

# Buyer's

## ULTIMATE GUIDE



*Debbie Smith, Realtor®*  
**REAL Broker, LLC**

# THE *Process*

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# HOME BUYER'S *Roadmap*



*Debbie*  
SMITH

- REAL ESTATE AGENT -

# 10 STEPS TO *Buying a home*

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FIND THE RIGHT AGENT

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PREPARE FINANCES

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GET PRE-APPROVED

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START HOME SHOPPING

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MAKE AN OFFER

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NEGOTIATE FINAL OFFER

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SCHEDULE THE MOVE

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CLOSING DAY

# 01 FINDING THE *Right agent*

## GETTING YOU IN THE DOOR

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Finding the right buyer real estate agent is crucial to ensuring a smooth and successful home-buying experience.

Look for an agent with experience, knowledge, strong communication skills, and a professional demeanor. They should have a deep understanding of the local market and be able to provide you with personalized guidance and support tailored to your unique needs and preferences. It's also important to find an agent you feel comfortable working with and who is committed to providing exceptional customer service. With the right agent by your side, you can find the home of your dreams with confidence and ease.

## STAYING ON TOP OF THE PAPERWORK

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As a real estate buyer agent, staying on top of the paperwork is essential to ensure a smooth and timely transaction. I am highly organized and detail-oriented, and I pride myself on my ability to manage and track all necessary documents and deadlines with precision and efficiency.

## ON YOUR SIDE

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As a real estate buyer agent, I am dedicated to representing your best interests throughout the entire buying process, from property search to negotiation and closing.



## AFFORDABILITY

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As a real estate buyer agent, I focus on finding affordable properties that meet my clients' needs and budget.

## PROBLEM SOLVER

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As a real estate buyer agent, I am a skilled problem solver, able to anticipate and address any challenges that may arise during the buying process. I work tirelessly to find creative solutions that meet my clients' needs and achieve their real estate goals.

## NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERT

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As a real estate buyer agent, I am a neighborhood expert, knowledgeable about the local community, schools, amenities, and property values. I use this expertise to help my clients find the right neighborhood that meets their lifestyle and investment needs, while ensuring they get the best possible value for their money.

# 02 PREPARE *Financing*



## HOW MUCH HOUSE CAN YOU AFFORD?

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Mortgage lenders recommend you do not buy a home that is more than 3 to 5 times your annual household income. If you are not purchasing a home with cash, you will need a mortgage pre-approval provided by your mortgage lender. A lender will work with you to get a loan that meets your needs. Some buyers are concerned with keeping their monthly payments as low as possible, others want to make sure that their monthly payments never increase.

## CHECK YOUR CREDIT

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A mortgage requires a good credit score. You can improve your score by:

- ✓ Paying down credit card balances
- ✓ Continuing to make payments on time
- ✓ Avoid applying for a new credit card or car loan until you have been approved
- ✓ Avoid making big purchases until you have been approved
- ✓ If possible, avoid job changes until you have been approved

## SAVE CASH FOR A DOWN PAYMENT & OTHER EXPENSES

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In order to make your dream of buying a home a reality, you will need to save cash for your down payment, earnest money, closing costs & home inspector.

- ✓ A Down Payment is typically between 3.5% & 20% of the purchase price
- ✓ Earnest Money is money you put down to show you're serious about purchasing a home. It's also known as a good faith deposit.
- ✓ Closing Costs for the buyer run between 2% & 5% of the loan amount
- ✓ A Home Inspection costs \$300 to \$500

# 03 GET *Pre-approved*

Being pre-approved, unlike being pre-qualified, means you've actually been approved by a lender for a specific loan amount. You will need to provide documented financial information (income, statements, assets, debt & credit reports etc.) to be reviewed & verified by the lender.



# GET *qualified*

TYPE OF LOAN	CREDIT SCORE	DOWN PAYMENT
VA LOAN	620	NO DOWN PAYMENT
USDA LOAN	620	NO DOWN PAYMENT
FHA LOAN	580+	3.5%
	500-579	10%
203K LOAN	640	3.5%
CONVENTIONAL 97	620	3%
CONVENTIONAL LOAN	640	5-20%



## *Income* QUALIFICATIONS

### QUALIFYING INCOME

- ✓ W-2 Income/Salary
- ✓ Income from part-time jobs
- ✓ Income from a second Job
- ✓ Overtime & Bonuses
- ✓ Seasonal jobs
- ✓ Self-employed Income
- ✓ Alimony & child support (Documentation required)



### NON-QUALIFYING INCOME

- ✓ Income from the lottery
- ✓ Gambling
- ✓ Unemployment pay
- ✓ Single bonuses
- ✓ Non-occupying co-signer income Unverifiable income
- ✓ Income from rental properties

### NEEDED DOCUMENTS

- ✓ W2'S FROM THE PAST 2 YEARS
- ✓ 3 MONTHS WORTH OF PAY-STUBS
- ✓ BANK STATEMENTS (PAST 3 MONTHS)
- ✓ PREVIOUS 2 YEARS OF TAX RETURNS
- ✓ LIST OF YOUR DEBTS & ASSETS
- ✓ DIVORCE DECREE
- ✓ ADDITIONAL INCOME DOCUMENTS

# TYPES OF *mortgage loans*

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TYPES OF LOANS	WHO QUALIFIES	DOWN PAYMENT	UPFRONT MORTGAGE INSURANCE	MONTHLY MORTGAGE INSURANCE	MINIMUM CREDIT SCORE
VA Department of Veteran Affairs	Veterans  Personnel with honorable discharge  Reservists & National Guard  Surviving Spouses	NONE	NONE	NONE	580
USDA Department of Agriculture	Someone who is buying a home in a USDA -designated rural area.	NONE	2% of the loan amount. Can be rolled into loan amount.	REQUIRED	640
FHA Federal Housing Administration	Anyone who meets the minimum credit and income levels.	At least 3.5% of purchase price	1.75% of loan amount	REQUIRED	580-640
203K Federal Housing Administration	Anyone who plans to purchase a fixer-upper or needs to renovate their home and meets credit & income requirements	At least 3.5% of purchase price	1.75% of loan amount	REQUIRED	580-640
CONVENTIONAL 97	Depending on the program, available first time home buyers (a buyer who hasn't owned in the last three years) can put 3% down with a Conventional 97 program.	Varies from 3%-20% of purchase price	NONE	REQUIRED	620
SELECT SMART PLUS	Anyone who meets lenders credit, income & debt level requirements	Varies from 3% -20%, but typically ranges from 5-20%	NONE	REQUIRED	620

# *Start* HOME SHOPPING

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# 04

## START

# Home shopping

## START TOURING HOMES IN YOUR PRICE RANGE

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Time to start shopping! We will take notes on all the homes we visit. It can be hard to remember all the details of each home, so take pictures or videos to help you remember each home, and review the notes you have written. Once we have found THE house for you, we will present an appropriate offer based on recent sales and current buyer activity in the area, as well as the value of the property in its current condition. Negotiations may take place after the offer is presented.



## Tip

WE WILL MAKE SURE TO CHECK EVERY LITTLE DETAIL OF EACH HOUSE

- ✓ Test the plumbing
- ✓ Test the electrical system
- ✓ Open and close the windows & doors to make sure they work properly

## EVALUATE THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND SURROUNDING AREAS

- ✓ Are the surrounding homes well maintained?
- ✓ How much traffic is on the street?
- ✓ Is it conveniently located to schools, shopping, restaurants, & parks



# *Make an* OFFER

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# 05 MAKE *an offer*

## WHEN TO MAKE AN OFFER:

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So you have found THE house! Congrats! In today's market when the demand is higher than the amount of homes available it is important to act fast!

## HOW MUCH TO OFFER:

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We will sit down and look at recent sales and current buyer activity in the area, as well as the value of the property in its present condition. Putting all this information together, we will determine the price that you would like to offer.

## SUBMITTING AN OFFER

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There are some components to an offer that makes it more appealing to the sellers.

- ✓ **Put Your Best Foot Forward**  
We will work together to discover options and create your best offer. Depending on the circumstances, you may have only one chance to make a good impression.
- ✓ **Shorter Inspection Periods**  
Try shortening the inspection period to 10 days
- ✓ **Offer to Close Quickly**  
Many sellers prefer to close within 30 days.



- ✓ **Put Down a Healthy Earnest Deposit**  
A large earnest money deposit shows the seller you are serious.
- ✓ **Cash Talks**  
A transaction that is not dependent on receiving loan approval is more attractive to a seller
- ✓ **Write the Seller a Letter**  
We will make your offer stand out by writing a personal letter to the seller, explaining why you fell in love with their home.

## AFTER YOU SUBMIT AN OFFER

### THE SELLER COULD

- ✓ **ACCEPT THE OFFER**
- ✓ **DECLINE THE OFFER**

This happens if the seller thinks your offer isn't close enough to their expectations to further negotiate.

### ✓ COUNTER-OFFER

A counter-offer is when the seller offers you different terms. If this happens, you can:

- ACCEPT THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER
- DECLINE THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER

### ■ COUNTER THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER

You can negotiate back and forth as many times as needed until you reach an agreement or someone chooses to walk away.

### OFFER IS ACCEPTED - CONGRATS!

Sign the purchase agreement and you are now officially under contract and in escrow! There are usually several contingency periods while in escrow. Now inspections, appraisals, or anything else built into your purchase agreement will take place.

# ESCROW PERIOD

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# 06

## ORDER AN *inspection*

During the inspection period, we will schedule a licensed home inspector to do a thorough inspection of the home. Once this is complete, the inspector will provide us with a detailed report. You can take the issues as-is or request the seller to address some or all of the findings. We will be mindful and reasonable on smaller items while being very cautious and vigilant of potentially significant issues.



# 07

## NEGOTIATE *final offer*

Issues typically arise after the home inspection, and those issues tend to result in another round of negotiations for credits or fixes.

- ✓ Ask for credit for the work that needs to be done.  
Likely, the last thing the seller wants to do is repair work.
- ✓ Think “big picture” and don’t sweat the small stuff.  
A tile that needs some caulking or a leaky faucet can easily be fixed. Repairs are still up for negotiation and perhaps a small credit would help with closing costs.
- ✓ Keep your poker face.

The listing agent will be present during inspections and revealing your comfort level with the home could come back to haunt you in further discussions or negotiations.

# 08 APPRAISAL *ordered*

Your lender will arrange for a third party appraiser to provide an independent estimate of the value of the house you are buying. The appraisal lets all parties involved know that the price is fair. The loan file then moves on to the mortgage underwriter. If approved you will receive your final commitment letter that includes the final loan terms & percentage rates.



## PROPERTY TITLE SEARCH

This ensures that the seller truly owns the property and that all existing liens, loans or judgments are disclosed.

## HOME OWNERS INSURANCE

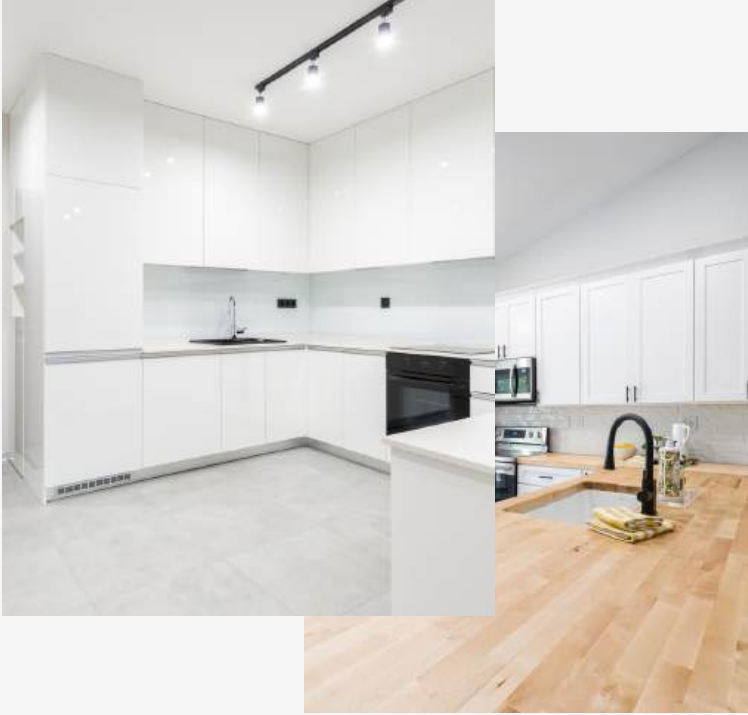
You'll need insurance for the new home before closing. This will protect against things like fire, storms, and flooding.

# *Scheduling* YOUR MOVE

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# 09 SCHEDULING *your move*



## AFTER SIGNING

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- ✓ Finalize Home Mortgage
- ✓ Schedule Home Inspection
- ✓ Declutter! Sort through every drawer, closet, cupboard & shelf, removing items you no longer need or like. Donate or sell items that are in good condition
- ✓ Get copies of medical records and store them with your other important documents
- ✓ Create an inventory of anything valuable that you plan to take
- ✓ Get estimates from moving companies

## 4 WEEKS TO MOVE

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- ✓ Give 30 days notice if you are currently renting
- ✓ Schedule movers/moving truck
- ✓ Buy/find packing materials
- ✓ START PACKING

## 2 WEEKS TO MOVE

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- ✓ Secure Home Warranty
- ✓ Get quotes for home insurance
- ✓ Schedule time for closing
- ✓ Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable)
- ✓ Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc.
- ✓ Minimize grocery shopping
- ✓ Keep on packing

## 3 WEEKS TO MOVE

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- ✓ Arrange appraisal
- ✓ Complete title search (Title company will do this)

## 1 WEEK TO MOVE

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- ✓ Obtain certified checks for closing
- ✓ Schedule and attend a final walkthrough
- ✓ Finish packing
- ✓ Clean
- ✓ Pack essentials for a few nights in new home
- ✓ Confirm delivery date with the moving company

# *Closing* DAY

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# 10 CLOSING *day*

## CLOSING DAY

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Closing is when you sign ownership and insurance paperwork and you receive your new home's keys! Typically, closing takes four to six weeks.

## CLOSING DISCLOSURE

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Lenders are required to provide you with a closing disclosure, at least three days before closing. This will show you what your final loan terms and closing costs will be. You will have three days to review the statement. This is done to ensure that there are no surprises at the closing table. If there is a significant discrepancy between the loan estimate and the closing disclosure, we must notify your lender and title company immediately.



## FINAL WALKTHROUGH

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We will do a final walk through the home within 24 hours of closing to check the property's condition. This final inspection takes about an hour. We will make sure any repair work that the seller agreed to make has been done.

We will be sure to:

- Make sure all appliances are working properly
- Run the water in all the faucets and check for any possible leaks
- Open and close garage doors with opener
- Flush toilets
- Run the garbage disposal and exhaust fans



# CLOSING TABLE

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Who will be there:

- ✓ Your agent
- ✓ The seller
- ✓ The seller's agent
- ✓ A title company representative
- ✓ Your loan officer
- ✓ Any real estate attorneys involved in the transaction

The closing can happen at the title company or based on State requirements, a real estate attorneys office.. You will be signing lots of paperwork so get your writing hand warmed up! Some of the papers you will be signing include: the deed of trust, promissory note, and other documents.



# CLOSING COSTS

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Closing costs can vary depending on your home's purchase price and where you are located. You can generally expect your closing costs to be around 3% to 4% of the home's purchase price. These closing costs can sometimes be shared with the seller.

# BRING TO CLOSING

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- ✓ Government-issued photo ID
- ✓ Copy of the sales contract
- ✓ Homeowner's insurance certificate
- ✓ Proof of funds to cover the remainder of the costs

# RECEIVE YOUR KEYS

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Congratulations! It was a journey but you are now officially a homeowner!! Time to celebrate!





# SERVICES OFFERED

Our dedicated real estate services for homebuyers encompass personalized property searches, expert market analysis, and seamless transaction support. We guide you through the entire home-buying process, offering in-depth property evaluations, negotiation assistance, and diligent paperwork management.

From identifying your dream home to closing the deal, our Realtor services ensure a smooth and successful home-buying experience tailored to your unique needs.

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**01 Personalized Property Search**  
We conduct a tailored search based on your preferences, ensuring you view homes that match your criteria. From location and size to amenities, we prioritize your needs to find the perfect property.

**02 Expert Market Analysis**  
Receive comprehensive market insights to make informed decisions. We provide data on property values, trends, and negotiation strategies, empowering you to secure the best deal.

**03 Seamless Transaction Support**  
Our support extends beyond finding the right home. We guide you through negotiations, inspections, and paperwork, ensuring a smooth transaction from offer to closing. Trust us to navigate the complexities and make your home-buying journey hassle-free.



# WHY YOU NEED A BUYERS AGENT

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- **Needs Exploration:** We will discuss *your preferences and lifestyle needs* to find the perfect home.
  - **Market Knowledge:** With detailed knowledge of the local real estate market, including pricing trends, neighborhood amenities, school districts, and future development plans, you can make informed decisions when *choosing a home and making an offer*.
  - **Negotiation Skills:** Whether it's negotiating a lower price, getting the seller to cover closing costs, or resolving issues that arise during inspections, I will *always protect your financial interests*.
  - **Help with Legal and Financial Complexities:** Real estate transactions come with a variety of legal documents and financial considerations. I'll ensure that you understand your obligations and that the paperwork is completed accurately to *minimize the risk of legal or financial mistakes*.
  - **Cost Transparency:** Recent NAR changes require buyers to be more aware of agent compensation. I will provide *clear guidance on how commissions work* and help ensure that you understand all the costs associated with your purchase.
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# BUYER COMPENSATION

## Ways realtors get buyer compensation

With the recent NAR changes, buyers now have several options for compensating their agent if the seller does not cover the buyer's agent commission. Here are the main options:

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- **Cash Payment at Closing:** The buyer can pay their agent's commission directly as part of their closing costs. This would be a separate payment from the down payment and other fees.
  - **Reducing the Down Payment:** Buyers can adjust their down payment amount to allocate funds for the buyer's agent commission. For example, if they planned a 10% down payment but need to pay a 3% commission, they could opt for a 7% down payment and use the remaining funds for the commission.
  - **Negotiating with the Seller:** Buyers may negotiate with the seller to cover all or part of their agent's commission, particularly in a competitive market. This can be structured as part of the purchase offer, where the seller pays a portion of the buyer's agent fees.
  - **Rolling into the Loan:** Depending on the lenders' policies and the loan structure, buyers may be able to finance the commission by rolling it into their mortgage. This option depends on the buyer's financial situation and the loan terms.
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# NEXT STEPS



After your buyer consultation, we'll sign a Buyer Representation Agreement and initiate a personalized property search based on your preferences. We'll choose which homes to see, schedule viewings, and begin the exciting journey of finding your dream home!

*Thank you!*

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# *What to* EXPECT

GREAT COMMUNICATION

HONESTY & TRANSPARENCY

INTEGRITY & RESPECT

LOCAL MARKET KNOWLEDGE

REACH YOUR REAL ESTATE GOALS

WWW.DEBBIESMITHREALESTATE.COM



*Debbie Smith*

REAL ESTATE AGENT

Connect With Me Here:

(678) 313-9080

realdebsmith@gmail.com

<https://calendar.app.google/PtwMM94HifvCCxad8>