

Virginia Homes

BY STACEY CAITO



WWW.VIRGINIAHOMESBYSTACEY.COM

BUYER'S GUIDE

I AM STACEY CAITO



HELLO

Welcome to our comprehensive guide on the value and role of a buyer's representative in the home-buying process. This guide will explain why having a professional realtor is essential and how choosing our team will benefit you. As a dedicated and passionate Realtor with extensive knowledge of the Virginia market, I strive to provide a smooth, stress-free buying experience. I look forward to helping you through the home-buying journey!

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU

STACEY CAITO

REAL ESTATE AGENT, LEAD BUYER'S AGENT

- offering expert advice and guidance through the challenges of the real estate market
- is passionate, creative and committed to delivering exceptional results to her clients



KERRI RALSTON

REAL ESTATE AGENT, SHOWING AGENT

- Gives the utmost attention and care to clients resulting in a distinctive level of service.



NIKKI MENDES

TRANSACTION COORDINATOR

- Nikki is committed to her clients satisfaction and will support you throughout the home buying or selling process.



HOME BUYER'S ROADMAP

1

FIND AGENT

Match with an agent that you feel comfortable with

2

FINANCIALS

Get your finances in order, get a credit check, and get pre-approved for a mortgage

3

SEARCH

Begin your search! Look online and review homes your Realtor sends.

6

APPRAISAL

Arrange for a professional appraiser to visit the home and determine a value

5

INSPECTION

Arrange for a professional home inspector to visit the home

4

OFFER

Make your offer for the home and prepare to negotiate

7

SCHEDULE MOVE

Schedule your move date and arrange for movers

8

CLOSING

Get your keys and celebrate your new home!



Note: This is only a high level overview of a buy-side process. For more detailed steps, please refer to your real estate agent.

REAL ESTATE TERMS

PRE-APPROVAL

A pre-approval is the first step to obtaining a mortgage to purchase your home. The lender will perform an analysis on your income, debt, and credit-worthiness. You will need one in order to be ready to put an offer on a house.

OFFER

An offer is a preliminary agreement to purchase a home, and is set between a buyer and a seller.

CONTINGENCY

A contingency related to a property is when the preliminary offer is accepted, pending certain conditions set out by the buyer or seller.

CLOSING COST

The closing cost is the amount that is paid, in addition to the sale price. This can include: taxes, insurance and lender expenses.

GOOD FAITH MONEY

Good faith money is the balance of funds that are set aside into a trust or an escrow account to show the buyer is serious about the purchase.

TITLE SEARCH

A title search will confirm that the property that is being sold in fact belongs to the seller.

APPRAISAL

An appraisal is the value that is assigned to the real estate asset based on an assessment of the asset, neighborhood, market condition, and more.

HOME INSPECTION

A home inspection is an official review of the real estate asset's current condition. A licensed inspector will help to determine if there is any work needed to be done to the property to bring it to normal working order.

DISCLOSURES

The disclosures related to a property will include everything that the sellers know about the property, including any known material defects..

CLOSING

The closing part of the real estate sale is when the money and keys are exchanged.

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HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR HOME SEARCH

01

When you're ready to start your home search, preparation is key to a smooth and successful process. Let's start by covering a few key tips to ensure a successful beginning to your home search.

1. Define Your Non-Negotiables

Before starting your search, get clear on your top five non-negotiable needs for your new home. Sit down with your partner, family, or anyone else involved in the purchase, and make sure you're on the same page. These non-negotiables might include:

- **Location** – Proximity to work, schools, or amenities.
- **Number of Bedrooms/Bathrooms** – Essential for family planning or future growth.
- **School District** – A critical factor if you have kids or are planning to in the future.

Having a clear understanding of your must-haves will help you focus your search and avoid wasting time on homes that don't meet your core needs.

2. List Your Wants

Next, make a list of five wants—the things that would be nice to have but aren't deal-breakers if missing. This list could include:

- **Updated Kitchen** – For those who love to cook or entertain.
- **Certain Flooring** – Hardwood, tile, or carpet based on personal preference.
- **Two-Story Layout** – Depending on your desired home style.

This list will help you balance flexibility and practicality as you search for homes.

...PREPARING FOR YOUR SEARCH - CONTINUED

01

3. GET FINANCIALLY PREPARED

Take a deep dive into your finances and know exactly where you stand. Do you need down payment assistance? Many buyers take advantage of these programs, but you need to be prepared and well-informed if you're considering this route. Finances can be stressful, but it's even more stressful to enter the home-buying process without a clear understanding of your budget.

4. ESTABLISH YOUR TIMELINE

If you're currently renting, check your lease end date and start conversations with your landlord about your timeline for moving. If you need to sell your current home to purchase a new one, now's the time to start planning that process. Your timeline will help guide when to begin your search and how to align it with your financial and housing needs.

5. MEET WITH YOUR REALTOR & LENDER EARLY

If you're planning to buy a home in the next six months, you should meet with your Realtor and lender as soon as possible. The home-buying process takes time—from getting pre-approved, to finding the right property, to going through the necessary paperwork, inspections, and finally closing. Starting early ensures you're ready to act when the perfect home hits the market.

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF A BUYER'S REPRESENTATIVE

02

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

IN THIS GUIDE, WE'LL COVER:

- The critical role of a buyer's representative in the home-buying process.
- How the buyer-agent relationship benefits you.
- The key responsibilities and duties of a buyer's representative.
- My unique value proposition as your chosen realtor.

WHY YOU NEED A BUYER'S REPRESENTATIVE

EXPERT GUIDANCE

- Navigating the complexities of the home-buying process can be daunting. A buyer's representative provides expert guidance, helping you understand each step from initial search to final closing. We offer insights into market trends, property values, and negotiation strategies to ensure you make informed decisions.

MARKET KNOWLEDGE

- A buyer's representative has access to comprehensive market data and trends that are not readily available to the public. We leverage this information to help you find properties that meet your criteria and budget, ensuring you get the best value for your investment.

STRONG ADVOCACY

- As your advocate, we prioritize your interests throughout the buying process. I negotiate on your behalf to secure the best possible terms, whether it's the purchase price, closing costs, or contingencies. Our goal is to protect your interests and ensure a favorable outcome.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Protecting your personal and financial information is paramount. As a buyer's representative, we ensure that your data is handled with the utmost confidentiality, safeguarding your privacy and providing peace of mind.

THE HOME-BUYING PROCESS: HOW WE HELP

03

INITIAL CONSULTATION

- During our first meeting, we take the time to understand your needs, preferences, and budget. We discuss your goals, desired neighborhoods, and any specific features you're looking for in a home. This information forms the foundation of our search strategy.

GETTING PRE-APPROVED & UNDERSTANDING YOUR FINANCIALS

- Before starting your home search, getting pre-approved for a mortgage is crucial. It provides a clear picture of your budget, shows sellers that you are a serious buyer, and speeds up the buying process.
- Knowing your financial situation, including your credit score, debt-to-income ratio, and savings, helps in making informed decisions. We can connect you with trusted lenders who will guide you through the pre-approval process.



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QUICK FACT

Using a realtor can significantly increase the chances of having your offer accepted. According to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), 89% of buyers purchased their homes through a real estate agent or broker. Moreover, 90% of buyers who used an agent would recommend their agent to others, highlighting the effectiveness and satisfaction of using professional representation in the home-buying process.

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THE HOME-BUYING PROCESS: HOW WE HELP...continued

03

PROPERTY SEARCH

- With your criteria in mind, we search for properties that meet your requirements. We provide you with detailed listings, including photos, descriptions, and relevant market data. We then narrow down the options to the ones that best match your needs.

PROPERTY SHOWING

- We schedule, organize and lead home viewings, allowing you to see potential homes in person. During these showings, we provide insights into each property's condition, potential, and how it fits your criteria.

NEGOTIATIONS

- Once you've found the right home, we assist in formulating an offer. Our team will evaluate the property's market value, consider comparable sales, and advise on a competitive offer price. We then negotiate with the seller's agent to secure the best terms for you.

CLOSING

- We guide you through the closing process, ensuring all paperwork is completed accurately and on time. Our team coordinates with lenders, inspectors, and attorneys to ensure a smooth and efficient closing.

WHY CHOOSE US?

04

EXPERIENCED AND KNOWLEDGABLE

- With years of experience in the real estate market, we have a proven track record of success. Our in-depth understanding of market trends and property values ensures you receive the best advice and service.

CLIENT-CENTRIC APPROACH

- We tailor our services to meet your unique needs and preferences. We listen actively to your concerns and goals, providing personalized solutions that align with your objectives.

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL

- We are committed to the highest standards of professionalism and ethics. You can trust that we will always act in your best interest, providing honest and transparent communication throughout the process.



STRONG NEGOTIATOR

- Our negotiation skills are honed through years of experience. Our team is dedicated to securing the best possible terms for you, whether it's the purchase price, closing costs, or contingencies.

TRANSPARENCY AND OPEN COMMUNICATION

- We maintain regular contact, keeping you updated at every stage of the process.
- We provide honest feedback and advice, ensuring you have all the information needed to make informed decisions.

CONTINUOUS SUPPORT

- We are available to answer your questions and provide guidance at every stage of the home-buying process. Our goal is to make your experience as seamless and stress-free as possible.

NAVIGATING MARKET CHALLENGES

05

The real estate market can be unpredictable, but with the right strategies and insights, we can navigate these challenges together.

MARKET ANALYSIS

- **In-Depth Research:** We conduct thorough market research to understand current trends and property values.
- **Strategic Planning:** Based on the market analysis, we develop a strategic plan tailored to your needs.

FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY & TIMING

- **Adapting to Changes:** The market can change rapidly, and we are always ready to adjust our approach as needed.
- **Innovative Solutions:** Our team utilizes innovative solutions and technologies to enhance the buying process and address any challenges.
- **Timing and Patience:** Knowing the right time to make an offer can save you both money and stress. We'll guide you through market conditions and help determine when it's best to take action. Finding the perfect home can sometimes take time, but we're committed to supporting you every step of the way until you find the ideal property.

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL

We are committed to the highest standards of professionalism and ethics. You can trust that we will always act in your best interest, providing honest and transparent communication throughout the process.

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QUICK FACT

In 2024, technology plays a critical role in the home-buying process. According to the National Association of Realtors, 97% of homebuyers used the internet to search for homes, and 76% used a mobile or tablet device. This highlights the importance of having a tech-savvy realtor who can leverage online tools and platforms to enhance your home-buying experience (www.nar.realtor).

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WHAT TO EXPECT DURING ESCROW

06

Congratulations on Being Under Contract!

Once your offer has been accepted and you're officially under contract, the home-buying process enters a critical phase. This stage involves several important steps to ensure everything is in order before you finalize the purchase. Here's what you can expect:

INITIAL DEPOSIT (EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT)

- Purpose: This deposit shows the seller you're serious about purchasing. It's held in escrow and applied to your closing costs.
- Amount: Typically 1-2% of the purchase price, though it can vary.

HOME INSPECTION

- Schedule and Conduct: Schedule a home inspection promptly. The inspector will assess the condition of the roof, foundation, electrical systems, plumbing, and more.
- Review Report: Carefully review the report to understand any issues or needed repairs..

NEGOTIATING REPAIRS

- Request Repairs: Based on the inspection, request repairs or a credit for the cost of repairs.
- Seller Response: The seller may agree to some or all requests, or none. Negotiations can take a few days..

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING ESCROW...continued

06

APPRAISAL

- **Lender Requirement:** Your lender will need an appraisal to confirm the property's value.
- **Appraisal Report:** The appraisal verifies if the property's value supports the loan. If it's lower than the purchase price, you may need to negotiate.

FINALIZING YOUR MORTGAGE

- **Submit Documents:** You'll need to provide your lender with all required documents, such as proof of income, tax returns, and bank statements.
- **Underwriting Process:** The lender will review your financial information and the property details to approve the loan.

Loan Approval: Once the underwriting process is complete, you'll receive a loan commitment letter from your lender.

TITLE SEARCH AND INSURANCE

- **Title Search:** A title company will conduct a search to ensure the property's title is clear of any liens or disputes.
- **Title Insurance:** You'll need to purchase title insurance to protect against any future title issues.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING ESCROW...continued

06

FINAL WALK-THROUGH

- Purpose: A final walk-through, usually conducted 24-48 hours before closing, allows you to ensure the property is in the agreed-upon condition.
- Checklist: Verify that all requested repairs have been made, no new damage has occurred, and the property is vacant (if required).

CLOSING DAY

- Closing Disclosure: Review the closing disclosure document, which outlines all the final costs and loan details.
- Signing Documents: At the closing, you'll sign all necessary paperwork, including the mortgage documents and the deed.
- Final Payment: You'll pay any remaining costs, such as closing fees and the down payment.
- Receive Keys: Once everything is signed and the funds are transferred, you'll receive the keys to your new home!

By following these steps, you can ensure a smooth and successful path to homeownership. Should you have any questions or require further assistance during this process, we are here to support you every step of the way!

Let's Get Started!

Ready to find your dream home? Let's embark on this exciting journey together. Contact us today to schedule a consultation and take the first step towards homeownership.

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

07

- ”
- Stacey is the best! As a first time home buyer new to the whole process, she walked me through every step and made sure I knew what was going on. She was easy to reach, highly dedicated, and really makes sure her clients get what they want! Couldn't have imagined going through this process without her! Highly recommend!

JORDAN LUDWIG

- ”
- Stacey made buying our first home a smooth, yet educational process. She was extremely communicative, gave expert advice, and so patient as we asked so many questions. Look no further, Stacey is the best!

EMALIE FREITAS

- ”
- My wife and I had a wonderful experience working with Stacey and couldn't have been happier with her dedication to helping us find a new home. Reliable, hard-working, responsive, and thoughtful are just a few of her many great qualities! Highly recommend!

SLATE KLEINSMITH

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

07

- ”
- I couldn't think of a better person to go through the buying process with than Stacey. She not only is extremely knowledgeable about the Northern Virginia real estate market but is incredibly communicative and professional with all parties involved. Stacey was super proactive and made sure to keep us updated every step of the way. The seller of the house even commented on how much they enjoyed working with Stacey which made our offer even more competitive. Stacey was such a joy to work with and we will without a doubt use Stacey again for a future home sale. I would highly recommend her to anyone!

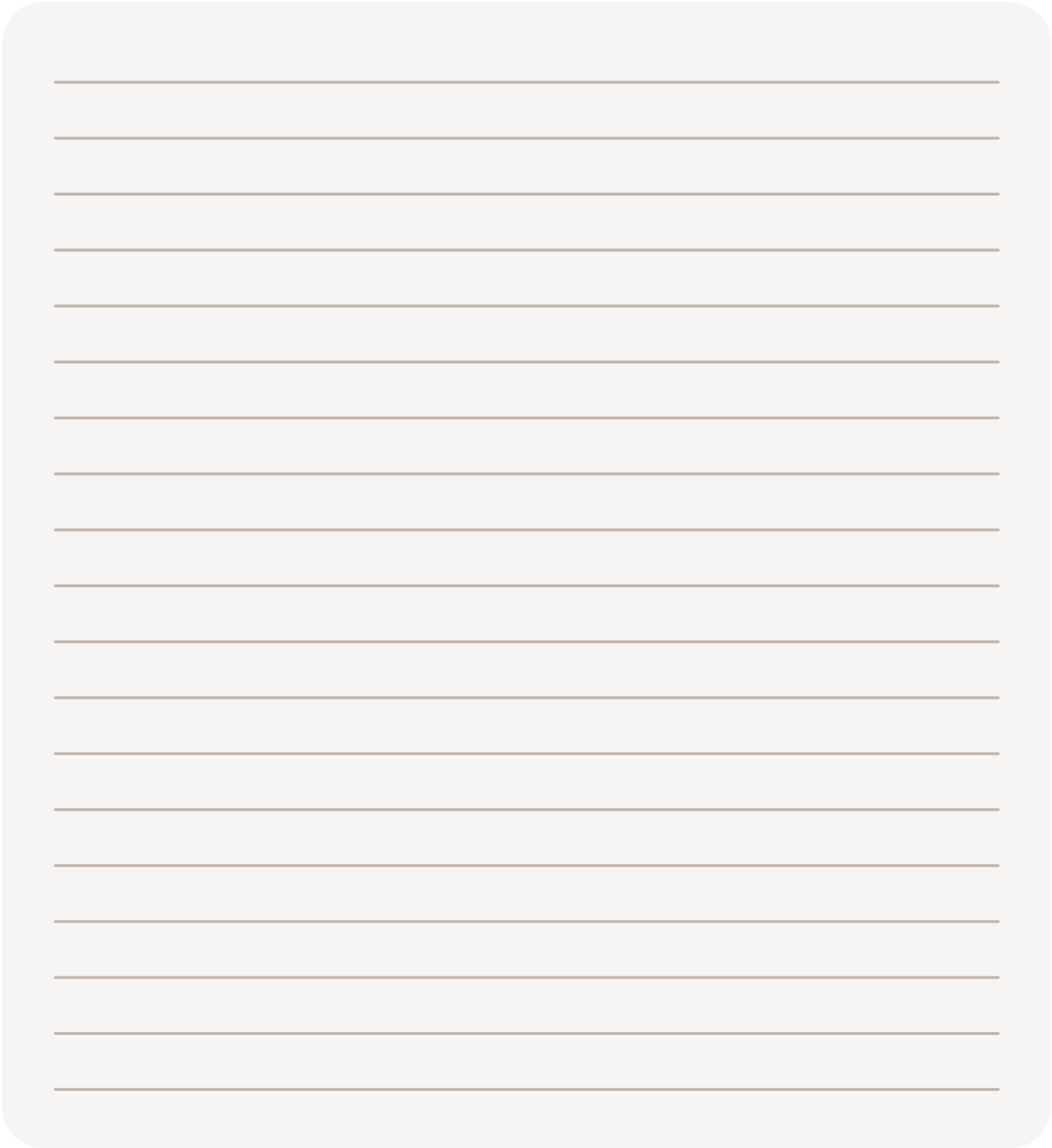
MEREDITH SUTTER

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- Stacey is a phenomenal realtor. She is very good at what she does. Her knowledge and follow through are something you don't know how important it is until you experience it. Stacey also loves her job. She cares about her clients, their families , and even their pets. To work with someone as personable, and knowledgeable is hard to come by nowadays. If you're looking for a realtor that is going to deliver results, she is the one for the job!

LIZ HAVELKA

Notes



A large, light gray rounded rectangle containing 20 horizontal lines for writing notes.

Virginia Homes

— BY STACEY CAITO —

