THE ROAD TO home

A HOME BUYER'S GUIDE

Eric & Maria Kuehlthau

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MOUNTAINS to SOUND Real Estate Group

GLOBAL LUXURY

COLDWELL BANKER DANFORTH

nice to meet you

Eric & Maria Kuehlthau

REALTOR®

Maria has been in real estate really her for her whole life with her family in custom home building. In 2015, Maria decided to get her real estate broker license. Her eye for design, knowledge of home construction and finishes, and work ethic, has propelled her to a top performer within her brokerage. Eric decided to get his license in 2022 to help Maria with the growing business. Eric comes from a background in marketing, owning his own video production business. With Maria's knowledge of current markets, and Eric's understanding of how to properly market real estate, they have become a powerfull team in the South Puget Sound, and together they formed Mountains to Sound Real Estate Group.

LET'S CONNECT

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ABOUT US

MEET THE TEAM

Maria Kuehlthau

REALTOR®

Eric Kuehlthau

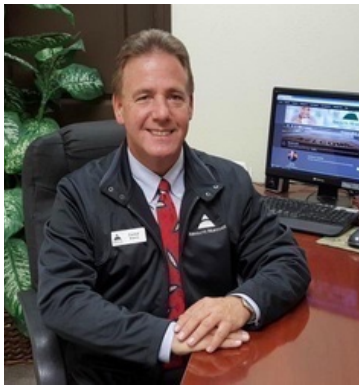
REALTOR®

SHANDON TC, INC

ADDING THE KEYS TO SUCCESS TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS GROW

Shandon Britton-Stuart

Transaction Coordinator



Dan Davis

Trusted Lender

“Committed to bringing you the most professional, informative, trustworthy & dedicated service.

Our responsibility is to protect the interests of our clients in every transaction.”

Ten Steps TO BUYING A HOME

01 FIND THE RIGHT AGENT

02 PREPARE FINANCES

03 GET PRE-APPROVED

04 START HOME SHOPPING

05 MAKE AN OFFER

06 ORDER AN INSPECTION

07 NEGOTIATE FINAL OFFER

08 APPRAISAL ORDERED

09 SCHEDULE THE MOVE

10 CLOSING DAY

HOME BUYING *process*

STEP 1

GET PRE-APPROVED

• Meet with a lender
• Prepare your credit
• Set a budget

STEP 2

MEET WITH YOUR AGENT

• Discuss budget
• Research area neighborhoods
• Set wants & needs

STEP 3

FIND YOUR HOME

• Tour homes
• Adjust criteria if necessary

STEP 4

MAKE AN OFFER

•Research comps in the area
• Work with us to set up the best offer
• Negotiations may occur

STEP 5

OFFER SIGNED

• All negotiations are finished
• Both parties have signed contract

STEP 6

INSPECTIONS

• Professional inspects the property
• Discovers issues that may need to be worked into the purchase agreement
• Negotiate repairs

STEP 7

APPRAISAL

• Appraiser ensures the property is worth the loan and purchase price you agreed to pay

STEP 8

TITLE COMMITMENT

• The title company will send you a title insurance policy for the property after closing

STEP 9

DOCUMENTS TO LENDER

• Make sure all requested docs are sent to your lender prior to closing

STEP 10

CLOSING

• Final walk-through
• Sign closing documents
• Receive your keys

01 FIND THE RIGHT AGENT

Buying a home is one of the most significant purchases in a lifetime. It is essential to have an experienced agent in your corner, always looking out for your best interest. A buyer agent's fiduciary responsibility is to represent the buyer and to ensure that they are protected.

After all, a seller has someone in their corner. A listing agent has an allegiance to the seller. Their goal is to get the seller top dollar for their home. There is incredible value in having someone working for YOUR best interests when buying a home.

GETTING YOU IN THE DOOR

We will narrow down the homes that fit your unique wants and needs and get you in the door! we look at dozens of homes every week, and we can help you identify potential problems within a home.

HANDLING CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

When repairs or changes in price need to be made, we will be your guide and handle requesting any repairs or changes in price to the sellers.

STAYING ON TOP OF THE PAPERWORK

Buying a home involves many types of documentation. We have the experience and knowledge to navigate real estate contracts. Ensuring that nothing is overlooked, and that you truly understand what a paper means before ever signing on the dotted line.

ON YOUR SIDE

A buyer's agent will represent your best interests. With a pulse on the local market and a sound understanding of how various amenities effect the value of a home, we will make sure we submit a competitive offer on the right house for you.

NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERT

We work daily in neighborhoods with inspectors, contractors, and negotiating with sellers. We have the market knowledge you need to get you the home of your dreams at the best price! Understanding the local real estate market is essential when it comes time to make an offer on a house.

PROBLEM SOLVER

We will work hard to protect all of your interests and take on any issues that may arise throughout the entire process. We work tirelessly to make sure buying a home is a fun and stress-free process.

AFFORDABILITY

The seller typically pays the commission for both the seller's agent and the buyer's agent.

02 PREPARE FINANCES

HOW MUCH HOUSE CAN YOU AFFORD?

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

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

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 around $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.

PREPARING

for a home loan

GET *qualified*

TYPE OF LOAN	CREDIT SCORE	DOWN PAYMENT
VA LOAN	620	NO DOWN PAYMENT
USDA LOAN	620	NO DOWN PAYMENT
FHA LOAN	580+ 500-579	3.5% 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

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 *Storytelling*

04 START HOME SHOPPING

START TOURING HOMES IN YOUR PRICE RANGE
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*

05 MAKE AN OFFER

WHEN TO MAKE AN OFFER:
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:
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
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 discuss your options and create your very best offer. Depending on the circumstances, you may have only one chance to make a good impression.

- **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

- **Shorter Inspection Periods**
  Try shortening the inspection period to 10 days

- **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.

- **Offer to Close Quickly**
  Many sellers prefer to close within 30 days.

THE PROCESS

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!

You will sign the purchase agreement and you are now officially under contract! This period of time is called the contingency period. Now inspections, appraisals, or anything else built into your purchase agreement will take place.

ESCROW *period*

06/ ORDER AN INSPECTION

During the inspection period, we will schedule an inspection with a reputable home inspector to do a thorough investigation of the home. Once this is complete, the inspector will provide us with a list of their findings. 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.

1. Ask for credit for the work that needs to be done.
Likely, the last thing the seller wants to do is repair work.

2. 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.

3. Keep your poker face.
Cameras are everywhere theses days, while touring a home try to avoid revealing to much of your feelings about the home, it 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.

Homeowner's Insurance

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

09 scheduling YOUR MOVE

AFTER SIGNING

- 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 move
- Get estimates from moving companies

4 WEEKS TO MOVE

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

3 WEEKS TO MOVE

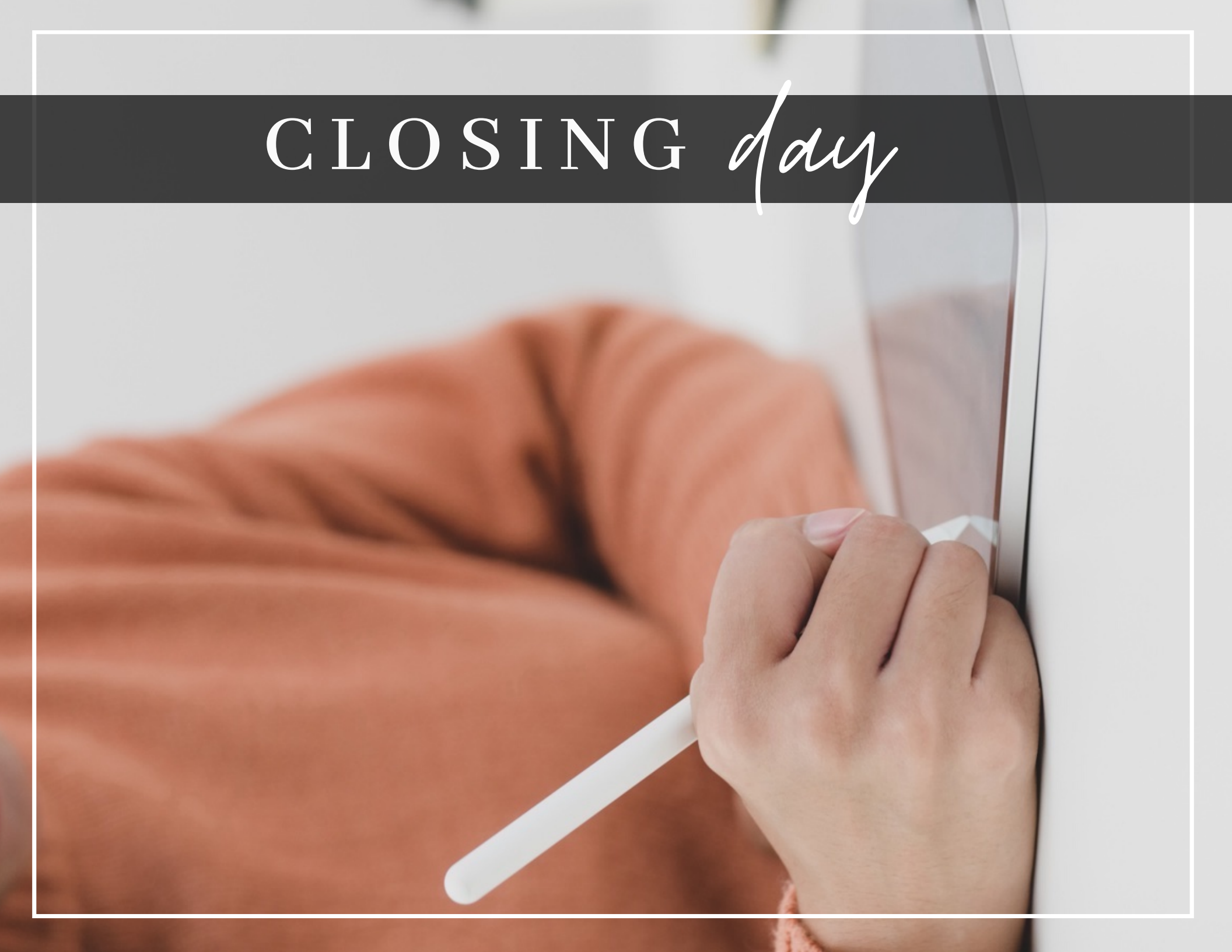
- Arrange appraisal
- Complete title search (Title company will do this)

2 WEEKS TO MOVE

- 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

1 WEEK TO MOVE

- 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. Write directions to the new home, along with your cell phone number


CLOSING day

10 closing day

CLOSING DAY
Closing is when you sign ownership and insurance paperwork and you receive your new home's keys! Typically, closing takes four to six weeks. During this time, purchase funds are held in escrow, where your money is held safe until the transaction is complete.

CLOSING DISCLOSURE
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
We will do a final walk through the home within 24 - 72 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
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 typically happens at the title company. 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
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 sales price. These closing costs can sometimes be shared with the seller.

BRING TO CLOSING

- Government-issued photo ID
- Copy of the sales contract
- Homeowner's insurance certificate
- Proof of funds to cover the remainder of the down payment and your closing costs

RECEIVE YOUR KEYS
Congratulations! It was a lot of hard work but you are now officially homeowners!! Time to throw a party and get to know your new neighbors!

REVIEWS

SOME OF OUR REVIEWS

★★★★★

Have been through the buying and selling process with Eric and Maria, they are everything you want when it comes to supporting you as a real estate agent. They are extremely reliable, responsive, knowledgeable and gracious. Both of them always follow through on their end and respond to any email, phone call, text message immediately. Their knowledge in real estate is extremely helpful and makes you feel at ease in making the biggest purchase of your life, They are both always learning, staying up to date on the latest and greatest in real estate and take classes etc to better themselves to serve their customers. Lastly, They are both extremely gracious people, they take time to engage in meaningful conversations and have a high level of respect for their customers. To top it off they know how to laugh, joke and make this process enjoyable as stressful as it can be.

-Logan

"Maria was great to work with, providing stellar insights, sharp knowledge, and unwavering professionalism. Go with Maria for all your real estate needs!

-Dylan

My husband and I hired Maria and Eric in 2019 to sell our home. It was a wonderful experience and we couldn't recommend them more! They make an amazing team and work together effortlessly. At the same time, they each bring unique talents and skills to their work providing their clients with a really top-notch experience! Eric and Maria are extremely personable and communicative, organized, tech savvy, market savvy and just a lot of fun to work with!

- Prita

Ten stars!!
My family and I sold our first house recently and going into the process we were very nervous because selling was something we had never done and during the home buying process with our first real estate agent it wasn't as smooth as we had hoped. So we did some research but were still nervous with many unanswered questions. Fortunately through mutual friends and coworkers we were put in contact with Eric and Maria. The rest was history! Their experience in this field, professionalism, and admirable work ethic shined from the get go and helped us sell our home quicker than expected. No question we had went unanswered, nor was there ever a lack of communication. It was a good feeling knowing our goals were just as important to them as they were to us. If you're looking for a high quality work when it comes time to buying or selling real estate I highly recommend these two.

- Francisco

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