

A minimalist home office with a wooden desk, a modern lamp, a framed map, and a wooden chair with a cushion.

THE ROAD TO

Home

A HOME BUYER GUIDE



HELLO, NICE TO MEET YOU!

I am Cat McCrary,
YOUR LOCAL REAL ESTATE EXPERT

Whether connecting national brands with consumers, local business owners with new clients or real estate buyers and sellers, I have more than 30 years of experience serving my clients with integrity, energy and professionalism.

Over the past 12 years, I've been involved in the sales and marketing of 400+ properties in the Catawba Valley region. I take pride in winning numerous awards, including the Realtor of the Year from my peers.

I'm so fortunate to work with amazing clients who become friends and are a strong part of my referral network.

Let's Connect

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MY *services*

COMMUNICATION

Communication is key to ensuring you get the home you want and the service you need. To stay in touch, I use:

- Email, phone, and text for everyday communication - let me know your preference
- DotLoop - for electronic signatures and copies of paperwork. Hard copies are available upon request
- MLS - for property alerts
- ShowingTime - I use this to schedule all appointments for showings and inspections

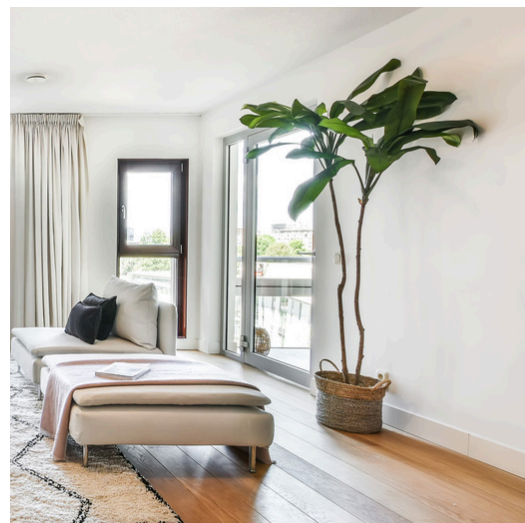
COORDINATION

Aligning on your goals, timing, financing, and criteria are of the utmost importance. I'm here to help you get pre-approved with a lender, establish the timing of your purchase and move, narrow down home wants and needs, and provide an education on the market. If you currently own a home, we'll also talk through whether you should buy or sell first

ADVISOR, NAVIGATOR, PARTNER

A real estate transaction is unique from other purchase experience in five key ways. I will make the process as easy as possible for you.

- Frequency - real estate transactions happen much more infrequently than typical purchases, usually every eight years
- Uniqueness - every market, home, buyer and seller are different. No transaction is the same, each with its own twists and turns
- Size - Real estate transactions are typically the largest investments of your lifetime, both financially and emotionally
- Complexity - From home search to offers, negotiations, inspections, repairs, financing, and closing, the transaction is complex from start to finish
- Risk - Taking into account all of the above, buying and selling real estate is inherently risky. Having the information to make informed decisions will be critical.





THE HOME BUYING
PROCESS

THE 10 STEP HOME BUYING PROCESS

- 1 FIND THE RIGHT AGENT
- 2 PREPARE FINANCES
- 3 GET PRE-APPROVED
- 4 START HOME SHOPPING
- 5 MAKE AN OFFER
- 6 ORDER AN INSPECTION
- 7 NEGOTIATE FINAL OFFER
- 8 APPRAISAL ORDERED
- 9 SCHEDULE THE MOVE
- 10 CLOSING DAY



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kW
KELLERWILLIAMS®

your ADVOCATE



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. I look at dozens of homes every week, and I can help you identify potential problems within a home. When repairs or changes in price need to be made, I 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. I 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

I work daily in neighborhoods with inspectors, contractors, and negotiating with sellers. I 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

I will work hard to protect all of your interests and take on any issues that may arise throughout the entire process. I 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.



2

PREPARING YOUR

FINANCING



PREPARING YOUR *financing*

1

AFFORDABILITY

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.

2

CHECK YOUR CREDIT

A mortgage requires a good credit score. Improve your score by:

- Paying down credit card balances
- Continuing to make payments on time
- Avoid applying for new credit until you have been approved
- Avoid making big purchases until you have been approved
- If possible, avoid job changes until you have been approved

3

DOWN PAYMENT

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, etc.

- A down payment is typically between 3.5% & 20% of the purchase price
- Earnest money deposit and due diligence fee is money you put down to show you're serious about purchasing a home.
- Closing costs for the buyer run between 2% & 5% of the loan amount
- A home inspection costs \$300 to \$500. Termite, radon, septic and hvac are other inspections you may consider





3

GET

PRE-APPROVED

GETTING *ahead*

IN THE HOME BUYING PROCESS



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.

WHY SHOULD YOU GET PRE-APPROVED?

KNOW YOUR BUDGET

One of the biggest benefits of getting pre-approved for a home loan is that it helps you understand how much house you can afford. This knowledge can help you set a realistic budget when searching for potential homes and prevent you from wasting time looking at homes that are out of your price range and budget.

NEGOTIATING POWER

When you're pre-approved for a home loan, sellers and their agents know that you're serious about buying a home and that you have the financial backing to make an offer. This can improve your negotiating power and give you an advantage over other potential buyers who may not be pre-approved.

CLOSE FASTER

In today's competitive real estate market, being pre-approved can help you close on your home faster because you've already completed some of the financial checks required to get a mortgage. This can help you beat out other potential buyers who may not be pre-approved and speed up the home buying process.

GET QUALIFIED

TYPE OF LOAN	CREDIT SCORE	DOWN PAYMENT
VA LOAN	580	NO DOWN PAYMENT
USDA LOAN	640	NO DOWN PAYMENT
FHA LOAN	580 500-579	3.5% 10%
CONVENTIONAL LOAN	640	5-20%
JUMBO LOAN	680	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

LENDER *recommendations*



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available to meet
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START HOME

SHOPPING

FIND YOUR *dream* HOME



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

HOME NOTES & BUYER PREFERENCES

WHAT IS YOUR BUDGET FOR YOUR NEW HOME?

WHAT ARE YOUR PREFERRED NEIGHBORHOODS OR LOCATIONS?

HOW MANY BEDROOMS AND BATHROOMS ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFIC STYLE OR DESIGN PREFERENCES?

WHAT ARE YOUR MUST-HAVES AND DEAL-BREAKERS FOR A NEW HOME?

notes



MAKE AN

OFFER

making 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 can be more attractive to a seller

•SHORTER INSPECTION PERIODS

Try shortening the inspection period to 10 days

•OFFER TO CLOSE QUICKLY

Many sellers prefer to close within 30 days.



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

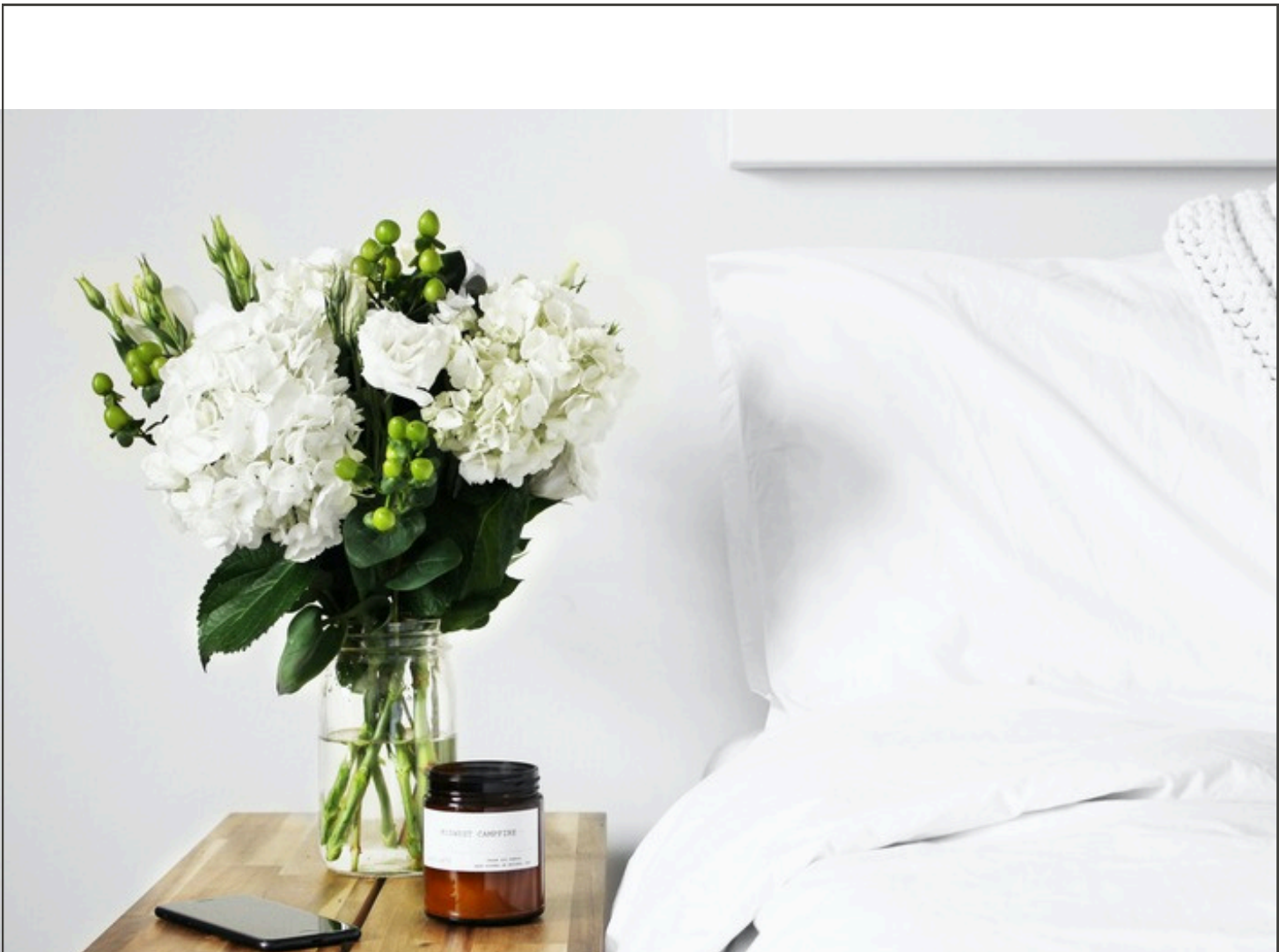
•DECLINE THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER

•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.



ORDER AN
INSPECTION

INSPECTION *time*

During the inspection period, we will schedule inspections so you have a chance to discover any potential defects that could impact your buying decision

STEP 1: HOME INSPECTION

Conduct an inspection, examining the roof, gutters, walls, windows, doors, appliances, electrical, plumbing, hvac, attic and foundation for damage or wear that could compromise the home's safety and integrity.

STEP 2: TERMITE & RADON INSPECTIONS

Conduct an inspection for wood destroying insects and test for the presence of cancer-causing radon.

STEP 3: WELL & SEPTIC INSPECTIONS

Inspect the well pump and test the water supply to ensure safe drinking water. Inspect the septic system to ensure waste is removed from the home property

STEP 4: SURVEY

The survey will mark the property lines and show structures, encroachments and other potential title issues.

STEP 5: REPORTING

Each inspector usually provides a written report with photos as needed. If major defects are found, you will have an opportunity to address these with the seller in another round of negotiations. It's best to remember "The Golden Rule" as often this can be an emotional process.





FINAL

NEGOTIATIONS

NEGOTIATE

the final offer

Issues typically arise after the home inspection, and those issues tend to result in another round of negotiations for credits or fixes.

STEP #1

ASK FOR CREDIT FOR THE WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE
Often, the last thing the seller wants to do is repair work. This option allows you to choose the service provider. If this is not feasible you can ask the seller to complete repairs before closing.

STEP #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.

STEP #3

KEEP YOUR POKER FACE
The listing agent or seller may be present during inspections and revealing your comfort level with the home could come back to haunt you in further discussions or negotiations.





ORDER

APPRAISAL

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

A property title search is the process of examining public records to determine the legal ownership and any outstanding liens or encumbrances on a property. It is performed during the home-buying process to ensure clear ownership and address any issues before the sale. It is typically done by a title company or real estate attorney.

HOME OWNERS INSURANCE

You'll need insurance for the new home before closing. This will protect against things like fire, storms, and flooding. Homeowner's insurance is important because it provides financial protection against losses or damage to your property, liability coverage, is often required by mortgage lenders, and provides peace of mind.



SCHEDULING

YOUR MOVE

SCHEDULING

your move

AFTER SIGNING	•Finalize Home Mortgage •Schedule Home Inspection •Get quotes for home insurance •Schedule time for closing •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	•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 •Arrange appraisal •Complete title search (Title company will do this)
2 WEEKS TO MOVE	•Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable) •Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc. •Minimize grocery shopping •Keep on packing
1 WEEKS 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



10

CLOSING

DAY



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 hours of closing to check the property's condition. This final inspection takes about 30 minutes to 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 attorney office. 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.

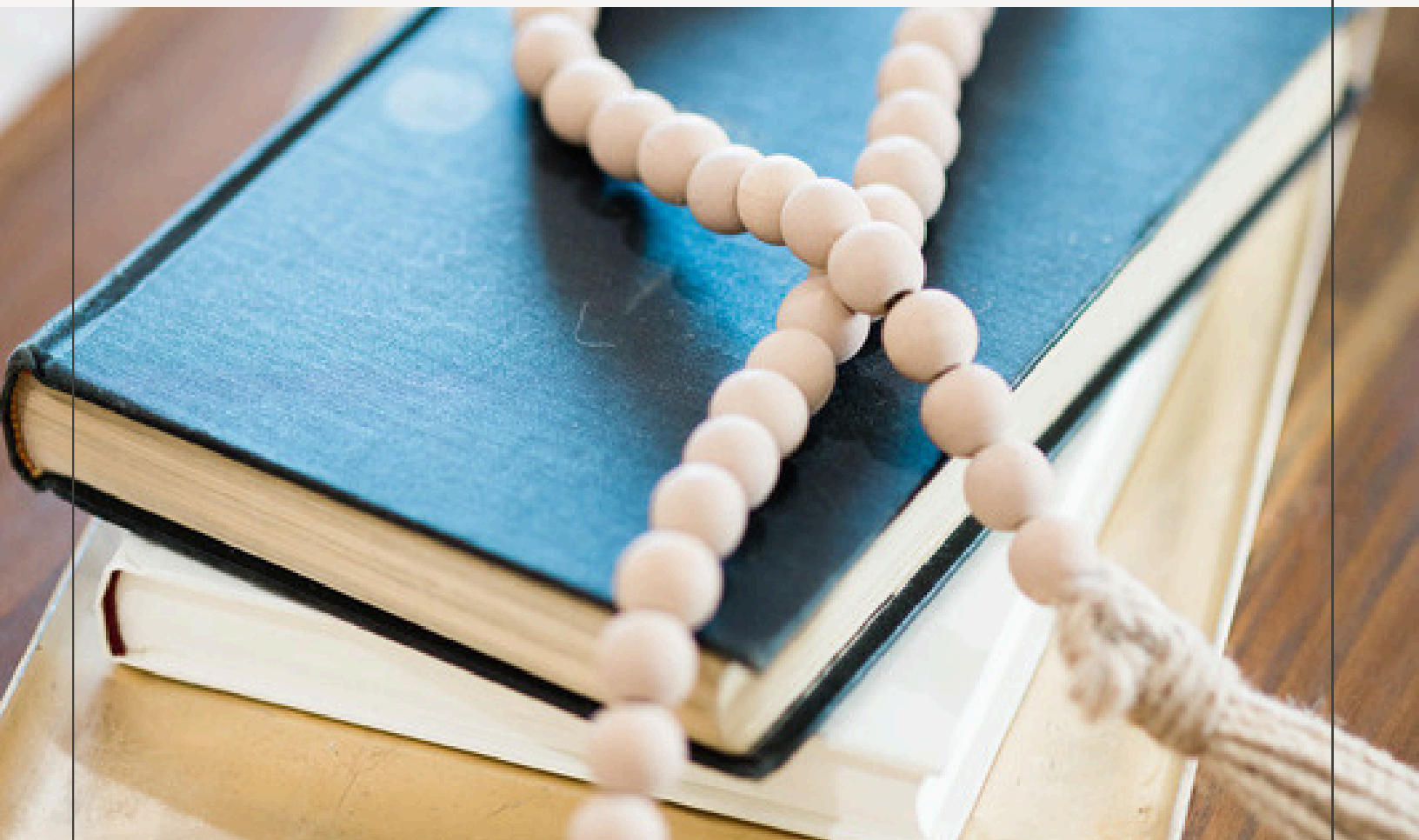
BRING TO CLOSING

- Government-issued photo ID
- Cashiers check or wired cash to close funds

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!





CLIENT
TESTIMONIALS

REVIEWS



"My oh my when it comes to knowledgeable, hard working, fun, down to earth, honest realtors we sure hit the jackpot with Cat! We moved across the US from Arizona and Cat took her time educating us on the area, driving us all around Hickory and the surrounding cities. She helped us find our dream home and once we opened escrow kept the ball rolling to make sure we had a seamless closing with no delays. She went above and beyond for us the whole way from beginning to end. We would highly recommend Cat to use as your realtor. You won't be disappointed. She is the very best!" benita o.

"Cat is a wonderful proven realtor. She is a true professional in her field. Very knowledgeable about the housing market. She really asks all the right questions and works with you every step of the way to find what you are truly looking for in a home. I highly recommend Cat when looking for real estate." tim a.

"Cat did an absolutely amazing job helping me buy my first home. She was super knowledgeable about not only the homes I was interested in but also about the surrounding areas as well. Even though I did a lot of prior research to buying a home, she was always bringing up new areas that I didn't even think about. Throughout the entire process she made sure that I knew about everything that was going on. She was also very flexible and comforting because buying a home in very stressful. She was prepared for everything and helped me with my specific situation. I would definitely hire her again!." alexandria a.

"We live in N.J. and were looking to buy in N.C. We were fortunate to choose Cat McCrary as our realtor. Cat is knowledgeable, organized, responsive, and a wonderful person to work with. We had complete faith in her from the initial home showing throughout the buying process. We highly recommend Cat to anyone who wants a stress free real estate transaction." sharon

"I highly recommended Cat McCrary for your realtor needs. She's professional, caring, great listener, good negotiator, hard worker, relieves the stress of buying a home, takes care of her clients needs, top notch all star." lisa b.

"We are so grateful for Cat and all she did to help our family find a home. She answered every phone call, text, and email, if not immediately, in a quick and timely fashion. She was there to show houses and answer questions no matter the time of day. We truly believe this process went so smoothly because of Cat and her dedication to helping us find the right home. She has helped multiple members of our families find our homes, so to say we highly recommend her would be an understatement." a. costner

"Cat was wonderful during the entire process! She did a great job marketing and pricing our home and we were well pleased with her guidance and advice throughout. I highly recommend her" g. harris

WHAT TO EXPECT

HONESTY & TRANSPARENCY

INTEGRITY

RESPECT

TIMELY & REACHABLE

ACTING IN YOUR BEST INTEREST



THE ROAD TO

Home



"Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and discuss your goals of buying a home. It was a pleasure getting to know you and learning more about your unique situation. I would be honored to assist you on your buying journey and provide you with the expertise and support needed to achieve your goals. I look forward to the opportunity of working with you and helping you navigate the process of buying a home."



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kw

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