative loan programs are available that require as little as a 3.5% to 5% down payment. A few specialized loan programs like the VA (for Active Duty Military & Veterans and USDA (Rural homes) can get a loan that requires NOTHING down!

Once you have determined a loan will be needed, it is time to make application with a mortgage lender. We urge our clients to talk to a mortgage lender as soon as they decide that they are interested in purchasing a home. This is advised because people may need to spend time saving more money, increasing their incomes, paying down some debts, or cleaning up their credit before they are eligible to purchase a property.

We want you to have these issues handled before you fall in love with a home and then have to watch it be sold to someone else because we weren't prepared to buy. This process also helps everyone involved define the appropriate price range to pursue. Once a lender is selected, they will request permission to run your credit report and ask you for information regarding your work/residence history, income, down payment and assets.

Assuming the information provided is satisfactory, the lender will then be able to tell you how much you can afford to borrow. Regardless of this amount, please make sure the monthly payments for this particular loan will also meet your comfort level.

## **Documents You Will Need To Provide To Lender**

### **1. Tax returns**

Mortgage lenders want to get the full story of your financial situation. You'll probably need to sign a Form 4506-T, which allows the lender to request a copy of your certified copy of tax returns from the IRS.

Lenders generally want to see two years' worth of tax returns. This is to make sure your annual income is consistent with your reported earnings through pay stubs and there aren't huge fluctuations from year to year.

### **2. Pay stubs, W-2s or other proof of income**

Lenders will ask to see your pay stubs from the past month or so. Your tax returns help give them a clear idea of your overall financial health, while pay stubs help them gauge your current earnings. If you're self-employed or have other sources of income (such as child support), you may need to show your lender proof through 1099 forms, direct deposits or other means.

# LENDERS & MORTGAGES 1.1

## 3. Bank statements and other assets

When assessing your risk profile, lenders may want to look at your bank statements and other assets. This can include your investment assets as well as your insurance, such as life insurance.

## 4. Credit history

In order to assess you as a borrower, lenders often pull your credit report — with your verbal or written permission. You should be prepared to write a statement that explains negative items on your credit report. This helps a lender evaluate what kind of risk you are. Lenders may look at one-time unavoidable circumstances differently from habitual delinquency.

## 5. Gift letters

Your family might help you buy a house by giving you money. If that's the case, you'll need to provide a written confirmation the money is indeed a gift from a family member and not a loan. The documentation should list their relationship to you as well as the amount of the gift.

## 6. Photo ID

You'll likely need to provide a photo ID, such as a driver's license. This is simply to prove you are who you're claiming to be.

We recommend you ask your lender what specific documentation you will need to provide. Being well prepared upfront will help the loan process run smoothly and potentially avoid any unwelcomed surprises.

Once an appropriate figure has been determined, your lender will be in a position to forward a pre-approval letter to us, your realtors, so it can be presented to a listing agent when we write a purchase offer for the home you want.

This letter confirms your financial strength and demonstrates you have the ability to be approved for a specific type of mortgage financing. **This information is crucial to sellers to consider your offer as a serious offer.**

**ALWAYS KEEP COPIES OF EVERY DOCUMENT YOU SEND THE LENDER, MANY TIMES DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS (PROCESSOR & UNDERWRITER) WILL ASK FOR THE SAME DOCUMENT.**

# MEMEBERSHIPS & CERTIFICATIONS

Millions of new and existing homes are sold each year. There's no shortage of housing options, so our challenge isn't finding a home, it's finding the right one. A home is more than just a collection of bedrooms and bathrooms. Several properties -- each with four bedrooms, three baths, and the same price -- may represent radically different designs, commuting distances, lot sizes, tax costs, interior dimensions, and finishes.

With so many choices it is easy to become overwhelmed about the home finding experience. In an attempt to eradicate all apprehension, we have provided you with our needs analysis questionnaire (see last pages of this document) before our first formal meeting. This will get you thinking about your options before we sit down and decide where we should begin our search.

## San Antonio & Central Texas MLS's

**LOCAL MLS** – We pay to be members of both the San Antonio (SABOR) MLS, Central Texas MLS, Texas Association of Realtors, and the national association of realtors. We pay extra to maximize your search of homes in the area.



**SYNDICATED REAL ESTATE WEBSITES** – We pay to be on syndicated on real estate websites like, Realtor.com, Zillow, Trulia, Hot Pads, Yahoo Homes, Redfin, and more.



**MILITARY & VETERAN CERTIFICATIONS** - We are veteran Advocates: Keith is one of a very few REALTORS® who has all three military/veteran expert certifications in the area.

Keith is an Army veteran and it is our honor to serve our Active Duty Military, Retired Military & Veterans. *Welovetoserve those who have served us!*



# CLOSING COST & DOWN PAYMENT 1.0

One major concern people have when purchasing a home with a mortgage is how much money they will need to fork out upfront. While we cannot give you an exact number we thought a breakdown of average cost(s) would help you visualize your monetary outcome after the sale.

Closing cost is the money the bank requires you to put down upfront to insure you are a proper client with good standings. As previously stated there are loans that allow for 0% down. If you do not qualify for these loans do not despair. In this market it is commonplace for buyers to ask the sellers to pay for their closing cost. Remember though, if you do not have the cash to pay for closing cost you may need to offer more on the house for the sellers to agree to pay for your closing expenses.

- Earnest Money Deposit is usually 1% of purchase price \$200,000 home would be \$2,000
- Option Fee is a fee (\$10.00 a day and is usually 5-10 days)
- Closing Cost is usually 3.5% of Purchase Price! (\$200,000 home is = \$7,000)
- Home Inspection \$250-&600
- Home Warranty \$400-\$700

**Earnest money deposit** is the money put down on the house you want to buy. It's used to show sellers that you are very serious about purchasing their home. Assuming all goes well and you buy the property, the earnest money goes toward your down payment and closing costs. You will write a check to be deposited into escrow as your earnest money deposit after your offer on a home has been accepted and you sign the purchase agreement. Your money is held in an escrow account owned by a licensed local title company.

**An Option Fee** (usually 10 days) from the seller for \$10.00 a day that gives you the irrevocable privilege to back out of the sales contract for any reason, and still receive your 1 percent earnest money back. (During this time, the Seller cannot back out of the contract...only the Buyer has that right.) This gives you time to have the home thoroughly inspected and find any defects that you cannot live with. It also allows time to negotiate repairs with the Seller.

**Home Inspection** (See How to Hire a Home Inspector later in this book.)

**Home Warranty** is very beneficial when purchasing a home as you will be covered on appliances and other expensive items like the central Air conditioning system for at least a year after the sale is final. Some sellers offer a home warranty upfront, while others will pay for it if added into the contract. If the seller refuses to pay for it we still advise our clients to purchase one to protect themselves and their investment.

# CLOSING COST & DOWN PAYMENT 1.1

**Now that you have found the home you would like to purchase, we will need to make an offer.**

As your realtors, we will do a comparative market analysis (CMA) to determine what prices for similar homes have actually sold for in the past 6-12 months. From there we will sit down with you to come up with a price that we, as a collective whole, feel comfortable offering.

**Ultimately it is up to you to have the final say on the price and terms of the offer.**

We will normally prepare the contract, go over it in person, and have you sign then. Depending on circumstances though, we may send you the contract via email where you electronically sign it.

**The contract will state, among other things:**

- What additional items other than fixtures you are requesting in the sale of the property (fixtures are items that are affixed to the property, i.e. made permanent)
- Purchase price
- The type of loan you are using
- What other financial terms you seek to obtain from the seller (closing cost)
- Time frame for acceptance, counter, or denial
- Your amount of earnest money and the title company escrow account it will be held in
- Time frame for inspections
- Settlement/funding /closing date



# THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS

Once we have prepared the contract and you have signed on the dotted line we will then send the contract to the listing agent and begin negotiations.

Negotiations can be a very messy and teeth-grinding process that is dealt with behind the scenes, allowing you as the buyer to simply come in at the end for the final decision.

One of our biggest assets as a real estate team is our ability to negotiate and get you the best price for the house of your dreams.

If the seller counters your offer, then the option to counter, accept, or walk away is now yours. This vacillating process will persist until one accepts the others offer and terms.

**An Executed contract is delivered to you, buyer, title company and participating real state agents once all parties have signed.**

We will send the executed contract to your mortgage lender. Your lender will then be in contact with you to set up an appointment to collect any remaining documentation, review disclosures relating to your specific loan program, discuss locking in on a specific mortgage rate, and let you know what to expect throughout the loan process.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: We love a house that is priced at \$200,000 but our limit is \$175,000. Should we even bother writing a contract offer?**

A: Many factors play a role in what a house will sell for. The house could be overpriced, the market could have shifted, the sellers may be desperate, etc. What a seller wants and what a seller gets are two different things. Do not let the listing price sway you from making a reasonable offer. **THE MARKET DETERMINES WHAT A HOUSE IS REALLY WORTH AT ANY GIVEN TIME.**

**Q: How long do the sellers have to accept, counter, or deny our offer?**

A: This is something we will decide together and will be written into the contract. The deadline is typically set for around 24 hours.

**Q: I loved the curtains in the living room, could I ask for those in the sale?**

A: Yes, there is a section of the contract in which we put the items you would like to remain in the home at the conclusion of the sale. We can add the curtains to that list, but remember they do not have to accept all terms of the contract, as long as the final outcome has your approval.

**Q: We want to place an offer on a house but cannot afford the house until we sell ours. Can we still make an offer?**

A: Yes, we will make an offer called a "Contingent Offer," where we will provide the terms to buying their house, i.e. the sale of yours. The seller will have the ability to still market the property but would have to disclose to any potential buyers to us. If another buyer makes an offer you will have the opportunity to either remove the contingency and buy the property or remove your offer all together.

**Q: We do not have the funds to pay for closing cost. Can we ask the seller to provide that money? A:**

In this current market buyers often ask the sellers to pay for their closing cost. Please do remember though, this is decreasing the final amount the seller is walking away with, so you may need to bid more on the home to have them pay closing. **ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING** is negotiable.

**Q: We are purchasing an 8 acre property and do not have the equipment to maintain it. I saw the owner has a tractor and would love to have it. Can we put that into the contract?**

A: While we will not be placing the sale of the tractor into the actual contract we can write a separate **NON REALTY ITEMS ADDENDUM** which will be enforced with the contract

# BUYER HOME INSPECTION

**The home inspection is set up by you, in the time designated in the contract option period.** The average time delegated for a home inspection to be conducted is 5-10 days after the ratification of the contract, but you need time to evaluate the report and decide on repairs you may want performed by the seller.

The sooner the inspection is performed the better. Home Inspections range from \$225.00 to \$550.00 on houses that are 1000-3500 Sq. Ft.

It is common for both, the buying realtor, us, and the buyer, you, to be present during the home inspection so you can ask any questions necessary and you understand the issues at hand. Before hiring a home inspector, we would recommend you ask some important questions (See how to hire a home inspector on the next page)



Once the home inspection is complete, the inspectors will send you (and us) the report, whereby we will talk through the report with you and determine what we should ask, if anything, the seller repair.

The repairs will be placed in an amendment. Remember, the seller does not have to fix anything that isn't structurally unsafe so please do not be too picky or else the contract may fall through, and you could lose the house.

We always seek to get funds back at closing instead of asking seller to repair because sellers are not going to care as much as you about your new home. Sometimes the lender requires repairs before they will close and that requires the seller to make repair the repairs. **Once you sign the repair amendment it will be sent to the seller to sign.**

# HOME INSPECTOR QUESTIONS 1.0



## Questions to Ask Home Inspector



By Keith D. Campbell - REALTOR®, MRP, CMR®, CMRS & Former 13 Year Licensed Professional Inspector #10107

**1. What Type of Inspector are You?** There are three different types of inspectors.

\* **Apprentice Inspectors** (Must be sponsored by a Professional Inspector and they have no education and have not taken a state inspection exam) These are the least experienced and educated inspectors there are!

\* **Real Estate Inspector** (Sponsored by a licensed professional inspector who is eligible to sponsor, they have Satisfied the TREC's requirements for honesty, integrity and trustworthiness (Background Investigation through DPS), they have completed 90 hours of class room education and they Must be sponsored by a licensed Professional Inspector who must provide indirect supervision for all inspections performed by the Real Estate Inspector, and they must have passed the Texas Inspector's Test with at least a 80% grade.

\* **Professional Inspector** (No Sponsor Needed, They are sponsors) A professional inspector must have Satisfied the TREC's requirements for honesty, integrity and trustworthiness (Background Investigation through DPS), and have completed Must have been actively licensed as a Real Estate Inspector for at least 12 months during the 24 month period prior to filing the Professional Inspector application AND must have completed 175 inspections under indirect supervision while licensed as a Real Estate Inspector or complete 430 hours of class room education, field testing and have tested deep understanding of home construction and inspection process. YOU ALWAYS WANT TO HIRE AN INSPECTOR WHO IS A TEACHER. THEY WILL SPEND THE TIME TO EXPLAIN THE HOUSE TO YOU IN EASY TO UNDERSTAND TERMS AND GIVE YOU BOTH AN EDUCATION AND CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE HOMES CONDITION!

**2. What does your inspection cover?** The inspector should ensure that their inspection and inspection report will meet all Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) laws. You should look at the TREC website at <http://www.trec.state.tx.us/inspector> and see the Texas SOP inspection minimums. Look at these SOP's and ask the inspector about what he inspects. If there are any areas you want to make sure are inspected, be sure to identify them upfront.

**3. How long have you been in the home inspection profession and how many inspections have you completed?** The inspector should be able to provide his or her history in the profession and even a few names as referrals. Newer inspectors can be very qualified, and many work with a partner or have access to more experienced inspectors to assist them in the inspection. You want a Professional Inspector with at least 200 inspections.

**4. Do you offer to do repairs or improvements based on the inspection?** In Texas it is illegal for an inspector to inspect a property and then perform repair work on it. It is a conflict of interest for a inspector to work on a property they have inspected.

**5. How long will the inspection take?** The average on-site inspection time for a single inspector is two to three hours for a typical single-family house; anything significantly less may not be enough time to perform a thorough inspection. Additional inspectors may be brought in for very large properties and buildings.

**6. How much will it cost?** Costs vary dramatically, depending on the size and age of the house, scope of services and other factors. A typical range might be \$250-\$1000, but consider the value of the home inspection in terms of the investment being made. Cost does not necessarily reflect quality.

**7. What type of inspection report do you provide and how long will it take to receive the report?** Ask to see samples and determine whether or not you can understand the inspector's reporting style. Are their lots of pictures with clear and easy to understand descriptions? Most inspectors provide their full report same day or following morning. Inspectors who do not take pictures or who will not send you a sample inspection

**8. Have You Been Disciplined By Texas Real Estate Commission?** You can go to TREC website and check for any disciplinary actions against a inspector

**9. Will I be able to attend the inspection?** This is a valuable educational opportunity, and an inspector's refusal to allow this should raise a red flag. Never pass up this opportunity to see your prospective home through the eyes of an expert, and always ask questions if you do not understand something.

**10. Do you use thermal imaging camera to check for leaks and insulation issues and do you use a Zip level to measure foundation differentials?** Thermal cameras find issues that hidden in walls and ceilings and other issues not found otherwise.

YOUR HOME IS THE LARGEST INVESTMENTS MOST OF US WILL EVER MAKE! TAKE THE TIME AND HIRE AN INSPECTOR WHO WILL GIVE YOU THEIR BEST EFFORT, WHO IS EXPERIENCED, WHO WILL EDUCATE YOU AS THEY EXPLAIN THE SYSTEMS AND CONDITIONS OR THE PROPERTY. DO NOT LET THE PRICE DICTATE YOUR CHOICE. THERE ARE BAD INSPECTORS WHO OVER CHARGE AND THERE ARE GREAT INSPECTORS WHO DON'T CHARGE AS MUCH, ASK QUESTIONS. <http://www.trec.state.tx.us/inspector/default.asp> to check if the inspector has any complaints and to verify their license

# THE HOME APPRAISAL

The type of appraisal completed on the property will be determined by the type of loan program selected.

For your protection, we instruct the lender to wait until you have reviewed, and are comfortable with, the home inspection prior to ordering the appraisal. This is done to eliminate the possibility of paying for an unnecessary appraisal should undesirable items reveal themselves on the inspection report.



Though it is a rare occurrence, we would not want you paying for an appraisal and a home inspection if a “deal killing” item is discovered that causes you to no longer want to purchase the house.

Unlike the home inspection, you will not be required to be present at the appraisal inspection. While the primary purpose of the inspection is to determine the condition of the house, the primary objective of the appraisal is to ascertain its current market value.

Once the appraisal is concluded the lender will then send all information to underwriting to insure the timeliness of closing.

# HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATIONS

## PROS

- Maintains and pays for the upkeep of common areas such as swimming pools, tennis courts, playgrounds, public gardens, golf courses and club houses. Without an HOA you may not have a community with these amenities within your neighborhood.
- May provide services such as driveway snow removal or lawn cutting for each residence, ensuring a clean, well-kept look throughout the neighborhood at all times.
- Mediates disputes between residents. Problems are brought to the HOA which acts as a miniature government for resolving problems.
- Helps maintain and/or raise property values by regulating things that help keep a neighborhood looking its best, such as keeping garage doors closed, no outdoor clothes lines, no colored outdoor lights.
- Hosts annual parties, such as block parties and family nights, which helps build camaraderie in the neighborhood.



## CONS

- It feels as if “Big Brother” is always watching you to see if your grass is mowed at the right level, if you planted the right types of flowers in your yard, etc.
- Homeowners looking to rent out or sell their residences may need to have the new potential occupant screened and approved by the HOA board.
- Dues you owe are another added expense for you to consider when factoring how much you can afford when purchasing your new home.
- An HOA can put a lien on your home or force a foreclosure on your property if you do not pay your dues within a set time frame. And if you fight them in court and lose, more than likely you will have to also cover the HOA’s legal bill.
- Some HOAs are poorly managed, in part because board members tend to be volunteers, with a paying day job or other personal obligations, and there is only so much time they can dedicate to overseeing matters.

HOA’s are not all the same. Some are very relaxed while others may have a number of rules to follow. The type of HOA a home has is an important factor to consider when purchasing a property.

# FINAL WALK-THROUGH

**Assuming that everything has run smoothly, or at least everything is in the process of being fixed, the next step is to prepare for the move and wait for the final walk-through.**

We will continue to work behind the scenes with your mortgage lender and the title company who will be performing your closing. We will make sure all items are in order to insure proper transfer of title. The last and final step before closing is the walkthrough.

The final walk-through is the time when we all go through the house and make sure everything is clean and in working order.



## **We will walk the property to make sure that:**

- Repairs you have requested have been made. Obtain copies of paid bills and warranties.
- There are no major changes to the property since you last viewed it.
- All items that were included in the sale price — draperies, lighting fixtures, etc. are still there.
- Screens and storm windows are in place or stored.
- All appliances are operating, such as the dishwasher, water softener, oven, etc.
- Doorbell, and alarm are operational is part of sale.
- Hot water heater is working.
- No plants or shrubs have been removed from the yard.
- •Heating and air conditioning system is working
- Garage door opener and other remotes are available. •All personal items of the sellers and all debris have been removed. Check the attic, and every room, closet, storage buildings, and crawlspace (if pier & beam home).

# CLOSING DAY :)

## It is finally here! The day of closing!

We will meet you at the title company office to perform the final acts of the deed transfer and closing.

You will be handed a large amount of papers to sign, but do not worry, the title officer will go over everything you are signing to insure you walk away with knowledge of your actions.

Once everything is signed and the mortgage company has funded the deal to the title company, it is time for our favorite part...handing over the keys to your new home!

Congratulations, you are the proud new owner of a good house that will soon become a great home.

It was our esteemed pleasure to have worked with you through this process, and are ecstatic we could find you the home to build your future in.



**Please let us know if we could ever be of assistance in the future, for you or anyone you know.**

### **Items to bring to closing or have completed for closing**

- Valid ID or Passport or Military ID for every signer
- Cashiers Check or Wire Funds “Cash to Close” to title company

**MAKE SURE ANYONE WHO IS ON THE LOAN OR WHO WILL BE ON THE TITLE ARE PRESENT THAT DAY AT THE TITLE COMPANY FOR THE CLOSING AND THAT EVERYONE HAS A VALID DRIVERS LICENSE, STATE ID, MILITARY ID, OR PASSPORT.**

# YOUR MOVE IN CHECK LIST



- CHANGE THE EXTERIOR DOOR LOCKS ASAP. YOU DO NOT KNOW WHO HAS A KEY?
- GET YOUR ELECTRICITY TURNED ON IN YOUR NAME
- GET THE NATURAL GAS TURNED ON IN YOUR NAME
- GET THE WATER & SEWER TURNED ON IN YOUR NAME
- CONTACT YOUR LOCAL POST OFFICE AND OBTAIN A CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM: WITHIN 30 DAYS
- GIVE A CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO THE FOLLOWING: BANKS, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, CELL PHONE COMPANY, CREDIT CARD COMPANIES, ETC...
- DRIVERS LICENSE MUST BE UPDATED WITHIN SIXTY DAYS