



Buyer

handbook

A HOME BUYER'S GUIDE

ELANA
MURRAY

SOUTHEASTERN RESIDENTIAL



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Thank you!

As your dedicated real estate agent, my focus is on finding the perfect home for you. I pledge to tirelessly search for properties that meet your criteria and negotiate the best deal on your behalf.

You'll be well-informed at every stage, ensuring a seamless and stress-free buying experience. Your satisfaction is my ultimate goal, and I'm committed to providing exceptional service throughout the entire home-buying process.

ELANA MURRAY

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NAR SETTLEMENT UPDATE

There are a few important changes you should know about that will impact the home-buying process since the NAR Settlement in 2024.

You'll Need to Sign a Buyer Agreement First

- Before we check out any homes together, we'll need to sign a written agreement.
- This ensures you understand the services I provide, how compensation works, and what to expect throughout the process.

Let's Talk About Agent Compensation

- The MLS will no longer show buyer agent commissions.
- We'll discuss how my compensation works before we start house hunting.
- Your agent's commission can be covered by the seller, negotiated into the deal, or paid by you—it's all about what works best for you.



NAR SETTLEMENT UPDATE

IMPORTANT CONTRACT UPDATES FOR BUYERS:

- Closing Date Extensions: If we need more time, we must request an extension before 8:00 PM on closing day.
- Emergency Delays: If a state of emergency happens, deadlines will automatically be extended.
- Earnest Money Fees: If your earnest money check bounces, you'll be responsible for any bank charges.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- We'll talk about compensation up front to avoid surprises.
- You'll need to sign a buyer agreement before we start looking at homes.
- We'll keep an eye on contract deadlines to ensure a smooth transaction.

FAQ'S FOR BUYERS

1. Do I have to pay you out of pocket?
 - Not necessarily! Compensation can come from different sources—we'll discuss the best approach for you.
2. Can I switch agents after signing an agreement?
 - Most agreements include a termination clause, so we'll review the terms together.
3. What if I don't sign an agreement?
 - Unfortunately, I won't be able to show you homes without one.

HOME BUYING PROCESS

1

MEET WITH YOUR AGENT

2

GET PRE-APPROVED

3

FIND YOUR HOME

4

OFFER & ACCEPTANCE

5

ORDER INSPECTION & APPRAISAL

6

PREPARE FOR CLOSING

7

GET YOUR KEYS

HOME BUYER

WORDS YOU SHOULD KNOW

CLOSING COSTS

Taxes, insurance, and other lender expenses paid at the end of the transaction by the seller, buyer, or both.

APPRAISAL

Property and/or land valuation completed by an appraiser who determines the market value - typically 1-4 weeks.

INSPECTION

A visual and mechanical examination of a home to identify defects and assess the home's condition.

DOWN PAYMENT

Is what you typically pay up front for a house in order to close the sale. Usually 3-20% of the purchase price. Not the same as closing costs.

EARNEST MONEY

Deposit made to a seller showing the buyer's good faith in a transaction. Typically 1-3% of purchase price.

TITLE INSURANCE

Insurance to protect the lender or owner from any claims related to the title of the property. Usually paid for by the buyer.

DEBT TO INCOME

DTI is the comparison of your monthly debt payments to your monthly income before taxes, expressed as a percentage.

CLOSING

Usually a meeting that includes documents, signatures, checks, and everything needed to buy or sell the house.

ESCROW

Funds deposited with a third party and held until a specific date is reached and/or a specific condition is met.

BUYER FAQS

WHAT'S THE FIRST STEP OF THE HOME BUYING PROCESS?

You'll need to get a mortgage unless you're paying cash for a house. To know how much home you can afford, you need to get pre-approved for a loan first.

HOW MUCH MONEY DO I NEED FOR A DOWN PAYMENT?

Usually 3-5% of the purchase price of the house.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BUY A HOME?

Typically around 30 to 45 days after acceptance.

WHAT OTHER FEES ARE THERE, BESIDES THE DOWNPAYMENT?

Mainly loan origination and closing costs at about 2% to 4% of the loan amount. You'll also have to pay for a home inspector, a home warranty, HOA fees, insurance, home maintenance and more.

CAN I BUY AND SELL MY CURRENT ONE AT THE SAME TIME?

Absolutely! Depending on your situation, we'll recommend buying or selling first.

WHAT KIND OF CREDIT SCORE DO I NEED TO BUY A HOME?

A score of 620 or higher can get you better lending terms.

WHEN CAN I EXPECT TO RECIEVE THE KEYS TO THE NEW HOUSE?

You'll get the keys to your new home on closing day once the transaction is complete and fully funded by the title company.



GETTING PRE-APPROVED

A pre-approval letter in your hands can turn the home offers you make into irresistible invitations. So before you start looking for a home, getting your finances in order is crucial.

Like the first stage of the buying process, shopping for a loan and getting pre-approved are best done a month or two ahead of your home search. Sorting out your finances can take some time; more importantly, the application for mortgage pre-approval takes approximately 45 days.



PRE-APPROVAL CHECKLIST

PROOF OF INCOME:

Provide documentation of your income, such as W-2 forms, tax returns, and pay stubs for the past two years.

EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION:

Provide evidence of stable employment for at least two years, such as a letter from your employer or a verification of employment form.

CREDIT HISTORY:

Your lender will check your credit report to evaluate your creditworthiness, so make sure you have a good credit score and a clean credit history.

ASSETS:

You'll need to provide documentation of all your assets, such as bank statements, investment accounts, and retirement accounts.

DEBT OBLIGATIONS:

Provide documentation of all your current debt obligations, such as credit cards, car loans, and student loans.

DOWN PAYMENT:

Determine the amount of your down payment and provide documentation of the source of funds for the down payment, such as bank statements or gift letters.

PRE-APPROVAL APPLICATION:

Complete a pre-approval application with your lender, providing all the necessary information and documentation.

PROPERTY INFORMATION:

Provide information on the property you intend to purchase, including the address, purchase price, and any other relevant details.

FINANCIAL MUST HAVES

DOWN PAYMENT

Although you'll pay this at closing, proof of this is also what will help you secure your mortgage.

EARNEST MONEY

When you make an offer on a home, you will be expected to pay a deposit as a show of good faith. It will be applied to your down payment or closing costs.

INSURANCE

You may need to pay for mortgage insurance depending on your down payment and loan. You are required to purchase both Title Insurance and Homeowners Insurance.

CLOSING FEES

Be prepared to cover the cost of attorney fees, surveys, appraisals, and documentation.



MORTGAGE LOAN TYPES

| LOAN TYPE | WHO QUALIFIES | DOWN PAYMENT | UPFRONT MORTGAGE INSURANCE | MONTHLY MORTGAGE INSURANCE |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| FHA LOANS FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION | anyone who meets minimum credit and income levels | At least 3.5% of purchase price | 1.75% of loan amount | 0.07% of the principal balance for the life of the loan, if down payment was below 5% |
| VA LOANS DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS | Current servicemembers veterans with honorable discharge some surviving spouses | NONE | 0 | 0 |
| USDA LOANS U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | Anyone who meets minimum credit and income levels who is buying a home in a USDA designated area | 0 | 2% of the loan amount; can be rolled into mortgage | 0.03% of the remaining principal balance for the life of the loan, if down payment was 0 |
| CONVENTIONAL MORTGAGES | Anyone who meets the lender's credit, income, and debt level requirements | Varies from 3% to 20%, but typically ranges from 5% to 20% | 0 | If the down payment is less than 20% mortgage insurance runs as much as 0.21% of the loan each month |

BUYER QUESTIONNAIRE

CONTACT INFO

BUYER NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

CO-BUYER NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

HAVE YOU BEEN PRE-APPROVED?

☐

YES

☐

NO

WHAT'S YOUR PRICE RANGE?

ARE YOU SELLING YOUR CURRENT HOME?

☐

YES

☐

NO

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

DETAILS

BATHROOMS:

BEDROOMS:

WHEN DO YOU NEED TO MOVE BY?

AREA:

STYLE OF HOME:

HOUSE

☐

TOWNHOUSE

☐

CONDO

☐

MOST IMPORTANT IN A HOME:

DEAL BREAKERS IN A HOME:

PICKING THE PERFECT HOME

Before you look for a home, you should know the type of property you're after. Is it a condo that meets your needs and preferences? Or is it a single-family home that fits your long-term goals?

To help you decide, consider the following factors:

HOW MUCH YOU CAN AFFORD

Take into consideration your annual income, monthly expenses, and debt-to-income ratio, all of which will affect the mortgage loan you can afford.

AGE OF THE PROPERTY

[City, State] real estate offers both historic homes and new construction. A resale property might be the one that you need with a few minor tweaks. But if you're after a brand-new, move-in property, consider buying new construction.

NON-NEGOTIABLES

List down features that you absolutely need to have in your new house. Consider your proximity to your work and community services, nearby schools, home size and number of rooms. This will help you determine the type of property that meets your needs best.

FINDING THE RIGHT LOCATION

CONSIDER THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Research the community where you plan to purchase a home. Look for features such as nearby schools, public transportation, shopping centers, parks, and entertainment options.

PROXIMITY TO WORK

Consider the distance and ease of transportation to your workplace. Check traffic patterns, parking options, and commuting times.

CHECK THE LOCAL MARKET

Study the local real estate market to understand the property values, trends, and market conditions. Check the price of homes in the area to ensure that you are getting a fair deal.

CHECK PROPERTY CONDITION

Examine the condition of the house, including its age, construction quality, and necessary repairs. Have a home inspection to determine if there are any major defects or issues.

EVALUATE SURROUNDINGS

Take into account the property's surroundings, such as traffic noise, air pollution, and potential hazards. Consider the climate and weather patterns in the area.

CONSIDER ACCESSIBILITY

Think about the accessibility of the property to other amenities, such as hospitals, police stations, fire stations, and airports.

CHECK THE CRIME RATE

Research the crime rate in the neighborhood to ensure the safety of your family and property.

DETERMINE PROPERTY VALUE

Assess the potential future value of the property based on location, surrounding developments, and community growth trends.

THE OFFER PROCESS

ONCE YOU SUBMIT AN OFFER

We'll meet and review your offer together. Once the details are thoroughly reviewed and understood, the seller will have three options:

1 - ACCEPT THE OFFER AS WRITTEN

2 - DECLINE THE OFFER

If they feel the offer isn't close enough to their expectations to further negotiate this offer.

3 - COUNTER OFFER

If they agree to most the offer but want to change a few details, they can counter our offer with the new terms.

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

**ONCE AN OFFER IS ACCEPTED BY
BOTH PARTIES, YOU ARE OFFICIALLY
UNDER CONTRACT.**



FINAL STEPS

ORDER THE INSPECTION

Ordering inspections before closing when buying a home is crucial to avoid potential complications and ensure the home is in good condition. General and pest inspections should be completed, and any issues should be addressed before finalizing the sale.

ORDER THE APPRAISAL

Ordering an appraisal for buyers before closing on a home can be a good idea to ensure that the home is priced correctly and to avoid any surprises during the sale process. However, it is not always necessary and the decision should be made based on individual circumstances.

FINALIZE LOAN APPLICATION

You'll submit all necessary documents, such as income verification and credit reports, to the lender. The lender will then review the application and make a decision on whether to approve the loan. Once approved, you'll sign the loan documents and provide a down payment before the loan can be funded and the home purchase can be completed.

NEGOTIATE FINAL OFFER

When negotiating a final offer for a property, it's crucial to consider current market and property conditions, urgency of the sale, and be realistic with expectations to come up with a fair and reasonable offer. Flexibility and compromise are key to reaching a mutually beneficial agreement with potential buyers.

THINGS TO AVOID AFTER APPLYING FOR A MORTGAGE

Don't change bank
accounts.

Don't apply for new
credit or close any
credit accounts.

Don't co-sign
other loans for
anyone.

Don't make any
large purchases

Don't deposit cash into your bank
accounts before speaking with your
bank or lender.

Consistency is the name of the game after applying for a mortgage. Be sure to discuss any changes in income, assets, or credit with your lender, so you don't jeopardize your application.

The best plan is to fully disclose and discuss your intentions with your lender before you do anything financial in nature.

SCHEDULING YOUR MOVE

AFTER SIGNING

Start by decluttering and packing up your belongings and donate or throw away anything you don't need, create an inventory of anything valuable that you plan to move, and, finally, you'll want to get estimates from moving companies for your specific needs.

4 WEEKS TO MOVE

- Schedule movers/moving truck
- Buy/find packing materials
- Start packing

3 WEEKS TO MOVE

- Your lender will arrange appraisal
- Title work will be completed
- Keep packing

2 WEEKS TO MOVE

- We will schedule you a time to close and sign your documents
- Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable)
- Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc.
- Minimize grocery shopping
- Keep on packing

1 WEEK TO MOVE

- You will complete your final walkthrough
- Finish packing
- Clean
- Pack essentials for a few nights in new home
- Confirm delivery date with the moving company.

WHAT TO BRING TO CLOSING

A PHOTO ID

A CASHIER'S CHECK

THE CLOSING DISCLOSURE

PROOF OF INSURANCE

YOUR REAL ESTATE AGENT

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

Selecting us as your realtor ensures a devoted and skilled team dedicated to assisting you in buying your ideal property. We offer personalized service, expert guidance, and a steadfast commitment to your satisfaction throughout the entire buying process.

- ✓ **HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY**
- ✓ **COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSIVENESS**
- ✓ **PROFESSIONALISM AND EXPERTISE**
- ✓ **DILIGENCE AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL**



SUCCESS STORIES

★★★★★

ELANA JUST ROCKS! SHE CONSISTENTLY WENT ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR US IN LOOKING FOR A HOME IN AUGUSTA. SHE DROVE US AROUND ON OUR FIRST IN PERSON VISIT TO LOOK AT HOUSES IN EVANS, MARTINEZ, AUGUSTA AND NORTH AUGUSTA. AS WE LIVED 600+ MILES AWAY WE SUBSEQUENTLY RELIED ON HER TO PERFORM VIRTUAL TOURS OF MANY HOUSES AND ONCE WE HAD FOUND THE HOUSE WE FELT WAS RIGHT NOTHING WAS TOO SMALL OR LARGE FOR HER TO DO AND/OR ARRANGE FOR US. I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO RECOMMEND HER FOR HER PROFESSIONALISM, FRIENDLINESS AND CHEERFULNESS ALONG WITH A COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA, ITS HOUSES AND VALUES.

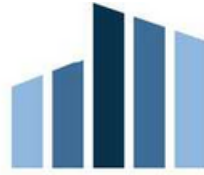
WILLIAM SZELAZEK, 5/4/2024 8:01:23 PM

★★★★★

I CAN'T SAY ENOUGH GREAT THINGS ABOUT ELANA MURRAY. SHE WAS AN ABSOLUTE DELIGHT TO WORK WITH AND EXTREMELY HELPFUL. AFTER THE PLACE WE WERE WANTING TO LOOK AT FELL THROUGH, SHE FOUND US SOMETHING EVEN BETTER. IT WAS EVERYTHING WE HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR AND MORE. SHE WENT ABOVE AND BEYOND TO HELP US GET INTO IT AND MAKE OUR DREAMS COME TRUE.

PAMELA BONEY, 2/19/2024 11:13:05 PM

□



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RESIDENTIAL

Utility Companies:

Atlanta Gas Light Co (404) 584-4000

Georgia Power Co (888) 660-5890

Georgia Natural Gas (877) 850-6200

Jefferson Energy Cooperative (706) 547-2167

SCANA Energy (877) 467-2262

South Carolina Electric & Gas Co (SCE&G) (800) 251-7234

Columbia County Water & Sewage (706) 863-6928

Grovetown Public Works (706) 860-5138

City of Augusta Water (706) 842-1925

Augusta Water & Sewer (706) 821-1851

North Augusta Water (803) 441-4215

Garbage Collection:

Augusta Disposal & Recycling Inc. (706) 860-2208

Waste Management (706) 724-7200

A-1 Sanitation Service (706) 793-0806

Columbia Waste (Precision Waste Services) (706) 373-4285

North Augusta Residential Garbage (803) 441-4240

Education:

Columbia County Board Of Education (www.ccboe.net) (706) 541-0650

Richmond County Board Of Education (www.rcboe.org) (706) 826-1000

Aiken County Board Of Education (www.acpsd.net) (803) 641-2428

Department of Driver Services:

Columbia County (678) 413-8400

Richmond County (678) 413-8400

Vehicle Tag Offices:

Columbia County – 630 Ronald Regan Drive (706) 868-6884

Richmond County – 2816 Washington Rd Suite 109 (706) 821-2391

Homestead Exemption:

Columbia County (706) 261-8299

Richmond County (706) 821-2396

Aiken County (803) 642-1514

Other:

WOW! (706) 364-1000

Xfinity (800) 266-2278

Charter (Grovetown) (855) 386-8466

Bell South Telephone (803) 278-4788

Columbia County Voter Registration (706) 868-3355

Richmond County Voter Registration (706) 821-2340

Aiken County Voter Registration (803) 642-2028

Columbia County Information (www.columbiacountyga.gov) (706) 868-3375

Richmond County Information (www.augustaga.gov) (706) 821-2300

Aiken County Information (803) 642-7557

Why Choose Southeastern?

We believe that home is a place for you and your family to unplug, connect, dream and be together. Our Executive team, agents, and support staff are hand-picked from the best-of-the-best to provide exceptional service to exceed all expectations. Our mission is to be the one-stop solution for all of your real estate needs.

- **A One-Stop Solution for Your Real Estate Needs**

Best of the best providing top service

- **Driven Real Estate Professionals**

Dedicated to Augusta and Charleston

- **Leading the Way**

With over 150 Million in sales in 2020

- **We're Effectively Social**

Engaging, connected and shoppable



Relocation Services

We know that no matter how exciting the opportunities are, the experience of relocating can be stressful. That's why we have the best people and practices to make your experience enjoyable and comfortable.

Development Services

Our sister company, Southeastern Real Estate Group, develops residential and commercial properties across the southeastern United States. If you have a property with development potential, let us know! We would love to help.

We Know Real Estate

We understand the real estate landscape, how to market homes effectively and what it takes to get the best possible price when you sell your home. That's why we're always innovating – pushing forward to better connect buyers and sellers.



Buying a Home in Augusta

Making your dream home a reality should be a collaborative process. Southeastern's expert team is committed to guiding you through every step to make the journey fun and easy.

- **Latest Technology** – Our agents have access to the latest technology putting thousands of properties at their fingertips.
- **In-Depth Knowledge** – Our agents are in the market every day and have in-depth knowledge of the local inventory of lots and homes.
- **Builder Relationships** – Our extensive builder relationships can help you with pricing a new home, estimating repairs or value engineering an addition to an existing home.

Our New Home Developments

Southeastern Residential represents multiple new home communities in the Augusta and Charleston markets. Each community is carefully planned to provide residents with unique amenities and long term value. We carefully select the right builders for our communities that share our commitment to quality. Ask one of our agents today about which community is right for you.

Augusta, Georgia



Charleston, South Carolina



AUGUSTA, GA

4024 Washington Road
Augusta, GA 30907
706-945-0512

Open Daily: 9am – 5pm

CHARLESTON, SC

4245 Ten Shillings Way
843-405-7060

Open Daily: Call for Appointment

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