

# Home Buyers' Guide

Virtual Homes is pleased to provide you with this Home Buyers Guide. This guide will assist you in the process of searching for and buying property. Real estate laws vary from state to state and we recommend that you consult a qualified Realtor professional to assist you with brokerage services.

## ***There Are Two Important Decisions In Buying A Home . . .***

Selecting a real estate professional to assist you in the process and choosing the level of services and representation are your primary concerns. You may wish to work with a Realtor as a "client" (agency relationship) or customer (non-agency) which is defined by state law. In either case, you can expect a Realtor (member of the National Association of



Realtors) to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the National Association of Realtors.

Real estate laws typically provide for real estate brokers to offer the consumer options in representation during the home buying process. Buyer agency, non-agency and sub-agency are the most common options offered. However not all Brokers offer Buyer Agency. Your Realtor will provide you with [disclosure forms](#) (you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view disclosure forms), which should be given to you prior to looking at property. These forms will assist you in understanding your options.

When you are ready to start the home buying process you should consult with a Realtor about their company policy regarding agency as it pertains to state law. Each state can be different in their laws and regulations, and office policy will vary from company to company.

## ***Buyer Agency***

This option provides for client level services where the real estate agent **represents you** and has a fiduciary responsibility to your interests. Buyer agents are advocates of the buyer and can legally negotiate in favor of the Buyer. Client level services differ from customer level services in that a Buyer's Agent can:

- Promote and protect your interests
- Seek real estate at a price and terms specified by you
- Provides information that may enhance your bargaining position
- Negotiate on your behalf
- Maintain confidentiality

## ***Non-Agency***

In non-agency, the agent does not represent your interests as a consumer and can only perform

ministerial acts. The agent can show property, prepare offers or agreements, convey offers or agreements and provide information and assistance concerning professional services. **The agent does not negotiate on your behalf.**

## ***Sub-Agency***

This option provides for the agent to assist you in the process but actually **represents the Seller** and has a fiduciary responsibility to their interests. In many states and offices where Buyer Agency is offered, sub-agency is not. Most consumers prefer that the agent either work on their behalf or in a "neutral" position in non-agency.

**Most consumers prefer buyer agency as they expect a real estate professional to work for them and their interests. Ask your real estate professional to provide you with a Buyer Agency contract so that you fully understand the relationship.**

## ***Broker's Role***

The Broker is a real estate agent and is not an attorney, tax advisor, lender, appraiser, surveyor, structural engineer, home inspector or other professional service provider. Agents will advise Buyer's to seek professional advice in these areas of concern.

## ***House Shopping - A Team Effort***

Our approach is to work with you to achieve your goals in the purchase of real estate. Our real estate agent will provide professional services and we ask that you respect this business relationship.

## ***The Process of Buying a Home***

One of the most important steps in purchasing a home is to understand the mortgage process and the available programs. It is extremely important for you be pre-approved (full credit approval or a bank commitment subject to an appraisal is the best), as this approval will strengthen your negotiating position with the Seller. Selecting qualified mortgage lenders who understand local real estate laws is critical in insuring a smooth transaction.

Once you are qualified and can target your price range now you can start the search for a home.

**To obtain mortgage information or a pre-approval, click on the lenders link on the home page or contact Virtual Homes.**

## ***What Type of Home?***

To assist us in locating properties that meet your needs provide us with the requirements for the property you are looking for. Price range, location, size, number of bedrooms and baths, style, and age are usually the primary concerns.

### ***Where Do You Want To Live?***

Let us help you find a home and a community that fits your lifestyle. Do you want neighborhood or country privacy? What is the commuting time that fits your lifestyle? Are school systems a primary concern? Do you have special interests? Understanding your needs will assist us in finding the right home in the right location.

### ***How Do We Find It?***

If the property you are looking for is available for sale, we will find it. Providing access to the entire inventory is our responsibility. We search the entire market including For Sale by Owners (FSBO) and builder's homes. Take as much time as you need to find the property that meets your needs. When you find it, don't wait. Market conditions favor the Seller.

### ***Closing the Contract***

In some states you will negotiate through an offer sheet with the seller. Once the offer is negotiated, lawyers will complete the Purchase and Sales Contracts. In other states, the offer sheet becomes the contract when accepted. The standard Purchase and Sales Agreement typically provides options to the Buyer for a Home Inspection, financing contingency, a Seller's Disclosure and special provisions.

The financing contingency is intended to permit you to obtain financing you select in order to purchase the property. The Home Inspection, by qualified professionals, may discover unknown material defects and address the structure, mechanicals, pests, water and sewerage systems, and special situations. The Seller's Disclosure is the Seller's representation as to their knowledge of their property.

Your real estate agent can guide you through this process in order to assure that all the contractual agreements have been met.

For more information regarding Home Inspections, click on the special reports offered on the Buyer Services page.

### ***Welcome Home!***

After all the contract contingencies have been met, the closing can be scheduled. Again, real estate law varies from state to state so your agent will advise you on the closing process.

Typically a title company or an attorney will conduct a title search and prepare the closing documents. Prior to the closing we suggest that you conduct a "walk-thru" to assure that the property has not been damaged or changed significantly. Soon it will be moving day, so start packing!

**[Click here to view the HUD office \(Housing and Urban Development\) guide to buying a home.](#)**