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HELPING YOU FIND THE PERFECT HOME





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WELCOME TO YOUR HOME BUYING JOURNEY!

This guide is designed to equip you with essential information as you navigate the real estate market.

Buying a home can be the most rewarding event in someone's life but with many moving parts and unexpected pit falls it can quickly become a daunting task. Many buyers start the home search process with excitement and optimism, but that can quickly fade if the buyer does not get the ideal outcome they may have expected from the start.

Choosing the right Real Estate Professional to help with the process is the first and most important part of making a home purchase and will alleviate any shortcomings that a buyer may face.

Whether you're a first time home buyer or looking for your next investment, we're here to support you in every step of the way.



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TYPES OF HOUSING



SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

These homes are brand new either built to suit (6-9 months) or inventory homes that have been built and are ready to move in. Typically the builders price is not usually negotiable but they do provide great incentives and provide closing cost assistance to buyers if they use the builder's preferred lender. Builders have Sales reps that work on behalf of the builder.



TOWNHOUSE

These can either be new construction or resale and a townhome shares an adjoining wall with one or both of its neighbors. This type of home is usually more affordable than single family but look out for high HOA fees considering most or all of outside maintenance is covers by the association.



CONDOS

This type of housing is typically a building or contains more than 4 units in one structure. Association fees are typically the highest of any type of housing and in most cases only cash or conventional financing can qualify for purchase.



SINGLE FAMILY RESALE

These homes have been previously owned and buyer will purchase from a pre existing seller. Price can typically be negotiated and seller is usually represented by their own Realtor.

TYPES OF FINANCING

CONVENTIONAL LOANS

Common for buyers with good credit.

FHA LOANS

Great for first-time buyers with lower credit scores.

VA LOANS

100% Financing For eligible veterans and active-duty service members with no down payment required.

USDA LOANS

100% financing for Rural development loans for eligible rural areas.

REHAB LOANS

Ideal for buyers or investors aiming to upgrade fixer-uppers in one streamlined loan.

AFFORDABILITY

Tips on calculating what you can afford, including the 28/36 rule (no more than 28% of gross income on housing expenses and 36% on total debt).

"Working with trusted mortgage partners ensures you get the best financing options."

PREFERRED MORTGAGE PARTNERS



Knowing how much house you can afford is the second step towards making your purchase.

The right mortgage broker can make all the difference when trying to get an offer accepted. Having a mortgage broker who is locally based and easy to contact and communicate with is key. Big banks typically only offer you their 1 product and throw you into the “big machine”, whenever you call to ask about your loan you get transferred to a random associate that loads your file onto their screen and assist you.

Choose someone who will offer you the best product at the best rates and provide you with personalized customer service.



Conventional: Down Payment (min)/max LTV Loan amount (max) credit score, Max debt to income (DTI)	Primary Home: 3% (97% LTV), 620, No cap Front/49.999 Back	Secondary Home: 10% (90% LTV), 620, No Cap Front/49.999 Back	Investment/Rental 15% (85% LTV), 620, No Cap Front/49.999 Back
FHA: Down Payment (min)/max LTV Loan amount (max) credit score, Max debt to income (DTI)	3.5% (96.5% LTV), 580 with A/E findings, 47/56.999 with A/E Findings	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE
VA: Down Payment (min)/max LTV Loan amount (max) credit score, Max debt to income (DTI)	0% (100% LTV), No Limit**, 600 with A/E findings, No limit with A/E Findings***	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE

	Primary Home	Second Home	Investment/Rental
Conventional	3% if LTV > 90% 6% if LTV > 75% and ≤ 90% 9% if LTV ≤ 75%	3% if LTV > 90% 6% if LTV > 75% and ≤ 90% 9% if LTV ≤ 75%	2%
FHA and USDA	6%	NA	NA
VA	4% * only certain costs are calculated into this amount	NA	NA

	Primary Home	Second Home	Investment/Rental
Conventional	Yes, 5% must come from borrower's personal funds for a 2-4-unit property	Yes, 5% must come from borrower's personal funds for a 2-4-unit property	Gifts not allowed
FHA and USDA	Yes	NA	NA

HOW TO CHOOSE A HOME THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU

CREATE A WISHLIST

Suggest making a list of must-haves versus nice-to-haves.

IDENTIFY PRIORITIES

Consider your lifestyle, personal needs, job location, schools and future plans.

CONSIDER RESALE VALUE

Think about the potential future value of the home.

VISIT MULTIPLE PROPERTIES

Visit various homes to get a feel for what best fits your style and preference



BUYER/AGENT COMMON COURTESY

Buyer/Agent Common Courtesy is essential for a smooth and enjoyable home-buying experience. When both sides communicate openly, respect each other's time, and stick to scheduled appointments, everyone can focus on finding the perfect property. It builds trust, helps avoid misunderstandings, and keeps the process moving smoothly from start to finish. Plus, a little courtesy can go a long way in creating a positive, professional atmosphere—one where both you and your agent feel valued and motivated to work together.

COMMUNICATION

We encourage open and honest communication; you should feel free to express your needs and concerns.

RESPECT FOR TIME

Please be punctual for showings and meetings.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We assure you that your sensitive information will be kept confidential.

FEEDBACK

Provide us with feedback after each showing to help refine the search process.

DO'S

- Do show up on time to all appointments and open houses.
- Do communicate clearly and let your agent know about any changes to your preferences.
- Do be transparent about your budget and financial situation.
- Do treat homes you view with respect—avoid touching personal items and leave the property as you found it.
- Do ask questions to fully understand each step of the process.
- Do keep an open mind and consider your agent's advice based on their expertise.
- Do inform your agent if you're approached by another agent about using their services.

DONT'S

- Don't cancel last minute without informing your agent.
- Don't communicate with the seller or seller's agent directly; let your agent handle all negotiations.
- Don't assume every showing is "drop-in"; respect that many sellers request appointment only showings.
- Don't discuss your offer terms or budget while touring homes or around others at open houses.
- Don't make lowball offers without a strategy—work with your agent on appropriate pricing.
- Don't bring large groups to showings unless it's discussed beforehand.
- Don't make verbal promises or commitments directly to sellers—always work through your agent.

STEPS TO A REAL ESTATE TRANSACTION

INITIAL CONSULTATION

Get to know the buyer's preferences, goals, and budget. Discuss their must-haves, deal-breakers, and sign a Buyer Representation Agreement

MORTGAGE PRE-APPROVAL

Encourage the buyer to connect with a preferred lender to get pre-approved. This defines their budget and strengthens their position when negotiating.

HOME SEARCH & VIEWING

Start your home search with specific search criteria. The buyer's agent will set up showings appointments, online tours, or in-person visits.

ESCROW & EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT

Deposit earnest money into escrow account to ensure your commitment to the contract. Typically 1% of purchase price.

NEGOTIATION

Negotiate any counteroffers to reach mutually acceptable terms between buyer and seller. This stage might require multiple rounds to finalize.

MAKING AN OFFER

Write an offer that's competitive and aligns with market conditions. This includes terms, price, contingencies, seller contributions and closing date preferences.

HOME INSPECTION

Once the buyer has reviewed the seller's disclosure they will then schedule a home inspection to uncover any potential property issues that are not readily visible

NEGOTIATING REPAIRS OR CREDITS

If the inspection reveals issues, the buyer can negotiate for repairs, a price reduction, or credits from seller at closing.

APPRAISAL

Ensure the property's appraised value meets or exceeds the loan amount. This is a lender requirement to protect their investment.

CLOSING THE TRANSACTION

Buyer and seller will sign all necessary documents with the title company to complete the financial transaction, and officially transfer ownership from seller to buyer.

FINAL WALKTHROUGH

The buyer does a final inspection to ensure the agreed-upon repairs have been completed and the property is clean and in good condition upon seller move out.

TITLE SEARCH & TITLE INSURANCE

Verify the property's title is clear of liens or legal issues, protecting the buyer's ownership rights when the transfer between seller and buyer is consummated.

WHAT IS TITLE?

TITLE INSURANCE

In real estate, "Title" is essentially your legal right to own and use a property. When you buy a home, you want to make sure you're getting full ownership free of any hidden claims, like unpaid taxes, mortgages, or liens. This is where title searches and insurance come into play, they verify the property's history to make sure no one can pop up at a later time claiming ownership. Title protection is important because it guarantees you won't have to fight over ownership or surprise costs, keeping your investment safe and your ownership protected from day one.

Title will also be responsible for holding your initial escrow deposit and collecting funds from all parties including buyers lender to fund the transaction at closing.



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HOME INSPECTION PROCESS/HOME WARRENTY

HOME INSPECTION

A home inspection is an essential part of the real estate transaction. A licensed inspector will evaluate the home's major systems such as plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and structure to identify any potential issues the home may have. The inspector will then provide a detailed report to buyers so they know exactly what they're getting into.

Home Inspection Contingency

Once inspections are completed, the buyer can either negotiate repairs or make a price adjustment if needed, if the seller does not agree, then the buyer may cancel the contract and receive their escrow deposit in full.

HOME WARRANTY

A home warranty offers you financial peace of mind by covering the cost of repairing or replacing major systems and appliances if they break down after the buyer moves into the home. A Home warranty is especially helpful for first-time buyers who might not be ready for unexpected repair costs. Buyers can often negotiate for the seller to pay for the first year of coverage, adding a safety net as they settle in.

FINANCING CONTINGENCY



DEFINITION

A financing contingency is a clause in a real estate contract that makes the purchase dependent on the buyer securing a mortgage loan. If the buyer cannot obtain financing within a specified time, this contingency allows them to cancel the contract and retain their earnest money, ensuring they aren't financially liable if the loan doesn't go through.

IMPORTANCE

A financing contingency is essential in the home-buying process as it protects buyers if their mortgage financing is denied or the buyer does not get a loan based on preset terms, such as Time to secure financing, the interest rate and years of loan term that are agreed upon by buyer and seller when entering into contract.



APPRAISAL

WHAT IS AN APPRAISAL?

An appraisal is a professional assessment of a property's market value, conducted by a licensed appraiser. It plays a crucial role in the home-buying process, as lenders require it to confirm that the property's value supports the loan amount. By evaluating factors like the home's condition, location, and recent sales of comparable properties, the appraisal ensures the lender isn't financing more than the property is worth, protecting both the buyer and the lender from overpaying.

APPRAISAL CONTINGENCY

The appraisal can lead to a few different outcomes: if the appraised value matches or exceeds the offer price, the loan process proceeds as planned. However, if the value is below the offer amount then the buyer may need to make up the difference.

If the buyer has elected to use an **"Appraisal Contingency"** then the buyer may exercise their right to cancel the transaction and collect their escrow deposit if the home does not appraise for the contracted purchase price. This process protects both the buyer and lender from overpaying.



HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE

TIPS FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE COVERAGE AND PROVIDER

- **Assess Coverage Needs:** Consider the home's value, age, local risks (like flooding or sinkholes), and high-value items you may want extra coverage for XXXXX .
- **Compare Providers:** Look for reputable insurance companies with strong customer reviews, reliable claims processes, and financial stability (ratings from agencies like A.M. Best can help gauge this).
- **Understand Policy Details:** Review what's covered and what's not, including any exclusions for natural disasters or wear and tear. Ensure liability coverage is high enough for adequate protection.
- **Bundle Policies for Discounts:** Many insurers offer discounts for bundling homeowners insurance with other policies, like auto or life insurance.
- **Review Deductibles and Premiums:** Find a balance between affordable monthly premiums and a deductible that's manageable in case of a claim.
- **Ask About Inflation Protection:** Some policies include or allow for inflation protection, which helps adjust your coverage to keep up with rising repair and replacement costs over time.

WHY HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE IS IMPORTANT

Homeowners insurance is essential because it protects one of your largest investments from unexpected financial loss. It covers repair or rebuilding costs if the home is damaged by incidents like fire, storms, or theft. Additionally, it includes liability protection if someone is injured on your property and helps secure personal belongings inside the home. Most lenders require it, providing both peace of mind and financial security in case of unforeseen events.

SURVEY



WHAT IS A SURVEY?

A survey is a detailed map of a property that outlines its exact boundaries, dimensions, and features. It's essential for confirming the property's legal boundaries, ensuring there are no disputes with neighboring properties. Surveys also identify any easements (areas where others have the right to use part of the property, like utility access) or encroachments (when neighboring properties cross the boundary lines). This information protects buyers by clearly defining the land they're purchasing and highlighting any restrictions or potential conflicts.



This official document outlines the property boundaries, dimensions, and any key features, like easements or rights-of-way, identified during the survey process.

WHEN IT'S NEEDED

A survey is typically needed when buying a home, especially if the property's boundaries are unclear or there are existing structures near the edge of the lot. Lenders or title companies may also require a survey to confirm boundary lines, easements, and encroachments before finalizing the loan or title insurance. Surveys are crucial for new construction, adding structures (like fences or pools), or if there are any boundary disputes, as they provide a clear legal record of the property lines.

BUYER NEEDS ANALYSIS

LOCATION

- Which neighborhoods or areas do you prefer? Are schools, work, or public transportation important factors?
- How close do you need to be to amenities like grocery stores, parks, or entertainment?

HOME SIZE AND LAYOUT

- How many bedrooms and bathrooms are essential for your lifestyle or family size?
- Do you need extra space for a home office, gym, or guest room?
- Is outdoor space, like a yard or patio, important?

AMENITIES AND FEATURES

- What interior features do you value most, like a modern kitchen, fireplace, or hardwood floors?
- Are there must-have amenities like a garage, pool, or energy-efficient systems?
- How important are nearby community amenities, such as gyms, pools, or recreational areas?

BUDGET AND INVESTMENT

- What is your ideal budget, including monthly mortgage and maintenance costs?
- Is this home a long-term investment, or do you see it as a stepping stone?





BUYER REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT

BUYER REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT

A Buyer Representation Agreement is a contract that defines the professional relationship between the buyer and their real estate agent. It ensures mutual commitment, outlining the agent's duties to represent the buyer's best interests in the home search and purchase process. This agreement also provides protection, guaranteeing that the agent is exclusively dedicated to finding the right property and negotiating effectively on the buyer's behalf.

BENEFITS OF A BUYER REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT

- **Dedicated Advocate:** Having a dedicated real estate agent ensures that you have an experienced advocate focused on your needs and interests throughout the buying process
- **Negotiation Power:** With an agent representing you, you gain a skilled negotiator who can work to secure the best terms and price for your new home
- **Access to Resources:** Agents often have access to exclusive listings and industry contacts, which can enhance your home search and provide more options
- **Streamlined Process:** A buyer's agent can help coordinate inspections, appraisals, and paperwork, making the entire process smoother and less stressful.
- **Fiduciary Duty:** The agent is legally obligated to act in your best interest, providing you with an added layer of protection during negotiations and transactions.

BUYER HOME SEARCH CRITERIA

WHAT TYPE OF HOME ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN?

- ☐ Single-family home
- ☐ Townhouse
- ☐ Condo
- ☐ Apartment
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

LOCATION:

zip/city/county

MINIMUM SQUARE FOOTAGE:

_____ Sq. Ft.

MINIMUM BEDROOMS AND BATHROOMS:

Bedrooms: _____
Bathrooms: _____

- ☐ One Story
- ☐ Two Story

COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD PREFERENCES

- ☐ HOA
- ☐ No HOA

GARAGE:

- ☐ 1 Garage
- ☐ 2 Garage

WHAT COMMUNITY FEATURES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ Good schools
- ☐ Low crime rate
- ☐ Nearby parks and recreational areas
- ☐ Shopping and dining options
- ☐ Public transportation access
- ☐ Community events and activities
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE DISTANCE TO WORK, SCHOOL, OR OTHER DAILY DESTINATIONS?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not important

LIFESTYLE & BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

WHAT'S YOUR TARGET BUDGET FOR PURCHASING A HOME?

- ☐ Less than \$200,000
- ☐ \$200,000 - \$400,000
- ☐ \$400,000 - \$600,000
- ☐ \$600,000 - \$800,000
- ☐ Over \$800,000

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A HOME THAT'S MOVE-IN READY OR ARE YOU OPEN TO SOME RENOVATIONS?

- ☐ Move-in ready only
- ☐ Open to minor renovations
- ☐ Open to major renovations

DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFIC LIFESTYLE NEEDS? (E.G., PET-FRIENDLY, SPACE FOR HOBBIES, ACCESS TO NATURE)

Long-Term Goals

How long do you plan to stay in this home?

- ☐ Less than 5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10+ years

IS THIS HOME PART OF A LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN OR AN INVESTMENT STRATEGY?

- ☐ Yes, it's primarily an investment
- ☐ No, it's primarily for personal use
- ☐ Both

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE US TO KNOW TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR IDEAL HOME?

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR VISION WITH US! YOUR RESPONSES WILL HELP US PROVIDE YOU WITH TAILORED GUIDANCE AND A SELECTION OF HOMES THAT MEET YOUR UNIQUE PREFERENCES

MEET YOUR AGENT



Phil Holliday Preferred Real Estate Brokers

Phil Holliday is a dedicated real estate professional with Preferred Real Estate Brokers, specializing in helping clients buy and sell homes in both Central Florida and Las Vegas. With years of experience in the industry, Phil combines local market knowledge, cutting-edge technology, and a client-focused approach to make every real estate transaction smooth and successful. One of Phil's unique offerings is his Perfect Home Finder program, a personalized service that goes beyond the standard MLS listings. By working closely with clients to identify their precise needs and preferences, Phil uses advanced target marketing to identify pre-listed and off-market properties that perfectly match each client's criteria. This program is especially valuable for buyers who want exclusive access to homes that aren't widely available. Whether you're a first-time homebuyer, a seasoned investor, or looking to relocate, Phil is committed to helping you find your dream home with ease and expertise. Reach out today to experience a superior level of service in Central Florida or Las Vegas real estate.



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