

# BUYERS GUIDE

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO BUYING A HOME  
IN 2026



Ruthie is 100% the best agent we've met—and we vetted a lot. She is incredibly resourceful and creative. She communicated thoughtfully and proactively throughout our selling process and was highly responsive to my many texts and questions! She advocates for her client, does extensive research to keep her saw sharp, and stays ready to make things happen! If I could, I would clone her and or take her with us for every future purchase and sale! Thank you,

Ruthie!!

-Kaitlin Desselle

YOUR AGENT

THE STEPS

BUY OR SELL FIRST

THE PRE-APPROVAL

UNDERSTANDING OFFERS

CLOSING COSTS

SEVEN  
FAQ'S

EIGHT  
MOVING CHECKLIST

NINE  
MEET THE TEAM

TEN  
LET'S CONNECT

## Meet Your Agent



Ruthie Lyons, owner of The Lyons Collective, is one of Knoxville, Tennessee's top-producing real estate agents—and she brings both results and personality to the table. With eight years in the industry, Ruthie is known for making the buying and selling process seamless, strategic, and even a little fun.

She earned her Associate of Arts degree from Pellissippi State Community College and her Bachelor of Business Administration from King University, pairing strong business knowledge with real-world expertise.

Before real estate, Ruthie made her mark in the corporate world as a Director of Sales and Marketing for major hospitality brands like Hilton, Marriott, and IHG. That background means she knows exactly how to market a home, negotiate like a pro, and deliver five-star service every step of the way.

When she's not closing deals, Ruthie is busy channeling her entrepreneurial spirit into her pajama line, Sleep Thrillzzz—because she believes you should chase your dreams and be comfortable doing it.

Driven, dynamic, and dedicated to her clients, Ruthie Lyons is redefining what it means to work with a real estate professional in Knoxville.

# THE STEPS

So, you want that dream home? We know exactly how to get you there. Here are the typical steps involved in buying a home.



## GET PRE-APPROVED

You'll want to get this process started asap, as getting pre-approved for financing is essential.



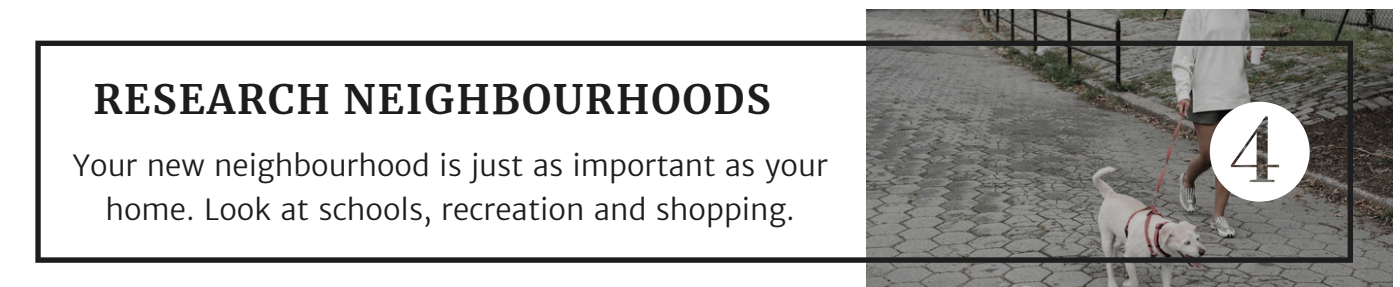
## CHOOSE AN AGENT

Choose an agent whose personality meshes with your own and whose experience can work in your favour!



## HUNT FOR HOMES

We'll take note of your requirements and start searching for properties that fit the bill!

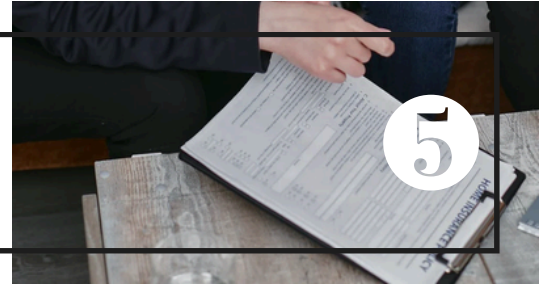


## RESEARCH NEIGHBOURHOODS

Your new neighbourhood is just as important as your home. Look at schools, recreation and shopping.

## MAKE AN OFFER

We'll draw up an offer and negotiate on your behalf.



6

## INSPECTION

This will address any hidden issues in the house.



## CLOSE THE SALE

Arrange a closing date and sign the paperwork!



8

## MOVE IN!

You did it! Welcome to your new home!



# BUY OR SELL FIRST

Each situation is unique, and several factors need to be looked at to determine which option is right for you. Here are some things to consider with each.



## BUY FIRST

### Works best when

There is a lot of competition in the market and property prices are rising

You're confident there will be a high level of demand for your existing property

You can negotiate or make it conditional on selling your own home

You're prepared to accept an offer that lets you move on or pay bridging finance.



## SELL FIRST

### Works best when:

Property prices are flat or declining  
if you want greater certainty about how much you have to spend on your next home

If you're moving locations and buying in a different and slower market

If you can negotiate a long settlement or know that you'll be able to find something that suits your requirements.

# PRE-APPROVAL

Getting a pre-approval is one of the best things you can do to simplify the process and give yourself more confidence in your buying power. Here's what you can expect from the process.

**ONE**



## YOUR CREDIT SCORE

Knowing your credit score will help lenders decide if you're a good candidate for a loan. The higher your credit the better.

## YOUR EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Lenders want to make sure you can regularly make mortgage payments, with no major gaps in income.



**TWO**

**THREE**



## YOUR ASSETS AND DEBTS

Lenders want to know your debt-to-income ratio to know if you can make each loan payment with the income you earn.



### WHAT KIND OF HOME DO YOU WANT?

Are you interested in single-family, condo or townhome? Do some research of what types of homes offer what that will help narrow down your search area.



### CONSIDER YOUR COMMUTE

Do you need a car to get to work? Are you going to be taking transit? Do a test run before committing to a certain area.



### OLD HOUSE OR NEW HOUSE

Older neighbourhoods are great for their charm and character, but often older homes require more repairs, newer developments have modern finishes and less repairs needed.

# CHOOSING A HOME



### COMMUNITY

What would you like to see in your new community? Is it more coffee shops? Events? Closer to the water? Whatever it is write it down and choose areas that have those features.



### WALKSCORE

How important is it to you to be walking distance to things like schools, shopping and groceries? Think of what you want or need to be close to.



### MUST NOT HAVE

Everyone has wants but have you considered the things you don't want? If you hate noise you might want to steer clear of the college area for example.

# UNDERSTANDING OFFERS

Once we draft and present the offer a few things could happen, here's a breakdown of the offer process and what you can expect.

## OFFER PRESENTED



### ACCEPT

Your offer is accepted!  
Time to celebrate, now we will move ahead with any conditions laid out in the offer like home inspection.

### REJECT

The Seller may reject your offer. We will ask questions to discover why and if there is anything we can do to make the offer more appealing.

### COUNTER

The Seller may come back with their own offer. In this case, we will review the terms with you and continue to negotiate until we reach an agreement.



Ruthie walked us through the entire offer and negotiated so well, we felt completely taken care of... and we got the house!

-MARY & TOM SMITH

# ELEMENTS OF AN OFFER

## **Price**

The price of the home

## **Deposit**

Will be applied against the purchase of the house when the sale closes.

## **Terms**

Terms include the total price offered and the financing details.

## **Conditions**

Conditions are items that must be completed or fulfilled prior to the closing (such as a home inspection, obtaining financing, or selling your existing house).

## **Inclusions and exclusions**

Items included or excluded. These items can be anything from appliances to decorative items, such as window coverings or mirrors.

## **Closing day**

The closing day is generally the day the title of the property is legally transferred and the transaction of funds finalized.

# CLOSING COSTS

We count ourselves as lucky that Ruthie landed in our lives...we would have been lost without her guidance and savvy know-how.

## BEFORE CLOSING

- DEPOSIT
- PROPERTY APPRAISAL
- HOME INSPECTION

## ON CLOSING

- LAND TRANSFER TAX
- PROPERTY TAX
- MORTGAGE INSURANCE

## AFTER CLOSING

- MOVING EXPENSES
- UTILITY CONNECTIONS
- RENOVATIONS
- REPAIRS + MAINTENANCE

## FAQ'S

### HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO PAY YOU?

There are some rare exceptions, but generally, buyer agents do charge a fee, and the fee is paid by the seller. So as a buyer, you will almost never pay any commission fee.

### WHY DO I NEED A BUYER AGENT?

It's in your best interest to have representation the Seller Agent is working in the best interest of the seller which means you need someone on your side to make sure you get the best possible deal.

### HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE?

Finding the right home can take weeks to months depending on your timeline and needs. Once we find a home you like, the offer can be accepted within days and the closing is typically 1-3 months, which means you could be moved into your new home in a few short months.

# MOVING CHECKLIST

## TWO MONTHS BEFORE

- Start downsizing and donating old and unwanted items
- Start researching moving costs and companies
- Collect school records and transfer
- Order packing supplies

## ONE MONTH BEFORE

- Change your address and send moving notifications to friends and family
- Find local healthcare providers and shopping necessities
- Buy any new appliances or make plans for what to buy

## TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- Contact utilities
- Finalize moving arrangements

## 2-3 DAYS BEFORE

- Plan payments and expenses for moving
- Defrost your fridge
- Clean as you continue to pack
- Pack things you will need right away separately

## MOVING DAY

- Do a final walkthrough
- Keep all receipts
- Pre-clean, seal any windows or doorways
- Check for damages in your new home that will need to be fixed
- Unpack room by room



ASSOCIATES



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