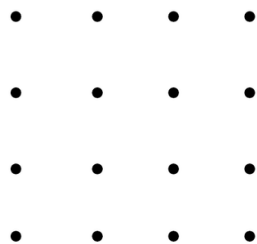


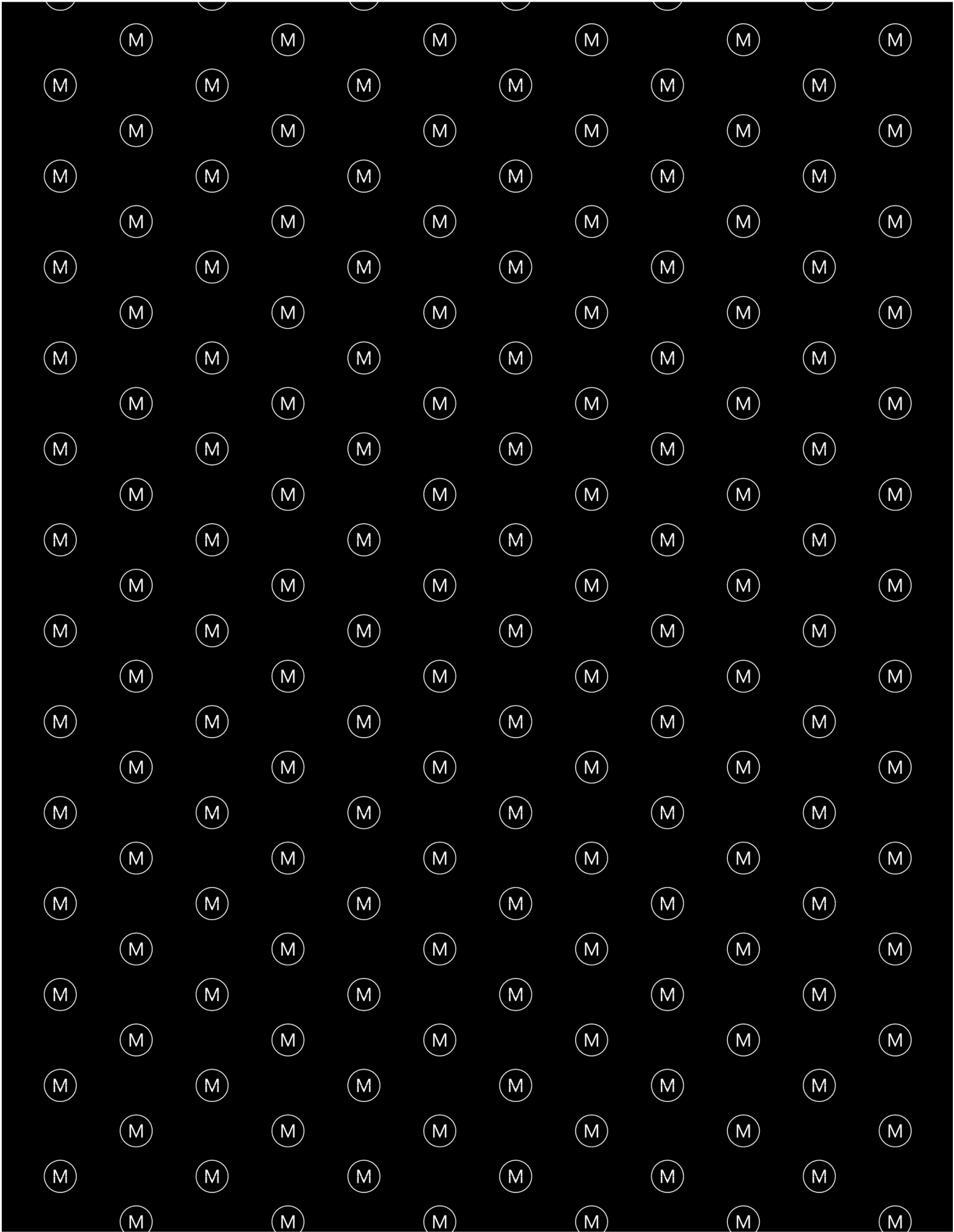


COMPASS

# Buyers Guide



MODA GROUP







You're buying a new home! That's incredibly exciting. Whether it is your first place, you're moving up to something bigger, or you're looking to expand your real estate empire, purchasing a home is the beginning of something new, and the process to get there should be one you look forward to and enjoy. After all, life is all about the journey, right?

That's our focus at Moda Real Estate Group.

As real estate professionals, our goal is to find you the perfect home. But at Moda Group, our mission is to provide you white-glove, 5-star service along the way so the journey is as fulfilling as the destination.

## Around here, we believe in something we like to call *Housepitality*.

What does that mean? Glad you asked! Housepitality is two-fold: it's about maximizing the client experience, and utilizing our experience to maximize the sale.

### That means . . .

- We're going to get to know you better than you know yourself, in order to provide you the best results and the most personalized service.
- We're going to tap into our deep network to bring you options and properties before they hit the market.
- We're going to use our combined 25+ years of experience to negotiate on your behalf and get you the best value.
- We're going to surround you with the best real estate professionals Chicago has to offer for all of your needs: legal, inspection, construction, home design, etc.
- We're going to anticipate your needs before you do, to provide you the best, most comprehensive support. Not just now, but long after you've settled into your new home.
- And we're going to lean on our smart, optimized systems to streamline everything so we can focus more time on you, and less time on everything else.

We are truly excited and honored to support you in your search for a new home, and look forward to celebrating your housewarming with you.



# Meet the Team



**James D'Astice**  
Founder, Licensed Broker



**Lauren Herskovic**  
Founding Member, Licensed Broker



**Abby Spurlin**  
Licensed Broker



**Julia Pandorf**  
Transaction Manager, Licensed Broker



**Tiffany Razo**  
Licensed Broker



**Claudia Carlucci**  
Licensed Broker



**Todd Hoffman**  
Licensed Broker



**Greg Bloomer**  
Licensed Broker



**Nora Rabideau**  
Licensed Broker



**Hannah Peterson**  
Director of Operations



MODA GROUP





## James D'Astice

Founder, Licensed Broker

james@modagrp.com

773.425.0706

### Why did you decide to go into real estate?

It really wasn't on my radar. In 2009, I was waiting tables and fresh out of college struggling to find a job in advertising so I decided to follow my wife's lead and get my license. Turns out, that was one of the best decisions I've ever made. I basically tripped and fell into my dream job! The rest is history...

### What is your favorite part of your job?

Guiding clients through a real estate experience that is bumpy, rocky, challenging... and then coming out on top. It is super rewarding and if it has a positive impact on someone's life, that's the best part of all.

### What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?

The restaurant scene. Chicago has become a world class dining destination, and I get to take advantage of it every day. (And I do!)

### If you could only share one piece of advice with buyers, what would it be?

Unicorns do not exist. There is no "perfect" property out there. And that is why it helps working with experienced professionals like us. We can help you set and manage those realistic expectations up front so when that ideal property does come available, you are prepared and positioned to move quickly on it.

### You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?

It's rare that I get a stretch of 4 hours on a Saturday, but if I do get it, I love being a Dad, making breakfast and hanging out with my daughter, Stella.



## Lauren Herskovic

Licensed Broker

lauren@modagr.com

248.396.8953

### **Why did you decide to go into real estate?**

I always loved the idea of helping people find their next home, but it always seemed like more of a pipedream than a realistic option. But finally, after burning out in the corporate world, I decided to stop wasting my life and get into a career that excited me. And I haven't looked back since!

### **What is your favorite part of your job?**

The excited sound in someone's voice when you tell them they've got a deal and they've got their dream home. If I could somehow bottle that and open it whenever I needed a boost, I would. Until then, I guess I'll just keep chugging coffee.

### **What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?**

This city has something for everyone: beach, food, history, culture, music, comedy, more food, sports, art... whatever you could ever want or need, you have it at your fingertips.

### **If you could only share one piece of advice with buyers, what would it be?**

Know what you want before you get out there and start looking. It's so easy to get swayed by bells and whistles that don't really matter to you, and you don't want to let those things distract you from the stuff that does.

### **You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?**

A long walk along the 606 with my dog, Harvey, followed by a well-earned treat: a Stan's Donut, a slice of pizza from Dante's, a cocktail from Best Intentions...or all of the above.



## Abby Spurlin

Licensed Broker

abby@modagr.com

407.848.4806

### Why did you decide to go into real estate?

One of my passions in life is history, whether that be the history of a city, its architecture, the various cultures, or the people. Real Estate allows me to immerse myself in Chicago's history, and help my clients do the same.

### What is your favorite part of your job?

Creating long-lasting relationships. I love meeting new people, listening to their stories and finding out their passions and interests. In real estate, we have the privilege of bringing those dreams to life. Seeing a smile on my client's face when they enter their dream space is priceless.

### What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?

I love that Chicago is a city with a million things to offer, but it also feels like an idyllic small town. One of my favorite things to do is hop on a bike and ride through the charming tree-lined streets, watch dogs and kids playing in parks, and hear the sound of laughter flow through patios as I make my way to the lake to catch a cotton candy sunset overlooking the iconic skyline.

### If you could only share one piece of advice with buyers, what would it be?

Keep an open mind. A lot of buyers are set on a particular neighborhood and street in the city. Chicago has a rich, complex and beautiful history that makes every neighborhood and street corner uniquely wonderful. You never know if your dream home is just a few blocks away or located in a nearby neighborhood.

### You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?

On a sunny Chitown summer day, I would go for a quick run on the beautiful Lakefront Trail, stop by the vibrant Lincoln Park Farmers Market (flowers, grilled cheese and strawberries in hand), then hop on a bicycle, and cycle through the streets with my husband. If I still had time to spare, I would meet friends or family at an outdoor patio for brunch.





## Julia Pandorf

Licensed Broker

julia@modagr.com

513.535.4342

### Why did you decide to go into real estate?

I've always loved going to open houses and looking at new properties in the city, every home has its own uniqueness! Being able to turn that into a job was a dream come true!

### What is your favorite part of your job?

Meeting new people everyday and helping them navigate through their real estate needs! I love to show people the fun side of real estate so that they can enjoy every moment of the process and be excited, not stressed out!

### What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?

FOOD. There's never a minute where you can't find the exact food you are craving and it's unbelievable how easy it is to get anything delivered to your home! Chocolate milkshake and egg rolls at 6am on a Sunday? 100% doable.

### If you could only share one piece of advice with buyers, what would it be?

Unless you build your home from the ground up, finding a home that meets every, exact need and want is near impossible (though I'm up for that challenge). Don't let that stop you from buying a home that is almost perfect for you. You can always make changes in a new home to suit your wants and needs, but getting the home is the first step!

### You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?

Grabbing a couple friends and heading to a new brunch place with (preferably bottomless) mimosas and bloody mary's and then making my way to Sweet Mandy B's for dessert. I'll bring my goodies home, turn on some Netflix or HBO and relax.



## Tiffany Razo

Licensed Broker

tiffany@modagr.com

630.664.9075

### Why did you decide to go into real estate?

After purchasing my first property, I was intrigued and wanted to learn more. The more I learned, the more I wanted to share with others. So I got licensed and now I focus a lot on educating my clients, especially first-time homebuyers. I want people to know that they don't need to be scared and what an amazing feeling it is to be a homeowner.

### What is your favorite part of your job?

Watching my clients blossom into confident, knowledgeable buyers! It warms my heart when they start noticing features of a property that they never used to - like being able to identify galvanized plumbing vs copper, or if there is grounding electric wire in a home. It's important to familiarize yourself with different parts of your home so you know exactly what you're getting and how it all works once you're living there. I also love seeing my clients start a new chapter in their lives, and have a role in making that exciting transition happen for them.

### What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?

The restaurant scene! You can find any type of cuisine in this city, whatever you're craving, and it's all authentic and delicious.

### If you could only share one piece of advice with buyers, what would it be?

Have an open mind when looking at properties. There is no such thing as a perfect home. Focus on your top "musts" and be flexible with the rest of your "wants." You can't change the location of a property or how much land it has, but you can update the kitchen or finish the basement.

### You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?

If it's warm out, I'm heading to a restaurant that has a patio or rooftop to soak in the sun (with good company, of course). If it's cold out, I'm snuggling on the couch with my furry babies and watching a movie.





## Claudia Carlucci

Licensed Broker

claudia@modagr.com

312.339.6697

### Why did you decide to go into real estate?

I've always been fascinated by how people transform their house into a home, and I just knew I wanted to be a part of that process.

### What is your favorite part of your job?

I love being able to meet new people on a daily basis and to help those people navigate the journey to homeownership. It can be overwhelming at times and I take great pride in making the process stress-free and exciting for my clients. Because it is exciting!

### What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?

The fact that it feels like a giant small town. The people are so friendly and welcoming, but there are always new places to explore, even after living here for decades.

### If you could only share one piece of advice with buyers, what would it be?

Listen to your gut! If you find a place that checks all of your boxes and you know you want to live there, do it! It's easy to think "what if there's something better out there?" but if a place is right for you, you'll know.

### You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?

Eating. My favorite activity is finding new local restaurants to try, and I'm so lucky that this city offers an endless list of options (and eating opportunities)! I'm passionate about supporting small businesses and, let me tell you, I definitely do my part!



## Greg Bloomer

Licensed Broker

greg@modagr.com

847.826.1313

### Why did you decide to go into real estate?

I decided to go into Real Estate because I always knew I wanted a job that allowed me to work directly with people \*and not be chained to a desk!) in order to help them achieve a goal, and homeownership is the ultimate goal.

### What is your favorite part of your job?

My favorite part of my job is hearing from my clients about how happy they are in their new homes after moving in and getting settled. It's very rewarding to know that the work you put in has had a positive impact on someone's daily life.

### What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?

The diversity of neighborhoods and the people. If you want to go have a fancy night out, go to River North or West Loop. If you want to find some of the best Mexican food you've ever had, check out Pilsen. If you're me, check out Boystown.

### If you could only share one piece of advice with buyers, what would it be?

Do not wait to submit an offer on a home you love! You might find your dream home during your first day of home tours and if you wait to be sure you've "seen everything," someone else might swoop in and snag that one while you're out there looking at others.

### You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?

Wait, Realtors can get free time on Saturdays? This is exciting news! If I had 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon I am doing one of two things: If it's nice out, I'm finding friends to have drinks with on any of my favorite patios/rooftops. If it's not so nice out (as we're all too familiar around here) you'll find me cuddled up on the couch with my boyfriend, dog and cat, watching whatever entertainment Netflix has graced us with that week.



## Todd Hoffman

Licensed Broker

todd@modagr.com

630.842.1979

### Why did you decide to go into real estate?

I've been in the Real Estate industry for X years as a Home Inspector, and I wanted to be a larger part of the process for home buyers and sellers. Plus, having that Home Inspector experience, I felt that bringing that knowledge and expertise to the table could offer a unique value to any prospective home buyer and seller.

### What is your favorite part of your job?

I'm a people person who is easily bored by routine, so meeting new people is always an adventure. There's never a dull moment in this career, and no two days are the same. I also find it very rewarding to educate people on their investment and find solutions to their problems.

### What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?

The range in diversity from people, culture and - of course - the food scene is what really attracted me to Chicago and what makes me love it more every day.

### If you could only share one piece of advice with buyers, what would it be?

Keep your offer simple. Sellers tend to see lots of contingencies as an opportunity for the deal to fall apart. They are more inclined to choose a relatively "clean" offer to ensure they get to the closing table.

### You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?

That would be a combination of sussing out the next great place to find the best chilaquiles, spending some time hiking in the woods, an afternoon matinee with my son, and relaxing with my friends and loved ones over some good old fashioned home cooking.





## Nora Rabideau

Licensed Broker

nora@modagr.com

908.399.0275

### Why did you decide to go into real estate?

I have always had a passion for building relationships and helping people. In my previous career I was a corporate legal recruiter, helping attorney's navigate changes in their careers. Being a recruiter has a lot of similarities to being a broker; in both capacities you are helping people navigate some of the most significant decisions that they will make in their lives. There is little that is more personal and foundational than the decision to buy or sell one's home. I decided to get into real estate so that I could extend my reach into the community around me to help my friends, family and those in my community (or soon to be) navigate these huge life decisions.

### What is your favorite part of your job?

By far my favorite part of my job is building long lasting relationships with my clients. I don't view the relationships with my clients as transactional, but rather as a long term relationship that extends past real estate. It is the relationships that we develop that turn a neighborhood into a community. I have clients who have become dear friends of mine and others that I often see out and about in the city. I love that I am able to touch so many people's lives and help build that sense of community.

### What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?

Having spent time in a number of cities before settling in Chicago, summertime in this city is unlike any other city I have lived in. The streets come alive with weekly neighborhood street fests, farmers markets, and restaurants spilling out onto the sidewalks. The energy in the city is truly unmatched.

### If you could only share one piece of advice with buyers, what would it be?

The small details have big impacts. Seemingly small details such as clutter (or lack thereof), flow, and proper staging can have a huge impact on the speed and ultimate sale price of your home.

### You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?

You'll likely find me hanging out with my husband, my golden retriever and some friends on a patio enjoying good conversation at one of Chicago's many amazing restaurants.



## Hannah Peterson

Director of Operations

[hannah@modagrp.com](mailto:hannah@modagrp.com)

614.570.6450

### Why did you decide to go into real estate?

After learning that the banking world wasn't for me, I wanted to gain some experience in a different field, so I thought I'd give property management a try. I really enjoyed my 2 years in that role, but I wanted to be part of something bigger, so I sought out a role on a growing real estate team. I am constantly inspired by the team's level of professionalism and dedication to our clients, and the relationship we build with the people we serve. It's incredibly gratifying.

### What is your favorite part of your job?

I love the collaboration with the team, especially when we're strategizing how to market our clients' properties or to market ourselves! Being a part of that creative process gets me excited to come into work every day.

### What is your absolute favorite thing about Chicago?

The diversity and culture this city has to offer. And the Cubano sandwich at El Cubanito.

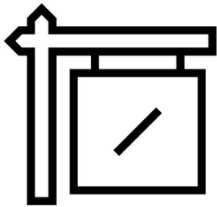
### You have 4 free hours on a Saturday afternoon; how are you spending it?

I love to spend time with friends going to restaurants or our favorite bars, such as Go Tavern and Star Bar.. In the summertime, I like going to a White Sox game or taking a stroll through Lincoln Park Zoo. However, nothing beats laying on the couch with a good snack and watching a scary movie any time of the year!

# What Our Clients Are Saying...

“

James helped us buy our first home and I was beyond impressed with the advisory approach he took with us, as every step of the process was brand new. He took the time to answer our questions and explain them (even more than once) in a way that made sense to us. He has an excellent feel for the market and that was critical as he helped us win a multiple bid offer. He has a vast network of referrals - i.e. attorney, inspector, contractors, mortgage originators, etc.—which was beyond helpful. — **Joe L.**



We worked with James on both buying and selling our house. James brings a personal touch that delights the customer and makes them feel that James is doing everything possible to ensure the client obtains what they want. — **Brent W.**

It's not everyday that my husband and I feel as passionately about a review or referral, but James and his team come highly recommended by both of us! James helped us to secure what is proving to be the perfect new home for us and we couldn't be happier. His professionalism, market knowledge, and respect for his clients and their goals provides a sense of trust and security. Big decisions go into both buying and selling and James provides a genuine comfort through his advising and expertise. We had the most ideal experience with both our buy and sale with James and team! — **Megan S.**

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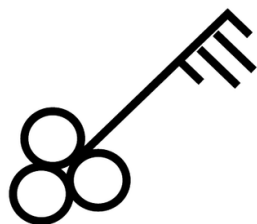
# What Our Clients Are Saying...

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“

Lauren is a lovely human and the consummate professional. She helped us buy our (dare I say) dream condo with relatively few hiccups. As first-time buyers, we were a bit anxious to buy a property during the pandemic, but Lauren was reassuring and responsive throughout the whole house-buying process. Her strengths are her people skills, communication, efficiency, and get-it-done-ness.

— **Ariel & Nathaniel**



Lauren is the absolute BEST! This was our fourth home buying experience - and by far the most complex - and working with Lauren made it our most enjoyable experience to date. She is not only incredibly knowledgeable but what she didn't know, she would find out and communicate back to us in a very honestly (and timely). We had complete trust in her and she knew exactly where we needed to be in terms of an offer to secure the (future) home of our dreams. — **Shaina & Victor**

Lauren was instrumental in making our cross country relocation as seamless as possible. Her thorough knowledge of Chicago's neighborhoods helped us narrow our home search, and she was full of helpful information regarding the unique quirks of living in this city. She expertly shepherded our family of 4 on a whirlwind weekend of showings as we had 48 hours in town to pick a home. Once we were under contract she handled all the details for us as we lived out of state. Her calm and straight forward attitude helped relieve our anxiety and she dealt with the minutiae of the repairs process and served as our eyes and ears on the ground. We love our new home and are entirely grateful to Lauren for all her hard work throughout the home buying process. — **Maggie & Jude**

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# What Our Clients Are Saying...

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“

Abby was amazing! As a first-time home-buyer, I expected a complicated, difficult process but Abby made it so easy. I had a particularly difficult seller that could have soured the process but Abby handled it all with ease, proving not only is she great at her job but great under pressure as well. She helped me get a great deal on a property that I didn't expect to get and I would absolutely recommend! — **Jonah L.**



Abby was wonderful to work with! As a first-time buyer, she walked me through every step and provided a lot of information to make sure I was comfortable from start to finish. And she answered every question I had even if it was a stupid question. She was responsive and stayed on top of the process so I never felt out of the loop or unsure of anything. I would recommend Abby to anyone I know looking for a realtor and wouldn't hesitate to use her in the future. — **Kalie W.**

I had the pleasure of having Abby Spurlin as my Real Estate Broker for both the Sell and Buy-side. I am so very thankful I did and would highly recommend her to anyone interested in buying or selling their condo/house. Abby will make you feel as the number 1 priority, she is attentive, responsive, informative, detailed, and proactive in anticipating the market and your needs. She is very data-driven and ensures that you are getting value for both the sell-side and the buy-side. For example, on the buy side, we made an offer on the house and she noted that we could go up to 620k if we would like because that is what it is worth based on comps in the area. Well, we went just shy of that number through her advice and got the house but guess what, it appraised for exactly 620k, Abby knows what she is doing. — **John & Erin H.**

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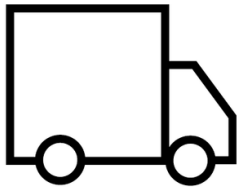


# What Our Clients Are Saying...

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“

We met Tiffany during an open house and she went over the home buying process, which was super helpful for us, being that we were first-time buyers. She explained everything from pre-approvals, to the offer contract, attorney review, inspection period, appraisal, and what to look for when going on showings. She kept our search criteria in mind and we found a beautiful condo. She negotiated the sales price and was able to get furniture thrown into the deal. She was quick on her feet when an inspector said that he couldn't open up the electrical box because he didn't have the right tools. She gave him a dime from her wallet to use so the panel was examined properly and prevented us from any unexpected costs. Her attention to detail was impressive. — **Amy C.**



Tiffany was relentless no matter how disarrayed I became with the process. She reassured me in all aspects. She was really thorough, educative and communicated greatly. She made sure I was taken care of. I can say we saw up to 60-70 properties throughout this process, yet she was greatly patient with me all throughout, [and] remained professional and personable. I will definitely recommend Tiffany to my friends and family, and will count on her for helping me rent out my units! — **Blessing O.**

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# What Our Clients Are Saying...

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“

Claudia was a pleasure to work with from beginning to end! She began the process by truly listening to what we wanted and touring us through properties that met our needs. She didn't waste any time taking us to properties that didn't meet our list of requirements. When we were under contract on a home and ultimately changed our mind due to inspection issues, she was completely understanding. Ultimately, we ended up in our dream home and Claudia is to thank for that! I would highly recommend her for your home buying needs!

— **Clare R.**



Claudia from Moda Group is absolutely wonderful to work with, and I don't think I could have pulled off my Dallas-to-Chicago move without her help! Claudia was extremely organized, responsive, reliable, knowledgeable, friendly, and helpful. She took care of EVERYTHING - and the app that Moda Group uses to organize the buying/renting experience was the best I have ever used of its kind. Claudia went above and beyond to make things as seamless as possible throughout my entire moving experience - even after she had found me my new home, she made sure everything about my arrival and move-in went smoothly. I highly recommend working with Claudia. — **Emily Z.**

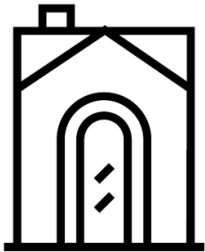
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# What Our Clients Are Saying...

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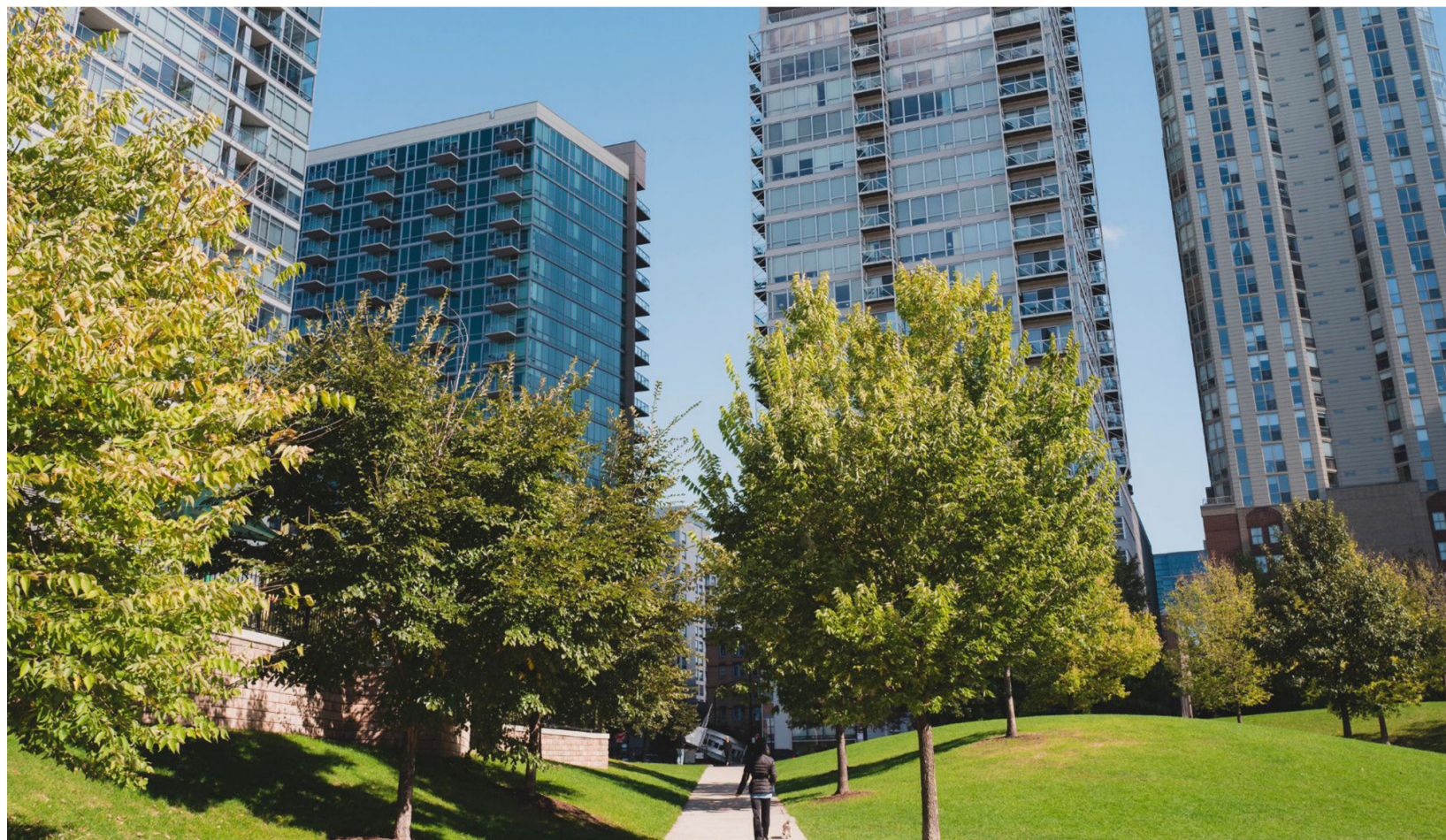
“

I was a young professional looking for my first solo home and Greg was a dream to work with. I didn't really have an idea of what I was looking for (neighborhood-wise) but, after talking to Greg, I knew exactly what I wanted. He was responsive to my calls and emails, continually checking in to update me on the process. I have recommended Greg to other friends and he's helped them out as well! — **Phil S.**



Greg was so incredibly helpful, I don't know how to express it all in a small review. He was so flexible with my schedule and easy to work with. He was extremely attentive to all emails and responded quicker than I ever expected him to. He was incredibly knowledgeable about the neighborhoods I wanted and led me to my dream home I would recommend him to any of my friends, or anyone for that matter! — **Orrin K.**

”



## Moda Group has represented buyers and sellers all over Chicagoland

Lincoln Park

Lakeview

Bucktown

Wicker Park

West Town

Ukrainian Village

Noble Square

Logan Square

South Loop

River West

West Loop

Fulton Market

River North

Gold Coast

Andersonville

Roscoe Village

North Center

Lincoln Square

Ravenswood

Edgewater

Uptown

Rogers Park

Albany Park

Mayfair

Jefferson Park

Portage Park

Edison Park

Park Ridge

Oak Park

Forest Park

Evanston

Downers Grove

No matter where you want to be in Chicagoland, Moda Group knows your neighborhood inside and out.







# Mapping the Journey to Home Ownership

- 
- Why You Should Buy vs. Rent
  - Hiring the (Best!) Real Estate Agent
  - Understanding & Securing Home Financing
  - Perfecting the Home Search
  - Making the Right Offer: A How-To
  - Due Diligence and Your Home Purchase
  - Closing Time
  - Make That House Your Home

# Why You Should Buy vs. Rent

There are two main motivators behind someone's decision to purchase a home: Financial and Emotional

## Financial

For some, the decision is purely about the numbers. While buying a home is one of the largest purchases most people will make in their lives, it is also the largest financial asset they will have.

### Let's dig into some numbers

**5-6%**

Average national annual appreciation rate

**at 3%**

a **\$150,000** home grows to a value of **\$364,000** in 30 years.

**at 1.5%**

this same home value will grow to **\$234,462** in 30 years.

With numbers like that, it is no surprise financial experts continue to argue that a real estate investment is one of the safest and most stable you can make. Even more, buying a home is a smart way to grow your personal wealth, as it allows you to:

- Grow wealth via equity buildup, debt pay down, and value appreciation.
- Take advantage of tax-deductible benefits, such as property and mortgage interest write-offs.
- Leverage opportunities, like using your equity to trade up to a better home or to invest in a rental property or a second home.

## Emotional

Of course, for most people out there, there's also a more personal, emotional component to the home buying decision. If that weren't the case, we wouldn't all spend so much time watching (and crying over) HGTV.

- A home represents your personal tastes and provides a haven of stability and security for both you and your loved ones.
- A home gives you a sense of pride, because it's yours.
- Purchasing a home is a rite of passage, part of the American Dream and a sign that you've really accomplished something.

Afraid that owning a home is out of reach? Think again! Owning a home can be possible and, based on what you are paying in rent, you could actually save some money.

## STEP 1

# Why You Should Buy vs. Rent

The scenario below is based on the difference between paying \$3,500 per month in rent versus purchasing a home for \$450,000.

### Purchase

Estimated Purchase Price	\$450,000
10% down payment	\$45,000
<b>Total Loan Amount</b>	<b>\$405,000*</b>

*\*This is based on a 740+ credit score, escrowing taxes + insurance, and a 30-year fixed rate at 5.45%*

Payments	Owning	Renting
Rent	n/a	\$3,500
P&I	\$2,287	n/a
Taxes & Insurance	\$650	n/a
PMI	\$78	n/a
Renter's Insurance	n/a	\$20
Assessments/HOA Fees	\$200	n/a
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>\$3,215</b>	<b>\$3,520</b>

\$3,215 in Monthly Mortgage X 84 Months: \$270,060

\$3,520 in Monthly Rent Payments X 84 Months: \$295,680

**Savings per year: \$3,660**

**Savings over 7 years: \$25,620**

Plus, of course, when you're ready to move up and move on, you're not just walking away and saying goodbye to all the money you've spent. You're going to sell it and *make* money!



# Hiring the Best Real Estate Agent

So you've decided to buy, hooray! Congratulations on making a rational, smart investment decision, with a side of emotion. Whether it was a big life milestone that led to this decision, or the fact that this decision *is* the big life milestone, cheers to you.

Now it is time to find the real estate expert to guide you through this (often overwhelming) process.

## **In general, real estate agents perform seven main duties**

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Educate you about the market                      | 5. Negotiate on your behalf          |
| 2. Analyze your wants & needs                        | 6. Review paperwork and deadlines    |
| 3. Help you focus on homes that fit your criteria    | 7. Solve any problems that may arise |
| 4. Coordinate the work of other needed professionals |                                      |

## **That being said . . .**

in the most successful agent/client relationships, the agents aren't the only ones making a commitment. You, too, need to commit yourself to your agent. Knowing they are your sole, exclusive broker allows them to dedicate themselves to you 100%, both in their time and their resources, which leads to better results: getting you where you want to be in the shortest amount of time for the best value.



# Understanding & Securing Home Financing

You've made the decision to buy. You've chosen your agent.  
Next step: get your financing locked in.

## Six steps to financing a home

1. Choose a loan officer/lender. Besides your agent, your lender is the key player in the real estate transaction and the bridge that connects you to that dream home! Don't just choose the lender who can offer you the lowest rates; make sure you are working with someone who is both knowledgeable and willing to take the time to share that knowledge with you.
2. Make a loan application and get pre-approved. The sooner you do this, the better. You do not want to go out and start looking at homes without a good understanding of what you can afford.
3. Determine what you want to pay and select a loan option. Your lender can help you calculate monthly payments based on taxes, HOAs, and other monthly fees so you know exactly what you will be paying for a specific home.
4. Submit to the lender an accepted purchase offer contract. (Don't worry; we'll take care of this part for you.)
5. Get an appraisal and title commitment. (Leave this to us and your lender, too! We've got you covered.)
6. Obtain funding at closing.

In many respects, the Lender holds the proverbial keys to your new home; he or she is in charge of securing the funds you need to make the purchase! And that is why it is so important so choose someone who not only knows the many (many) steps in the loan process, but is also rolling up his or her sleeves to help you through it quickly and efficiently.

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**It's not easy to identify a good lender, but don't worry because we already know a few great ones:**

**Drew Boland** | Proper Rate  
drew@properrate.com

**Michael Facchini** | Fairway Mortgage  
mfacchini@fairwaymc.com | 312.667.7681

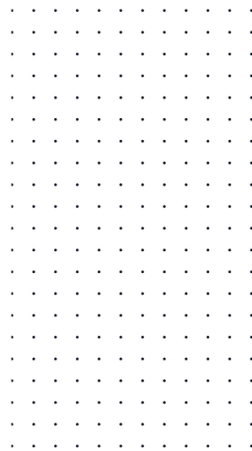
**Emma Butler** | Neighborhood Loans  
emma.butler@neighborhoodloans.com | 773.741.1094

# Perfecting the Home Search

Now that we've gotten all the foundational steps out of the way, we've come to the main event: finding your home. And this is where the fun *really* begins.

Of course, before you start favoriting all those gorgeous homes and going out to showings with your agent, it's important to get organized and get your priorities in order, otherwise you're going to be spinning your wheels and missing out on opportunities.

There are many variables to think about, depending on your lifestyle, budget and future plan - all of which will play into where you ultimately end up - and you want to think about all of those ahead of time so have a level head and clear goals when you hit the ground running.



**Here are a few things to consider when creating a wish list:**

## Location

Location matters, especially in Chicago. Each individual neighborhood offers its own unique flavor and sense of community. Consider the factors that are important to you such as schools, transportation and neighborhood amenities like restaurants, shops and parks. It is always a good idea to drive or walk through the neighborhood at various times of the day and evening to get a better sense of the location.

## Type of Home

A great diversity of housing exists: Single family homes, condominiums, co-ops, lofts. Then there's new construction vs. vintage, high-rises vs. low-rises, amenity buildings vs. non-amenity buildings. The options can seem endless. If you don't already have a preference, start weighing your priorities to narrow your focus.

## Features & Amenities

Garage, hardwood floors, fireplace, outdoor space, a large yard close to park. In the end, these are the kinds of details that drive the decision to purchase one home versus another. In creating this list, some things to consider are resale value, your daily routine and the cost of making changes or additions down the road.

### Is your ideal home starting to come into focus?

Good! We'll help you sharpen that vision and then we'll get to work on finding you properties that fit your goals, both on the market and through our connections and off-market channels.

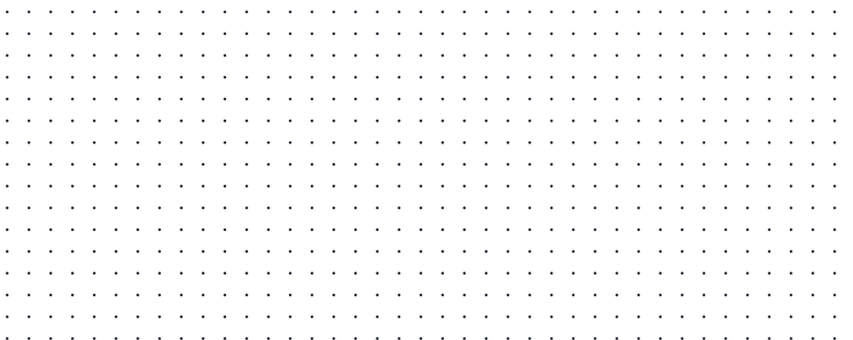
Your job, then, is to review the properties in your collection and let us know which you like, which you don't, and why. What stuck out to you, good or bad? What do you want more of or less of? The more we know, the better we can focus our search to get you exactly what you want and need.

# Making the Right Offer: A How-To

There's nothing quite like the feeling of falling in love.... with a home. All at once, the buying process becomes more exciting and more complex. And this is where our experience, knowledge, and attention to detail is especially useful.

## Here's what comes next:

1. We will high five. This is a big moment!
2. We will prepare a market analysis. This includes a review of properties that have sold, those that are currently on the market, and those that have not sold; in addition to research on the reputation of the building or builder. Performing a thorough, 360 degree review, gives us a really clear picture of where fair market value is for this particular property.
3. We will verify that all information is provided and accurate before writing an offer. This includes researching city, deed and tax records.
4. We will prepare the contract, including any required addendums and disclosures.
5. We will negotiate with the seller. The first step is re-confirming your personal goals for the transaction and having a solid understanding of what you want and what you are willing to do to get it. Then we take that, along with our tried and true strategies, and negotiate on your behalf.
6. We will high-five again. Because you just got yourself a new home!



# Due Diligence and Your Home Purchase

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After the seller accepts your offer, you are officially 'under contract.' First thing's first: attorney review. Contractually, this is the period of time - usually about 5-7 business days - during which you can dig into the details of the property via an inspection, a review of the Homeowners' Association, a check on the validity of the title, etc. **AKA** do your due diligence. This is an incredibly important part of the process, so it is imperative that you surround yourself with a team of trusted experts.

## **Here's a rundown of your team and their responsibilities:**

### **Real Estate Attorney**

During the Attorney Review period, the Buyer's attorney will typically ask for some modification to the language to be more in favor to the buyer (you!), and he or she will work with the Seller's attorney to agree on a property tax credit from Seller to occur at the closing. Your attorney will also assist you with title insurance, the land survey, loan documents, closing documents, and then work with you at actual closing.

### **Home Inspector**

A home inspection is an objective visual examination of the physical structure and systems of a home from the roof to the foundation. The standard home inspector's report will cover the condition of the home's: heating system, central air conditioning system (weather permitting), interior plumbing, electrical systems, roof, attic, visual insulation, walls, ceilings, floors, windows, doors, foundation, basement, structural components. A home inspection may identify the need for major repairs or builder oversights, as well as the need for maintenance to keep it in good shape. After the inspection, you will know more about the home, which will allow you to make decisions with confidence.

### **Contractor(s)**

Once the inspection is complete and you've got your report, you'll have a good understanding of the issues in the property, but you may still not understand the costs and steps involved to fix those issues. And that's why it is vital to have trusted contractors you can turn to, who can visit the property and provide their opinions on the best path forward. That information can be used to estimate the work you'll need to do after purchasing the home, or credits you can request from the seller at closing.

# Due Diligence and Your Home Purchase

While they're not officially on the Moda Group team, we've got a powerhouse crew of experts - with whom we've been working for years - that we can assemble to support you:

## Attorneys

Jay Mittlestead

[jmittelstead@gmail.com](mailto:jmittelstead@gmail.com) | 312.541.9900

Jeremy Bell

[jeremy@bellshah.com](mailto:jeremy@bellshah.com) | 773.635.0355

Aaron Minkus

[aaron@aaronminkuslaw.com](mailto:aaron@aaronminkuslaw.com) | 312.858.6280

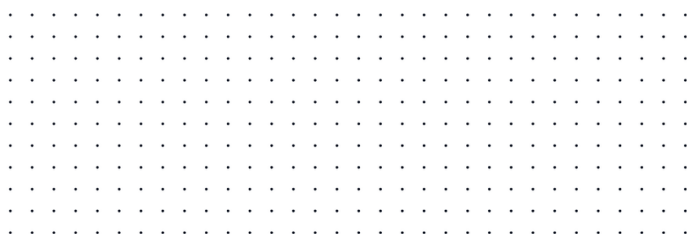
## Inspector

Hoffman Property Inspections

[todd@hoffmanpropertyinspections.com](mailto:todd@hoffmanpropertyinspections.com) | 630.842.1979

## Once we've lined them up, our approach is simple and focused

1. Attend the inspection and discuss the findings with the inspector in real time. It is easy for small things to seem like large issues and vice versa when they are written in a thorough report, so we feel strongly about being there, on the ground, to witness it all in person.
2. Review the inspection report, calling on our team of experts (from foundations to roofs, and everything between) when needed to advise us on the findings. We want their expert opinion on the severity of the issues and what it will take to remediate so we can strategize next steps effectively and efficiently, in a way that best suits our clients.
3. Review the building financials and work history to ensure our clients are making a smart investment and avoiding surprise projects and costs down the road.
4. Work with our attorney to finalize all terms of the contract so our clients get exactly what they need, in an ideal timeline.



# Closing Time

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You've come a long way, my friend. At long last, it is time to close on your property. Well, almost. First, a few final steps:

## Balance of Earnest Money Due

In Chicago, this is typically 3-5% of the purchase price, and is usually due within 2 business days of the end of Attorney Review. The purpose of Earnest Money is to show the seller that you are serious about the purchase, and that you are committed to moving forward. Depositing Earnest Money is a milestone in the home purchase process; a turning point that signals the closing is imminent.

## Appraisal

Your lender will order an appraisal to determine the value of the home, after which you will receive a report. The appraisal is often considered most important to the lender, but it is also a great safety net for you - the buyer - to protect you from overpaying for the property.

## Mortgage Contingency

This is a requirement - per the contract - by when you need to have your mortgage/financing locked in. This date has already been determined, and your agent will work with your lender to monitor the progress of the mortgage, make sure everything is on track, and request an extension if necessary.

## Closing Disclosure

Per federal law, you will receive a Closing Disclosure at least 3 days ahead of the closing, laying out all the financial details of the transaction, including costs for you and credits to you.

## Final Walk Through

Once the closing is scheduled, your agent will schedule a Final Walk Through of the property, usually within 12-24 hours of the closing. The purpose is to make certain that the property is in the condition you agreed to purchase, and that any repairs resulting from the inspection have been completed. You and your agent will attend.

## The Closing!

Closings take place at the Title Company office. Your agent and attorney will join you at the closing table, usually along with the seller's attorney and a Closing Agent. Since all of the details have been hashed out ahead of the closing, and all of the information has previously been disclosed, the closing is very straightforward. Your attorney will go through all the paperwork with you, one page at a time, as you sign your name over and over and over again.

**When you're done, the property is yours! And, of course, your agent high-fives you one last time. [If you can't tell, we really like high-fives.]**



# Make That House Your Home



Now that the home is officially yours, the fun part begins. And we’re not (just) talking about the housewarming party. It’s about making this house your home. Do you need to hire a moving company? Painter? Plumber? Home stylist? We’ve got you covered.

Here is a short list of Moda Group-approved vendors. And there’s plenty more where this came from:

**Painting**

Javier Bazzani | First Quality Painting  
773.968.8140 | javierbazzani@icloud.com

**Moving**

New City Moving  
800.733.6644  
  
The Professionals  
773.478.1365

**Flooring**

Mario Casas  
847.219.9794

**General Contractors**

Michael D’Astice  
847.476.0350  
  
Hector Salgado  
773.255.6112 |  
hector\_salgado@sbcglobal.net

**Foundation and Waterproofing**

Andy Gavin | American Crawl Space  
708.248.8389

**Cleaning**

Pablo | Professional Dustbusters  
773.664.9605  
  
Joanna Rojek  
312.792.5222

**Handyman**

Miguel Mora  
773.628.4694

**Electrician**

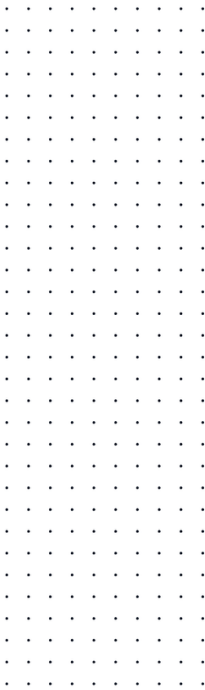
Pete Artis  
708.560.3224 | artiselectric@aol.com  
  
Kent | Skyline Electric  
312.818.0400 | artiselectric@aol.com

**Plumber**

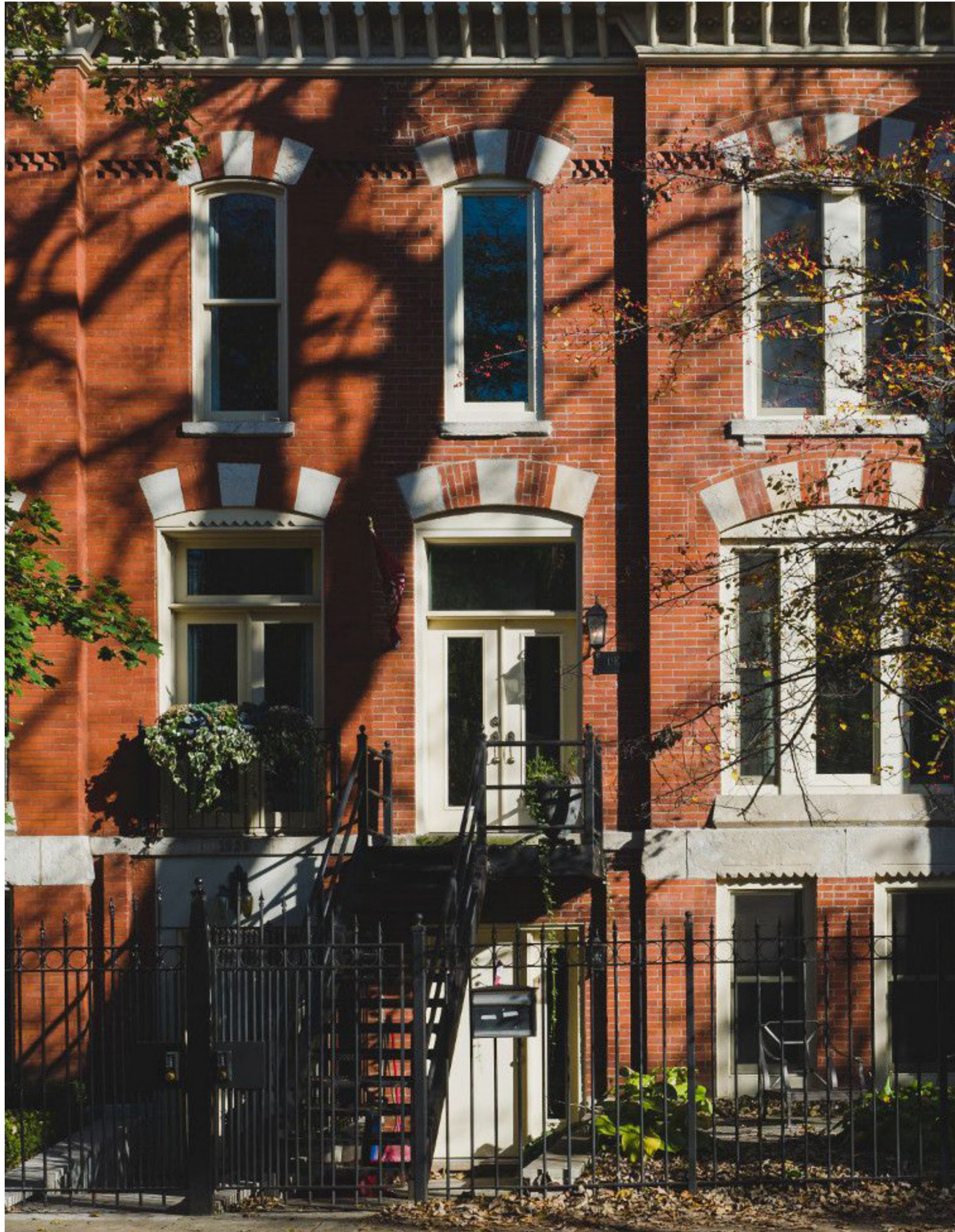
Oliver | All Plumb, Inc.  
773.727.9099 | allplumbinc@gmail.com  
  
Power Plumbing  
773.248.9574

**HVAC**

Simon Fahsi | Art of Heating and Cooling  
708.323.7993 | artheatcool@att.net  
  
Emanuel Stan | Thermatronic Heating & Cooling  
773.426.9911 | thermik@yahoo.com  
  
Spyros | A Climate Source, Inc.  
773.251.3181 | aclimatesource@aol.com









# Real Estate 101

When it comes to real estate transactions, there are a lot of moving parts and even more jargon. Sometimes, trying to understand what is going on can be harder than trying to translate the ingredients list in a craft cocktail menu. So, in case it helps, here's a little crash course in the Real Estate process so you're ahead of the curve before your first showing:

- A breakdown of who pays what in a transaction
- A glossary of the most common real estate terms

# Who Pays What in a Real Estate Transaction?

Sale Price	Typical Cost	Who Pays?
COMMISSION	6% OF PURCHASE PRICE	SELLER
APPRAISAL	\$250 - \$500	BUYER
CREDIT REPORT	\$30 - \$75 PER BORROWER	BUYER
INSPECTION FEE	\$450+/VISIT	BUYER
LENDER-DIRECT UNDERWRITING FEE	\$750 - \$1,000	BUYER
PROCESSING FEE	\$150	BUYER
FLOOD CERTIFICATE	\$50 - \$100	BUYER
TAX SERVICE	\$85 - \$200	BUYER
ATTORNEY FEE	\$650 - \$1,000+	BOTH
SETTLEMENT CLOSING	\$250 - \$1,000	BUYER
TITLE INSURANCE (BUYER)	\$1,500 - \$4,000+	BUYER
TITLE INSURANCE (SELLER)	\$1,500 - \$4,000+	SELLER
RECORDING FEE	\$75 - \$250	BOTH
STATE TRANSFER TAX	\$1.50 PER \$1,000	SELLER
COUNTY TRANSFER TAX	VARIES PER COUNTY	SELLER
MUNICIPAL TRANSFER TAX*	VARIES PER LOCALITY	BUYER
SURVEY	\$500 - \$1,000	SELLER
TERMITE INSPECTION	\$40 - \$100	BOTH
INTEREST PER DAY	LOAN AMOUNT X RATE/365	BUYER
ESCROW TAXES	1 - 5 MOS. (IF APPLICABLE)	BUYER
ESCROW INSURANCE	1 - 5 MOS. (IF APPLICABLE)	BUYER
TAX PRORATION	105 - 110% OF LAST TAX BILL	SELLER

ESTIMATED CLOSING COSTS COURTESY OF DREW BOLAND OF GUARANTEED RATE®.

Prices subject to change. Actual costs vary per lender, loan amount, property type and other factors. \*Property transfer taxes vary per local jurisdiction or township. Please consult your real estate attorney to obtain the best possible estimate for taxes and other closing costs.

# Real Estate Glossary of Terms



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## Agency

Any relationship in which one party (agent) acts for or represents another under the authority of the latter.

## Appraisal

A written analysis of the estimated value of a property prepared by a qualified appraiser.

## Annual Percentage Rate (APR)

A finance charge for a loan that includes interest, service charges, points, loan fees, mortgage insurance and other items, depending on the loan terms.

## As-Is

A contract or offer clause stating that the seller will not repair or correct any problems with the property.

## Assessed Value

The value placed on a property by a municipality for taxing purposes. It may differ significantly from appraised or market value.

## Attorney and Inspection Review

Common contingencies in a contract that allow time for the buyer to hire an inspector and have an attorney review the contract.

## Buyer Representation Agreement

An agreement that specifies the duties and the scope of services a buyer's representative agrees to provide to the buyer, as well as specifying the buyer's responsibilities.

## Certificate of Title

A statement provided by an abstract company or attorney stating the title to real estate is legally held by the current owner.

## Closing

A meeting at the conclusion of a real estate transaction in which a sale of property is finalized by the buyer signing the mortgage documents (if applicable) and paying closing costs. The seller then transfers the deed to the property.

## Closing Costs

The fees, costs and taxes associated with the purchasing of a home

## Comparative Market Analysis (CMA)

An analysis provided by a real estate professional that surveys like properties in a given area or of a certain type for the purpose of determining the relative value of a given property.

## Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of The National Association of REALTORS® establishes obligations with which a real estate professional who is a member (a REALTOR®) must comply to ensure that all parties to the transaction are treated fairly.

## Commission

The fee charged by a broker or agent for providing services related to a real estate transaction such as marketing the property, bringing the parties together and negotiating a purchase contract or loan.

## Comps (Comparables)

Properties that are comparable to the property being analyzed.

## Condominium (Condo)

Real estate in which an owner has title to a specific unit and shared interest in the common areas that are part of a larger property.



## Contingency

A condition in a contract that must be met or waived for the contract to be binding.

## Contingent

A property status that indicates that a property has an accepted offer; however, successful closing may depend on conditions listed in the contract, such as passing a home inspection or obtaining financing.

## Contract

The binding legal agreement between two or more parties that outlines the conditions for the exchange of value (e.g., money exchanged for the title to property).

## Counteroffer

An offer made in response to the offer of another.

## Deed

The legal document that formerly conveys title of a property from seller to buyer.

## Designated Agent

The agent/broker chosen by the client to act as his/her representative in the purchase or sale of a property.

## Disclosures

Information about the home that a seller must provide, by law, to a buyer. Examples include lead-based paint disclosure, or a heating cost disclosure.

## Down Payment

A percentage of the purchase price, not borrowed from a lender, that the buyer pays in cash or check.

## Dual Agent

A broker who works with both parties in a real estate transaction (e.g., buyer and seller, landlord and tenant).

## Earnest Money Deposit

A deposit made by the potential home buyer after an offer has been accepted to show that he or she is serious about buying the property.

## Equity

The amount of value of the property that is owned by the homeowner and is not held by a bank(s) as an outstanding loan.

## Fair Housing Laws

Local, state and federal fair housing laws that prevent discrimination against any individual or group of individuals based upon race, color, religion, sex, handicap, national origin or familial status, as well as other groups protected by various local and state fair housing laws.

## Fixture

Personal property that has become part of the property through permanent attachment (e.g., a chandelier).

## Foreclosure

A Legal procedure resulting when a borrower, after defaulting on mortgage payments, loses his/her interest in a mortgaged property.

## For Sale By Owner (FSBO)

A property for sale that is not listed by a real estate professional.

## Home Inspection

A thorough inspection carried out by a licensed home inspector that evaluates the structural and mechanical condition of a property. A written report is then provided for the buyer.

## Homeowners Association (HOA)

An organization of owners residing within a particular development or condominium formed for the purpose of maintaining and providing community facilities and services for the common enjoyment of the residents.

## Home Warranty

A guarantee for mechanical systems and appliances, but not the structure of the home, against repairs not covered by homeowners insurance. Coverage is for a specific period of time.

## Lien

The legal claim against a property that must be satisfied before the property may be sold.

## Loan-to-Value (LTV)

The ratio of the amount of a mortgage loan to the appraised value or sales price of the property mortgaged, whichever is lower.

## Multiple Listing Service (MLS)

A database of all properties for sale that is available to agents who have subscribed to the service.

## Mortgage

A loan to finance the purchase of real estate, usually with specified payment periods and interest rates. Generally, the mortgage document pledges the mortgaged property to the lender as security for the loan.

## Mortgage Insurance

A policy that insures the lender against loss caused by a mortgagor's default on a mortgage.

## Offer

A proposal given by one party to another that states explicit price and terms.

## Pending

The status of a home that was under contract, had contingencies waived or resolved and is now set to close.

## PITI (Principal, Interest, Taxes and Insurance)

The four elements that form the basis for monthly mortgage payments.

## PMI (Private Mortgage Insurance)

Coverage provided by a private mortgage insurance company to protect lenders against loss if a borrower defaults. Coverage is usually required for a loan with a loan-to-value (LTV) percentage over 80%.

## Preapproval

An estimate provided by the buyer's loan officer of how much financing a potential borrower might expect to obtain.

## Real Estate Agent

A person licensed by a state to negotiate and transact the sale of real estate on behalf of a property owner/seller or buyer.

## REALTORS®

A registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association of REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics. All Moda Group agents are REALTORS®!

## Sales Contract

The legally binding document that sets forth the terms of the sale; establishes the rights and obligations of the parties involved; specifies the actions to be taken in order to close the sale; and establishes the time frames for those steps to be completed. Also known as the purchase contract.

## Settlement Statement

A document, also known as the HUD-1, ALTA, or RESPA Statement, that lists all the costs of the transaction for both the buyer and the seller.

## Survey

A drawing or map showing the precise legal boundaries of a property, the location of improvements, easements, rights of way, encroachments and other physical features.

## Tax Proration

A credit given from the seller to the buyer that covers the property taxes according to when the buyer will officially become the property owner. There can also be proration of homeowner's association dues and other assessments that are area specific, as well as transfer taxes in some locations.

## Title Insurance

An insurance policy that protects against title holder loss from legal defects in the title, such as pre-existing claims or liens against the property.

## Title Search

A check of the title records to ensure that the seller is the legal owner of the property and that there are no liens or other outstanding claims.

## Transfer Taxes

Taxes levied on the transfer of property by state and/or local jurisdictions. These fees may be incurred by the buyer, seller or both parties in a transaction depending on the municipality.

## Underwriting

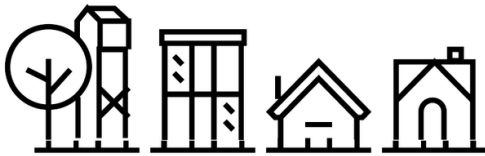
The process for evaluating a loan's application to determine the risk involved for the lender.

## Final Walk Through

A final inspection of the home before closing to verify that the condition of the property and its contents are as contracted.

# Let's Find You a New Home!

We're here to help. With over 10 years in the industry, and deep roots in Chicago, we've got friends and contacts all over this town. No matter where you find a listing, our team will get you access to the property.



## **Hear about a property for sale?**

Give us a call and we'll search out the details for you. And if you see a property you absolutely love that isn't for sale, send us that information, too. You never know who might be considering selling for the right price...

## **See a sign?**

We can show you properties that are listed with us or any broker in our area.

## **Read an advertisement?**

We can help you with any house you find online, or in the paper (if you're still reading the paper?), no matter what company or individual is marketing the home. Just send us the info and we'll find out all the details for you!

## **Want to visit an open house?**

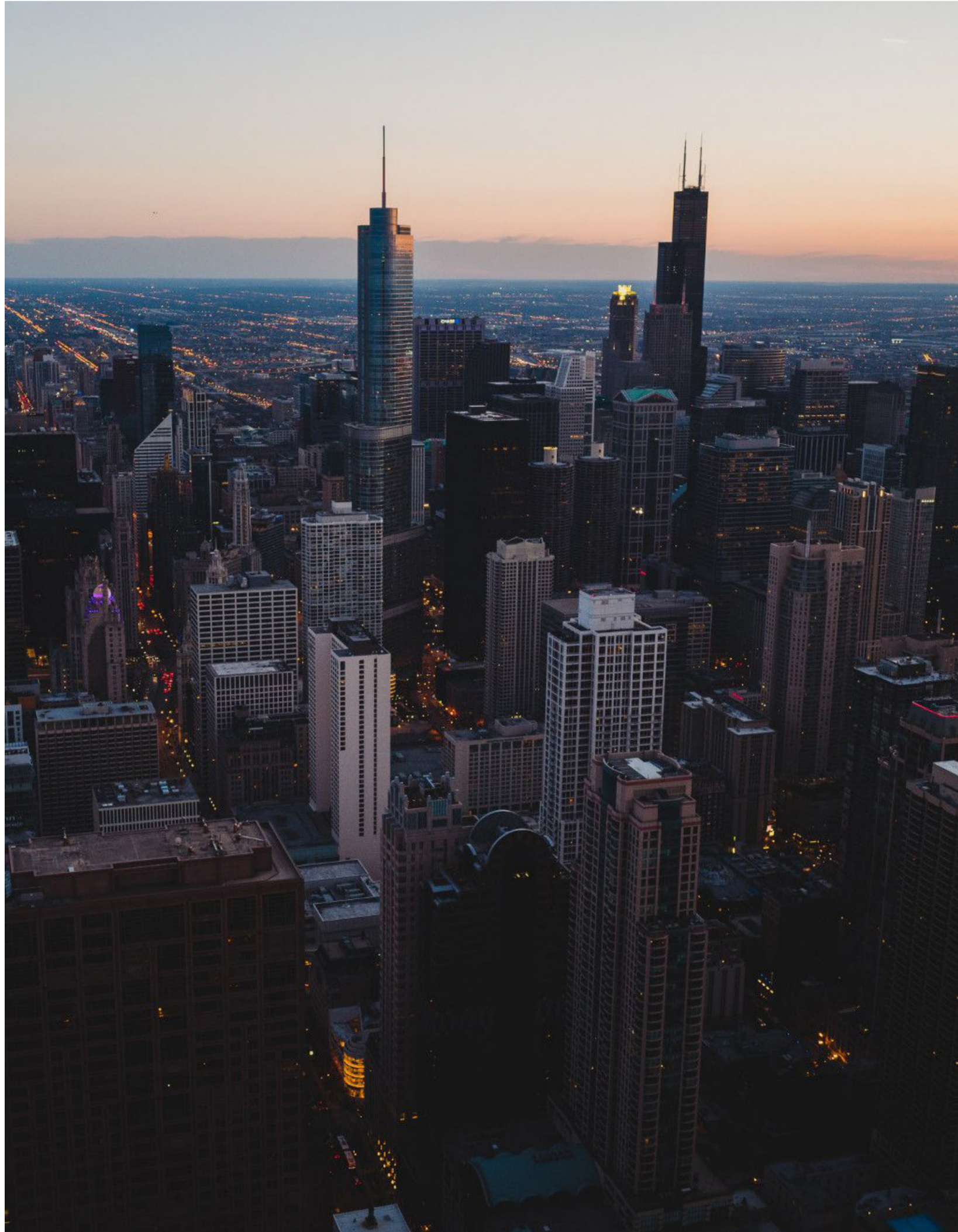
We will be happy to accompany you. If you attend on your own, please sign in with the Moda Group name after your own.

## **Would like to tour a new construction project?**

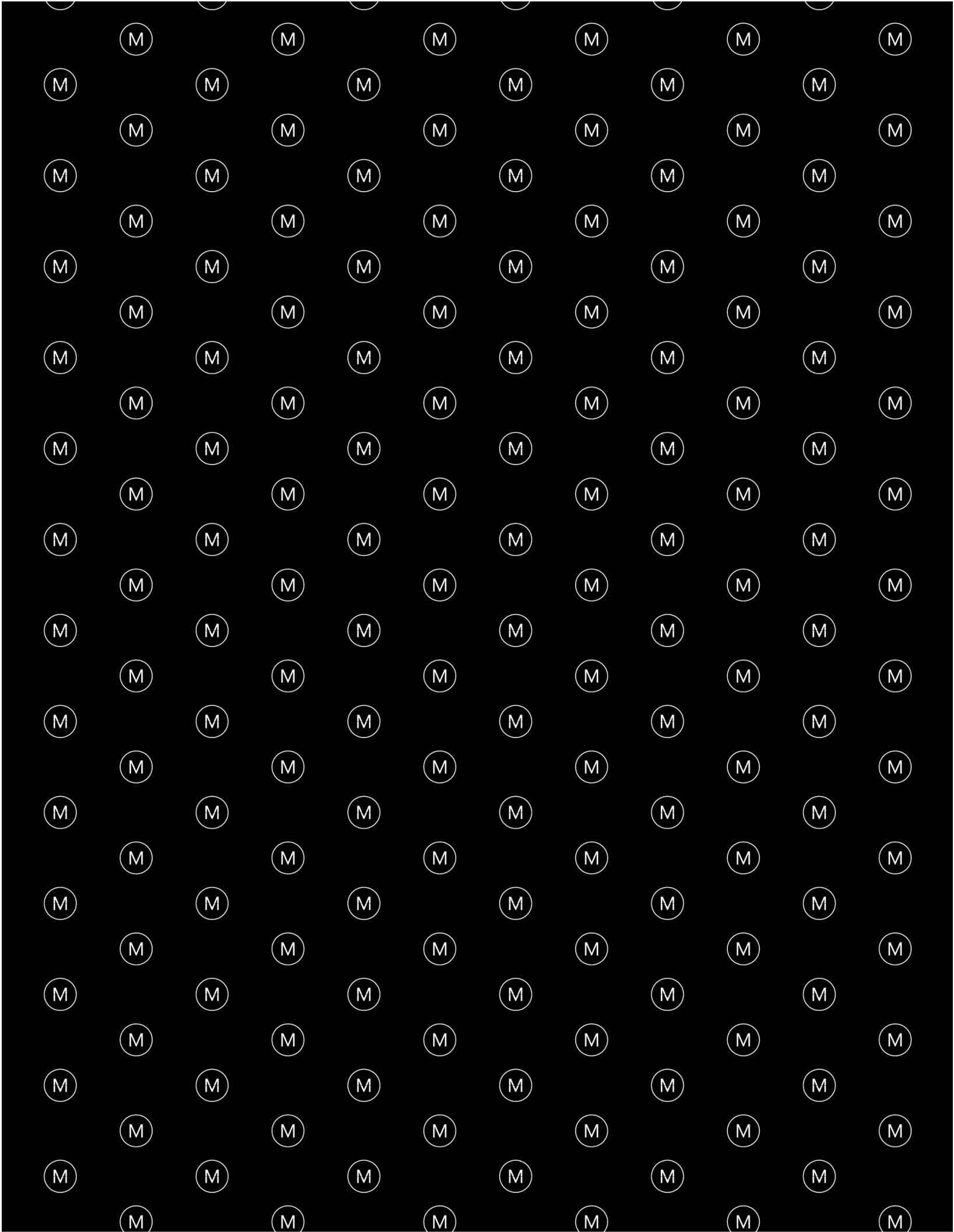
We will need to accompany you to the property on the initial visit. By letting us help you with the builders, you get all the services offered in the presentation as well as those offered by the builder without paying more for it.

*And, by the way, we also have access to off-market properties that you won't find online, giving you the opportunity to see them before anyone else and the advantage to snag 'em before they hit the market.*











MODA GROUP

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