ENGEL&VÖLKERS

Home Buying Simplified

Your guide to buying your dream home.

Meet your Advisor

Karen Geary

Congratulations! The path to home ownership is an exciting time. I hope that this journal will assist you in answering questions as well as capturing details that you will want to recall along the way.

Rooted in the Newburyport community for more than two decades, I've cultivated an extensive local knowledge, gaining insights into the market's challenges, its people, and the art of getting results. I look forward to leveraging Engel &Volkers' renowned resources. to deliver tailored solutions that exceed your expectations. Let me help you find your new home and begin your new life!

Thank you for trusting me to be your advocate and your guide!

Karen Geary
Global Real Estate Advisor

Welcome to the North Shore

Be your own landlord.

The Benefits of Homeownership

Home Equity

When you own a home you are investing your money into your future. Home equity increases each time you make a monthly payment, if home values rise, and when you make smart improvements to your home. The greater your equity, the more you can capitalize on your home's value over time.

Tax Advantage

Significant portions of your monthly mortgage payments are deductible! Done correctly with the advice of your tax preparer, your home office may be, too.

Creative Freedom

Owning a property allows you to surround yourself with an aesthetic that reflects your personality and brings you joy. The possibilities are endless when it comes to turning your home into your dream space.

Fixed Costs

Rates may fluctuate, but your mortgage payment will stay fixed. Rents and rates may rise, but you will be safe knowing your monthly spend for your home. Likewise, should rates fall, you have the ability to refinance your home for a more favorable rate.

Stability

A home should be a place of comfort and happiness. With home ownership comes security in an investment and a space where memories are made, long term.

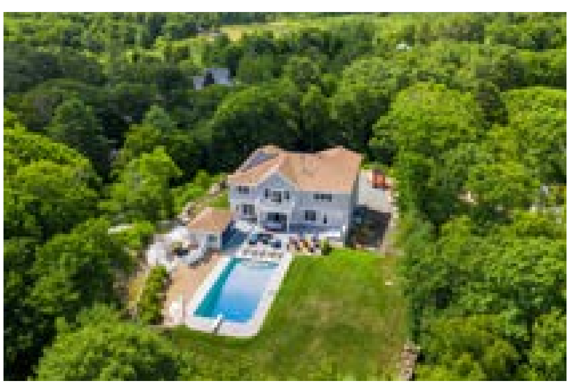
Wealth Creation

"Ninety percent of all millionaires become so through owning real estate. More money has been made in real estate than in all industrial investments combined. The wise young man or wage earner of today invests his money in real estate"

- Andrew Carnegie





Find Your Perfect Home, Confidently.

Here's what you can expect from me

My goal is to help you find a home that suits you perfectly and build wealth through savvy real estate acquisition. From our first meeting until you take the keys to your new home, I will listen to what is important to you and offer consultation as needed. You will benefit from my experience and perspective - analyzing property details, pertinent data, and forging your personalized path to success. My priority is to guide your purchase process with trust, care, and confidentiality, celebrating every step. Your home buying experience is special to me because real estate is my business and passion, and I am committed to providing exemplary service beyond your expectations.

Every detail that is important to you, is important to us.

Consistent Communication

It's our Promise to alert you to new properties, factors that may affect the market, and any deadlines or progress in your transaction, so that you know what is happening every step of the way.

Local Expertise

To maximize your time and energy, work with someone who truly knows the towns and communities you're interested in. I provide data, insights, and local consultation tailored to your personal goals and needs.

Education

If this is your first purchase or a new neighborhood, I'll provide the information you need for confident decisions. At Engel & Völkers, we prioritize continuous improvement to ensure you understand everything thoroughly.

Show Properties

I'll be your guide when we start looking. On the North Shore, showings require scheduling 24 hours in advance. I'll arrange tours and discuss your preferences until we find the perfect home.

Property Analysis

We are able to provide data-driven, helpful insight on the merits or drawbacks of specific properties, and create an analysis of value for any home you are considering, including resale potential.

Offer Strategy

Crafting compelling offers and counteroffers is crucial for catching a seller's attention. Our extensive negotiation training ensures your offer stands out, helping you achieve your goals. We take your success seriously!

Paperwork

Drafting offers, filling forms correctly, and meeting deadlines are key to your success. Our diligence keeps you safe and compliant. As tech-savvy and paperless, you can sign most documents from your phone or computer.

Advocate

From day one until closing, I'll advocate for you. As your Buyer's Agent, I promise loyalty, confidentiality, and diligent care, negotiating on your behalf to advance your interests as you describe them.

Help Build A Team

We work with trusted partners to provide essential services like financing, insurance, and inspections. We serve all clients equally, regardless of race, creed, sex, religion, national origin, familial status, or sexual orientation.

The best agents help you buy and sell, but at E&V By The Sea, we do more.

We call our agents Advisors to reflect their superior service. We're highly selective, holding ourselves to high standards, because closing a home represents more than a transaction—it's where your life unfolds.

First Time Buyer Assistance

Your first purchase can be daunting, but I'm here to guide you. This book covers the basics, and I'll explain each step. Plus, I can recommend top lenders, attorneys, and inspectors to ensure your success.

Investment Property

Real estate is a fast, stable way to build wealth. As an experienced guide, I'll help you qualify tenants, renovate, and assess market value. With a surging rental market, my expertise ensures your investment succeeds.

Relocation Assistance

Moving to the North Shore or anywhere globally? Our Engel & Völkers team ensures a smooth transition. Rely on my expertise and contacts to find your perfect home remotely. Moving away? Trust our advisors worldwide. Need relocation help? I'll handle the paperwork

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New Construction

Building a new home is exciting! I'll keep you updated, organize details, and assist with choosing amenities, finishes, and upgrades that enhance market value and your investment.

Condo

Condos require unique knowledge and documents compared to single-family homes. I will evaluate specific financing criteria and ensure the unit and building suit your needs. My expertise ensures a smooth condo purchase and closing.

Additional Buyer Services I am pleased to provide

Different Homes Need Different Expertise

Team Up for Your Dream Home.

Buying a home is filled with equal parts strategic thinking & emotion.

We'll work as a team to navigate both of those elements, because choosing a home represents a significant investment in your future, but it also needs to be a place you truly love. Ever changing market conditions may affect the path you take in finding the property that's right for you, and the features that are important to you today may not be the features you find most important after you get out there and start looking. Don't worry, that happens all the time. The fun is in the search.

Fill out the form & let the search begin

What's your style:

- ☐ Investment
- ☐ Single Family
- ☐ Condo
- ☐ Multi Family
- ☐ Condo
- ☐ Land
- ☐ New Construction
- ☐ Charming & Cozy
- ☐ Contemporary
- ☐ Waterfront
- ☐ Charming
- ☐ Walk to Town
- ☐ Woodsy
- ☐ Private

Bedrooms:

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5+

Bathrooms:

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3+
- ☐ Primary Bathroom

What I/we can handle:

- ☐ Just clean & paint
- ☐ I'll do a kitcehn or a bath
- ☐ Total renovation, bring it on!

Home Feaures

- ☐ Finished basement
- ☐ Pool
- ☐ Fireplace
- ☐ Central Air
- ☐ Home office
- ☐ First floor bedroom
- ☐ Big yard
- ☐ Garage

Price Range

- ☐ >$400,000
- ☐ $400,000 - $750,000
- ☐ $750,000 - $1,000,000
- ☐ $1,000,000+

Square Footage

- ☐ >1,500
- ☐ 1,500 - 2,500
- ☐ 2,500 - 5,000
- ☐ 5,000+

Lot Size

- ☐ >2 Acres
- ☐ 2 - 5 Acres
- ☐ 5 - 10 Acress
- ☐ 10+ Acres

My/Our Favorite Towns

1. ______________________
2. ______________________
3. ______________________
4. ______________________
5. ______________________

Yes, please!

____

____

____

No, thank you!

____

____

____


POINT

Find Your Perfect North Shore Community.

Here's what you can expect from me

When it comes to looking for a home, one of the most important questions is, **where?** If you aren't familiar with the area, try to spend some extra time in and around each town you are considering, doing a bit of your own research to make sure the community is a comfortable fit for you. So many factors go into deciding which community is just right, and these little North Shore towns are so different in amenities and personality. That's the beauty and the good news - that within just a few miles of each other, one of these towns is probably perfect for **you**.

Spend Time In The Neighborhood

- Drive through at different times of day and week.
- Enjoy a meal at local restaurant.
- Speak to the locals.
- What types of homes do you see in this community?
- Go to Open Houses with me to get a good feel of what you can buy.

What's Important To You?

- City, suburbs or rural?
- How long is my commute to work, school or people you visit regularly?
- Proximity to major routes or public transportation?
- Open space, parks, museums, restaurants?
- An up and coming area vs. an established one.
- How close are the necessities- shopping, a cute town center, a gym or stable?

Do your research

- Compare school ratings online, visit schools or speak to school departments.
- Check with local police department to ask about the neighborhood.
- Pick up or subscribe to a local paper to hear current local issues.
- Research things like soil or water quality.
- Check planning boards for future development.
- Check with the Building Inspector to know about permits, zoning and restrictions.
- Investigate any recorded or unrecorded easements.
- Check with Conservation Committee to see about land restrictions.

Location = Value.

Location, Location, Location

This is one of the most important factors to consider when you are looking for your new home, because unlike structures, paint colors and flooring, the location of your home cannot be changed. Beyond the physical location of the home within the city or town, you should also think about its location in the neighborhood, community, and/or the building, as this too will have an impact on your home's value.
Why is the right location so important?

Watch Detailed Video Here

Beverly

Located about 26 miles from Boston, Beverly has the small-town charm you look for in an oceanfront community, coupled with a sophisticated city identity. With easy access to Route 128, five commuter rail stations, excellent public and private schools.

Median Sale Price
$661,000

Newbury

Beautiful, yet unassuming, Newbury is notable for both it's coastal and inland beauty, and was the mother of Newburyport & West Newbury. Her streets are dotted with antique homes and rolling terrain inland and the popular Plum Island Beach facing the sea.

Median Sale Price
$1,875,000

Essex

Essex is equally loved for its picturesque marshes, abundant forested areas, wetlands and open spaces, as it is for their seafood restaurants and antique stores that famously line its town center.

Median Sale Price
$725,000

Ipswich

Ipswich is a sleepy coastal town that awakens in the summer and fall – welcoming tourists of all ages to her 4 mile long, white sand Crane Beach and delighting brides and elegant party-goers of memorable events at the Gatsby-esque, historic Crane Estate.

Median Sale Price
$759,000

Rockport

Rockport is located at the tip of Cape Ann and is surrounded on three sides by the Atlantic, with quaint summer cottages and magnificent oceanfront homes that dot the rocky shoreline. Tourists and locals adore strolling downtown Bearskin Neck to shop, dine and enjoy the ocean air.

Median Sale Price
$905,000

Gloucester

Gloucester is one of the most breathtaking coastlines on the East Coast. Both modest homes and estates well into the millions are available here for lovers of the sea. Natives enjoy a rich heritage in commercial fishing and shipbuilding, and now an emerging center for research on marine life and conservation.

Median Sale Price
$708,000

Topsfield

Topsfield offers a calm atmosphere with low noise levels, except near the railway line. Residents enjoy easy access to around 10 parks, including Masconomet Regional High School Athletic Fields and Town Common, making it a peaceful community.

Median Sale Price
$1,555,000

Amesbury

Amesbury offers a slower-paced atmosphere with easy access to around 20 public green spaces like Camp Kent Recreation Area and Town Forest. It's generally quiet, though some areas near Interstate 95 or Blue Star Memorial Highway can be noisy.

Median Sale Price
$549,900

Marblehead

Marblehead, birthplace of the American Navy, is renowned for its Revolutionary and Civil War contributions. Just 18 miles north of Boston, its narrow streets and historic buildings reflect its 1629 founding, embodying the charm of New England living.

Median Sale Price
$989,900

Swampscott

Ipswich is a sleepy coastal town that awakens in the summer and fall – welcoming tourists of all ages to her 4 mile long, white sand Crane Beach and delighting brides and elegant party-goers of memorable events at the Gatsby-esque, historic Crane Estate.

Median Sale Price
$759,000

Newburyport

Newburyport is home to an historic seaport and active waterfront, vibrant tourism, and a picturesque downtown shopping district making it a destination for all New Englanders. Exquisite architecture is abound, and the city is known for the stately Federal Style mansions along High Street, built by the seafaring entrepreneurs of yesteryear.

Median Sale Price
$1,350,000

Nahant

The Town of Nahant is a resort town of rocky coasts in the southernmost part of Essex County. Used in early colonial days as a grazing areas for cattle, sheep and goat flocks owned by Lynn residents, Nahant very soon became a maritime community with a small population devoted to fishing.

Median Sale Price
$1,575,000

The Beauty & Charm of the North Shore.

Community Guide

Beauty, art, climate & culture all contribute to Cape Ann's appeal. From seaside, historical charm, to golf communities and equine properties, each North Shore neighborhood offers something for everyone. There is always a way to enjoy the people and the landscape – quaint town festivals and celebrations, world class art & theatre, the beckoning Atlantic and its glorious beaches assure that there will be something to enjoy every week of the year.

Community Resources

Know What To Expect.

A Standard Timeline For Purchasing

Choose your Advisor

Get Pre-Approved

Select Your Home

Write An Offer

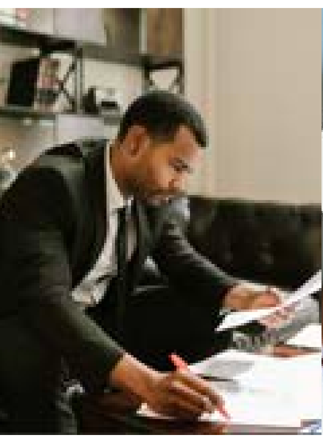
Offer to Inspection, 1-7 Days

Inspections

Do your due diligence

Appraisal

Closing Week
Offer to Close, 45 Days



Execute Purchase & Sale
Offer to P&S, 7-10 Days

Mortgage Commitement
Offer to Mortgage Commitment, 34 Days

Closing
And Celebrate

Your Journey Starts with Us.

Choose Your Advisor

I am thankful that you have found your way to me, and honored to be your guide along this exciting journey. Our next step will be to sit down and you can tell me everything! And that's just what I want to hear - where you'd like to live, what your home looks like, considerations such as schools or public transportation…all of it. If you aren't familiar with the North Shore or a particular town, I'm here to give you an insider's perspective with your goals in mind.

Check Out My Website

Connect with a trusted lender today.

Get Pre-Approved

Our next step, if you haven't already done it, will be to introduce yourself to a reputable lender and get yourself pre-approved for a mortgage.

Because the market has shifted and mortgage products are changing nearly daily, you'll be most successful with a local lender that has experience and options for you. I work with several that have earned my trust over years of great service, and if you need a reference, I'd be pleased to connect you. If you'd prefer to find your own mortgage professional, a great place to start is to ask your friends and family who they have used recently with a great outcome - there is nothing better than a trusted connection.

Once you've selected a lender, you'll need to collect the following documents for your first meeting.

- ✓ Last two years of tax returns
- ✓ Last year of bank statements
- ✓ Mortgages or rents on other properties

After reviewing your credit and the requested documents, your lender will provide you with a pre-approval letter outlining the amount they believe they would confidently lend you and under what terms. You will need this letter in order to submit offers.

Now you are ready to go looking!

Tailored Property Alerts for You.

Find Your Home

We will have already met to discuss your needs, dreams, and desires for your new home and are now ready for the fun part! The best property feed is straight from our MLS, which is the most accurate. I will create a profile for you, and possibilities will appear in a daily email. You can let me know what interests you and what you would like to tour. We will go on scheduled showings and attend Open Houses (you decide with or without me, but it's helpful for me to go). I may also hear about off-market opportunities that I will share with you.

The first one or two appointments together will be a very important part of getting to know what you desire in a home. The more you share, the better job I can do for you.

You may be the one most surprised by the house you fall in love with! Our best advice is to stay open-minded and see the complete inventory. When the house YOU love becomes available, you will have enough market knowledge to act quickly without reservation. Plan ahead for the best time to see houses, but when a good one comes up, time is of the essence!

Simplifying Your Offer Negotiations.

Write an Offer!

You've found the One and you're ready to make an offer! The Contract to Purchase begins the negotiation process between you and the Seller.

Before we put pen to paper, I will help you to analyze all of your pros and cons, and run a comparative analysis that weighs the following factors:

- ✓ Your perceived value of the home- what is it worth to you?
- ✓ Careful analysis of recent, comparable sold properties.
- ✓ How competitive the market is for this type of home.
- ✓ Ability to re-sell at same price or higher.
- ✓ Desire to make it yours, or how important is owning this home to you?

It is unusual that your offer would be accepted outright, but not impossible. Much more likely there will be some level of negotiation. Swiftness of response can be important in securing an accepted offer, so we may play out possible outcomes beforehand in order to provide quick counter offers, and I'll ask you to be by the phone the day we present our offer.

If your offer is accepted, you'll need to provide a check that day for $1000, or a number we have determined is most strategic. This is your earnest money deposit, which will be held in an escrow account, and will be the consideration that binds your offer in good faith. We'll also alert your inspector and attorney that they may be called upon very soon.

If your offer is not accepted, we take the lessons we learned and get right back to it. It may feel like cold comfort, but it really is true - the right house is always waiting for you!

See **10 Steps to Getting your Offer Accepted** in the coming pages.

Ensure Your Dream Home Delivers.

Inspection

You've found the home you love, and now it's time to do the research necessary to make sure it meets your expectations outside of first glances. The exact amount of days will be specified in your offer, but you will likely have 7-14 days (your due diligence period) to complete your inspection as well as any negotiating of items that arise from it, if any. Scheduling this inspection sooner is always better than later, and I encourage you to choose your inspector/s prior to placing any offer.

During your initial inspection, you may uncover issues or questions that need the expertise of a specialist, like a structural engineer or an electrician, and we'll need time to get them into the property. I can help you to find those specialists and schedule them, if needed.

Your attorney will begin to work on finalizing the P&S after we let them know you are comfortable with your inspection and are ready to move forward. We try to work quickly to resolve issues 2-3 days before the P&S is due to allow time for your attorney to make any changes and get in agreement with the Seller's attorney. Giving your attorney plenty of time to do their work is critical to make sure we stay in contract.

An inspection can last 3+ hours and may cost between $500-$2000. You should know the exact cost before inspection day. You can bring anyone that you like to join you, and if you have a trusted advisor, you should. In most cases, you will get a complete report of findings within 12 hours after the inspection."

This version removes details about the weather and frequent communication during the transaction week, focusing on the core steps and considerations involved in the home inspection and negotiation process.

Streamlined Purchase and Sale Process.

Write an Offer!

After you are satisfied with what you've discovered and/or negotiated in your due diligence period, you will sign a Purchase & Sale Agreement, or P&S. Prior to the signing deadline, you should make an appointment to review the P&S with your attorney so that you understand it completely.

When you are ready to sign, you will sign before the Seller, and give me a certified check in the amount of your total down payment, less your earnest money deposit. EX: Total deposit is $10,000. You have already given $1000 earnest money when your offer was accepted, so you'll have a certified check ready at P&S for $9000. This check will join your first deposit in escrow until you close. As a convenience to you, we also use DepositLink, which allows easy transfer of funds without having to get a certified check.

If you decide not to move forward with the transaction based on your due diligence, and we are within our agreed upon inspection period, you will have your earnest money returned in the overwhelming majority of cases.

Once the P&S has been signed, you will begin the formal loan application process.

- ✓ Review P&S with attorney
- ✓ Deliver 2nd deposit
- ✓ Sign P&S
- ✓ Begin formal loan application

Appraisal & Options.

Appraisal

After the P&S is signed, the bank will send out an appraiser to determine the bank's opinion of value before they approve your loan. You pay for this in your closing costs at about $400-600, and get a copy to keep. You do not attend the appraisal- just the listing broker and the appraiser attend. If the property appraises at what you agreed to pay for it or higher, there is nothing for you to do. If the appraised value comes in lower than what you agreed to pay, you have choices.

1. Providing your contract .has a mortgage contingency that allows for it intact, you could release yourself from the transaction.
2. You could negotiate the sale price lower, if the seller is willing, to accommodate the value given.
3. You could ask if your bank will allow a second appraisal. Small chance, but it sometimes exists.
4. You may be able to work with your mortgage provider to adjust fees or if you are putting down a significant downpayment, to allow you to put down less as a down payment, essentially absorbing some or all of the difference in the appraisal gap.
5. You could pay the difference. Your lender and I will walk you through it, should this occur.

Also around this time, your attorney will initiate a title search to make sure there are no unknown claims to ownership on the property. If there are not, you will have "clear title", which is good. If there are, your team will work to clear those items, which may delay the closing, depending.

✓ Appraisal to determine value

✓ Your attorney does a title search

Major Milestone achieved!

Mortgage Commitment

This is a REALLY big day - mortgage commitment day! Today is the day that the bank must tell you (in the form of a letter/email) that they have completed their due diligence and are ready to commit to giving you your loan. For your privacy, the letter will come only to you.

There will be conditions on this letter that will need to be met AFTER today, which presents a calculated risk for you, and why it is so important to review the letter with your lender and attorney before calling me to say you have accepted it.

Most of these conditions are standard - like re-checking your credit and employment-so please don't buy anything large on credit or change jobs yet! Other conditions may not be so standard, and you need to make sure you CAN fulfill them.

Examples might be to close on your current house, or fix a problem with your credit. We will make sure that all open contingencies of your P&S are completed or will be by closing day, and you'll need to get your insurance binder, including flood insurance if necessary, by closing.

Simplify Your Move.

Closing Week

This may be a frantic week for you, as any move can be, but with proper planning the final days before closing will have you gearing up for celebration rather than worrying about details. Check out our Moving Timeline for tips during this time.

Days before the closing, you will review your HUD with your attorney. A HUD is a document that outlines the complete and final accounting of every cost associated with your closing, including all money going to or from both you and the Seller.

You will also attend a walkthrough at your new home, preferably the day of the closing or day before. You'll check for any damage that may have occurred since the inspection took place, that any work we negotiated in the P&S was finished, that all appliances run as expected, etc. If there are surprises, we'll bring them up for resolution before the actual closing.

- ✓ Review P&S with attorney
- ✓ Deliver 2nd deposit
- ✓ Sign P&S
- ✓ Begin formal loan application

Keys in Hand!

Time To Celebrate

- ✓ Bring license, checkbook and final check for closing
- ✓ Sign documents
- ✓ Record the deed
- ✓ The house is yours!

Both you and the Sellers will have completed signing all of your documents, and once the final document-the HUD- has been signed by both parties and all contingencies or issues settled, your property will go “on record” at the Registry of Deeds. Before COVID, all parties gathered in a room together for your closing, but now, you may sign at different times and places than the Seller, and you may never meet them.

You will be asked to bring the following to your closing : your driver’s license, a checkbook (for unforeseen incidentals), and a certified check in the amount your attorney tells you is your final payment (closing costs + the remainder of your down payment, if any). Once recorded, you will get your keys and you can move right in.….the house is yours!

Streamlined Negotiation Strategies.

10 Step to Getting Your Offer Accepted

The day we find your dream home will be an exciting one! After some discussion and analysis, we'll put pen to paper and write your offer. Here are a few tips to help you put your best foot forward.

1. Negotiations can be stressful, so let's discuss your needs and goals in a relaxed environment beforehand. Your confidentiality is assured, and understanding your priorities helps me negotiate effectively. We'll explore all financing options to maximize acceptance and appeal to the seller. Can you make a larger down payment, close quickly, or pay cash?

2. I will speak to the listing broker to see if there is a competitive advantage we can use outside of money- Do they want a longer closing we can accommodate? Want to leave furniture you don't mind disposing of? Many times, these details favor your offer even over ones higher than yours!

3. We will feel good about the price and terms you offer, because we'll go in with a well crafted market valuation that supports our offering of price and keeps us confident in the value during our negotiations.

4. The best offers are the EASIEST ones for the listing broker to read and share. All completed documents are attached in one pdf, right at the beginning - pre-approval, Lead Paint Disclosure, Agency Disclosure, Seller's Statement, and anything else the listing firm requires.

5. The seller of your new home wants to know your offer is as close to a SURE THING as possible. One way we create that feeling, is to establish a familiar and competent team around you. Let them know your attorney has been retained and your lender is expecting their call. This can be as stressful a time for a seller as it is for you, so acting quickly is favorable. Waiting makes people nervous. You should have a home inspectorat the ready that you can schedule quickly. Respond quickly with your concerns, if any, after the inspection.

6. The market is changing, but the best properties still bring competitive bids. We may use an escalation clause in this case. If so, it would be well explained verbally and in paperwork to both you and the list agent, and can be a powerful tool to save you from overbidding.

7. Explain your contingencies simply and completely. Having an offer that is easy to communicate goes to the top of the pile.

8. Introduce Yourself! Some sellers won't accept "love letters" for Fair Housing concerns, but you can always write a love letter to the house, rather than revealing information about yourselves. Why does buying this home mean so much to you? What features are your favorite? Where can you see yourself spending the most time and what do you love about the neighborhood? This could all strike a chord with a Seller.

9. Even in offers, first impressions are everything. We always take the care to type our offers and communication - you can't imagine how important this simple step is.

10. Don't give up! Counter offers are just invitations to engage, in most cases. No matter how negotiations go, we'll do our best to think strategy over emotion. If the first offer doesn't work out despite our best efforts, just know that your dream home IS out there waiting for you!

Budget Confidently First.

Financing Your First Home

The financing process evaluates you in three ways

- ✓ Your ability to repay (your assets)
- ✓ Your willingness to repay (your credit rating)
- ✓ The value of the property to secure the loan (the appraisal)

It is important to identify clearly what you are able to afford when it comes to your new home and how much a lender is willing to loan based on your income, debt, expenses and credit rating. Those two numbers may not be the same, so do a little budgeting before you head to the bank so you feel confident about your monthly payment.

Most Sellers will require a pre-approval letter to accompany your offer, and depending on the price point you are looking at, maybe even to schedule a showing, so you'll want to line this up first thing.

If you don't have a trusted lender in your contact list, we can put you in touch with several who serve our clients expertly. The lender you choose is an important part of our team, and will help you work within your budget to find the home that enhances your life,but is also something you can comfortably afford.

This is Very Important!

Do & Don’t when applying for a Mortgage

DO’S

- ✓ Tell your lender if your income changes
- ✓ Keep documentation of all large deposits
- ✓ Pay bills on time
- ✓ Use credit as you normally would
- ✓ Pay down existing credit balances to below 30% of your credit limits

DONT’S

- ✓ Apply for ANY new credit
- ✓ Overcharge on your credit cards (NO large purchases)
- ✓ Consolidate debt onto one or two credit cards
- ✓ Cancel unused cards
- ✓ Pay off collections or charge offs (unless your loan officer tells you to)
- ✓ Change or quit your job

Build Wealth Securely.

The Benefits of Homeownership

Am I better off renting or buying a home?

There are reasons you might rent at certain times in your life that make very good sense. In general, however, it is better to spend your monthly housing payment toward an investment in your own future rather than to build wealth for your landlord. Real estate can be a particularly high yielding investment, over time, and also provides great joy while you are living there. Most folks say, if you can buy, you should.

What is the difference between pre-qualified and pre-approved?

A pre-qual is a lenders opinion of your ability to purchase. A pre-approval is an underwriters decision that you are qualified after reviewing your complete information. A pre-approval letter is often a requirement before a seller will accept your offer.

What's my first step?

The Mortgage Pre-Approval. Unless you are paying cash, you will need to get a mortgage. In order to know how much home you can afford, you will need to get pre-approved for a loan. Ask for recommendations, and meet with a lender to get the process started.

What credit score do I need to buy a house?

While there are programs that are available for lesser scores, you can generally start to look at mortgages at a score of 620 and up. The better your score, the better your rate.

What documents do I need to assemble before I meet my lender?

Each lender may have specific items other than or in addition to these, but a solid place to start will be your payroll records for past 30 days, W2 or 1099 forms for past two years, your two most recent tax returns, last year of bank statements and/or investment account statements, and other mortgages, property tax bills or rental income. If you are renting, bring evidence of rent and utility payments if they are not taken out of your checking account.

Wealth Creation

Everyone's financial situation differs and it's important to recognize what you can comfortably afford to borrow. Your loan officer will help you determine this while factoring in:

- Your debt-to-income ratio. This is your total monthly payments as a percentage of your gross monthly income
- The amount of cash you have available for a down payment and closing costs
- Your credit history
- The value of the property you want to purchase

How much do I need for a down payment?

In Massachusetts, the down payment is usually made in two parts: an initial deposit of $1000 when the offer is accepted and the rest between the Purchase & Sale Agreement and closing. For example, a buyer might put down 20% total, with 5% at the Purchase & Sale Agreement and the remainder at closing. Common amounts are $1000 for the initial deposit and 5% for the total down payment, but these can vary. You might qualify for a 3% down payment program or choose to put 30% down to strengthen your offer. We'll discuss strategy with you and your lender to meet loan requirements. Your deposit will be held in an escrow account.

How Long does it take to buy a home?

Forty five days is the new normal with a mortgage, but each situation is different. Some lenders can rush to close in 30 days, and in other cases, a closing may take longer than 45 days because of circumstances with either you or the seller. It is rare to have a closing take longer than 60 days, unless you are requesting that length of time on purpose.

What does it mean to lock my rate?

Locking your interest rate guarantees a specific rate for your loan for a set period, known as the lock period. This ensures your rate until your loan closes before the lock date expiration. If the lock period expires before closing, you may face fees to extend it or have to accept current market rates. Typical lock periods are 30-90 days, but this can vary.

What are the closing costs?

Closing costs include items such as appraisal fees, title insurance fees, attorney fees, interest, and documentation fees. These items are different for each customer due to differences in the type of mortgage. You will receive an estimate of your closing costs, which typically range between 3-6% of the loan, in advance of your closing date.

What is the big deal about the appraisal?

After the lender has looked at your qualifications for buying the house, the bank sends an appraiser out to the property to determine whether the house is worth, to them, what you have agreed to pay for it, so they can use the house as security for the loan. If the appraisal comes in low, negotiations may ensue or you may be able to rescind your offer and receive your deposits back in full.

What other fees can I expect, besides the downpayment?

The down payment is usually the largest upfront cost associated with buying a house. Then your closing costs, which are paid when you close. Outside of your closing costs, you will have the cost of your inspection during your due diligence period and then your "pre-paids" - which are charges that cover prepaid interest, homeowners insurance and taxes associated with your property, and are also paid at closing.

What is PMI?

Private Mortgage Insurance, which is an insurance policy that covers the bank in case you can't pay your loan payments, and the bank can't recoup the entire value of the loan on the house in foreclosure. Banks generally require this insurance if you put down less than 20% as a down payment.

What is a commitment letter?

This is the letter that you are waiting to see! It says that the bank has completed their review of you and the property and are ready to give you a mortgage. There will be contingencies on there, so pay careful attention to those that need to be satisfied by someone other than yourselves or that you may not be able to fulfill. This is an incredibly important document that you will need to discuss in detail with your lender. You must accept or refuse this commitment letter outlying the terms of your loan on (or before) the exact day you have written in your offer. The seller may honor an extension of that date, but is under no obligation to do so. Once you have accepted the commitment from the lender, you will likely have checked off your last contingency that would allow you to be released from the purchase contract. So it's a big one!

How do I improve my credit score?

A better score creates more options for you, here's how to get there!

Navigating Closing Costs.

Typical Home Purchase Costs

When purchasing a home, you'll encounter various costs, including inspection fees ($350-1000+), attorney fees ($1000-2500), and loan-related expenses like points, interest, and pre-paids. Title search and insurance protect against property claims, while homeowners and flood insurance ensure coverage. Additional expenses may include survey and recording fees, as well as any remaining down payment. In most cases, no brokerage fee is due at closing.

- Inspections- $350-1000+. Pest/Water/Radon or inspections requiring specialists will be an additional fee.
- Attorney Fee - Most commonly $1000-2500. Some charge a flat fee and some charge by the hour.
- Loan fees- points equal 1% of the loan.
- Loan interest- interest from date of closing to the end of the month.
- Loan Pre-paids- including your taxes and interest.
- Seller Reimbursements for condo fees or fuel they have paid in advance.
- Title Search- Performed by a firm hired by your attorney to ensure that the current owner of the property has clear rights and can sell the property without having claims from prior owners. It may uncover liens, judgements, easements or encumbrances which may exist on the property. For so many reasons, title insurance is highly recommended.
- Title Insurance - This insurance protects the purchaser and lender from claims that may not have been discovered by the title search. It is typically paid by the buyer and is a one-time premium at closing.
- On your HUD, and included in your final check - survey fees, recording fees, Declaration of Homestead, application fee, credit report pulled 2x, the fee for the lender's attorney.
- In 99% of case, there will be no brokerage fee due from you at the closing.
- Homeowners Insurance - you'll need proof of this policy to close, and flood insurance if needed.
- Flood insurance may be required, depending on the floodplain maps where your new home lies. It's always important to check on this, because you don't have to see water to be in a floodplain. Likewise, you could be directly on the ocean, but be elevated enough that flood insurance is not needed.
- Remainder of your down payment, if you didn't deliver it all to escrow at the P&S.

Simplify Your Move.

It’s Time to Pack

Congratulations! You are getting ready to move. Packing and moving can be disruptive, but it also represents an opportunity to repurpose unnecessary belongings and an opportunity to create a fresh new home, with things that reflect a new life.

Above all, moving is a process best executed with a plan. These pages contain a few tips to organize your move as much as possible. Think about your move as a series of small projects you can begin while your home is under contract.

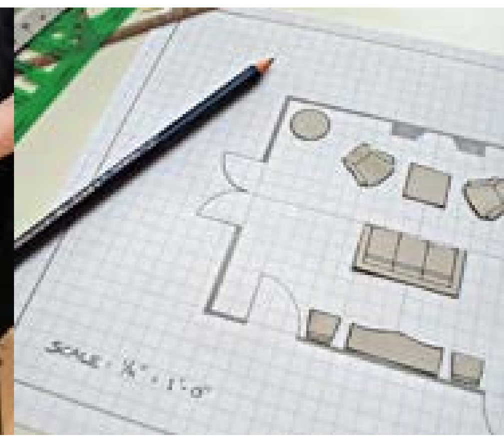
Check out the moving Timeline on the next page

2 Months Out

- Select your mover or rent a truck - buy the mover's insurance.
- Save all moving related receipts.
  Some can be deductible.
- Declutter, garage sale, donate. - don't bother to pack what you don't love.
- Purchase or gather your moving supplies
  boxes, bubble wrap & tape.
- Pack items you won't need before you move things like decorations or old photos
- If you have kids, show them their new home and room so they can visualize it.

2 Week Out

- Alert utility companies of ending and starting service at your new address.
- Make appointment for cable and wifi in the new place.
- Arrange for all other services at the new address.
- Confirm moving arrangements.
- Draw a floor plan of where your new belongings will go.



1 Month Out

- Service your car if you are driving.
- Label boxes by items and room and even a number to make unpacking easier.
- Arrange for pet care, babysitters and helping hands if needed on moving day.
- Get medical records, vet records - anything you think you'll need if changing providers.
- Send rugs, drapes, bedding, etc. to the cleaners.
- Change your address with family, friends, service providers, subscriptions and employers.
- Hire cleaners, window washers, lawn service, if necessary, for the new house.
- If you have children, visit their new school.

The Day Before

- Final walkthrough on your new home, and your old one to be sure you are ready.
- Defrost the fridge if you are moving it.
- Get some cash for tips for the movers and other unforeseen expenses.
- If you are renting, take photos for proof of the condition of all rooms/appliances.
- Remove hanging fixtures you'll be taking with you, that weren't included in your sale.
- If you are moving yourself, grab a dolly. You're welcome :)

1 Week Out

- Create your Emergency Kit in case your belongings are delayed.
- Separate your valuables and important docs to keep with you during the move.
- Open new local banking account.
- Backup files on your computer.
- Pick up items from cleaners, repair shops or friends.
- Pack tv, stereo, computers in original boxes if you can.

Closing Day

- Lock all windows and doors in the home you are leaving.
- Bring a license and checkbook to the closing, along with your check for certified funds.
- Make plans for getting new locks and keys made.
- Plan on spending the entire day with the movers, direct them with your floorplan.
- Note and photograph any damages from the move.

Check it Twice!

Your Moving Day Survior Kit

You:

- ☐ Phone charger
- ☐ Sheets/ Blankets
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Toilet paper
- ☐ Toothbrush/paste
- ☐ Prescriptions
- ☐ Readers
- ☐ Checkbook
- ☐ Change of clothes
- ☐ Pet food

Your House

- ☐ House keys
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Cleaning supplies
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Paper plates
- ☐ Hammer
- ☐ Screwdriver
- ☐ Tape measure
- ☐ Batteries
- ☐ Light bulbs
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Trash bags
- ☐ Pocket knife

Pro Tips

- ☐ Label boxes with the room they'll be unpacked in.
- ☐ Label fragile items with red marker.
- ☐ Pack plates vertically- they'll be less likely to break.
- ☐ Keep sandwich bags for the small parts of things you'll disassemble like curtain rods or mounted tvs.
- ☐ Take a photo of how your electronics were connected.
- ☐ Keep drawers and other items with loose objects intact by covering them with Press'n'Seal wrap. Your toiletries, too!

Notes & Reminders

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